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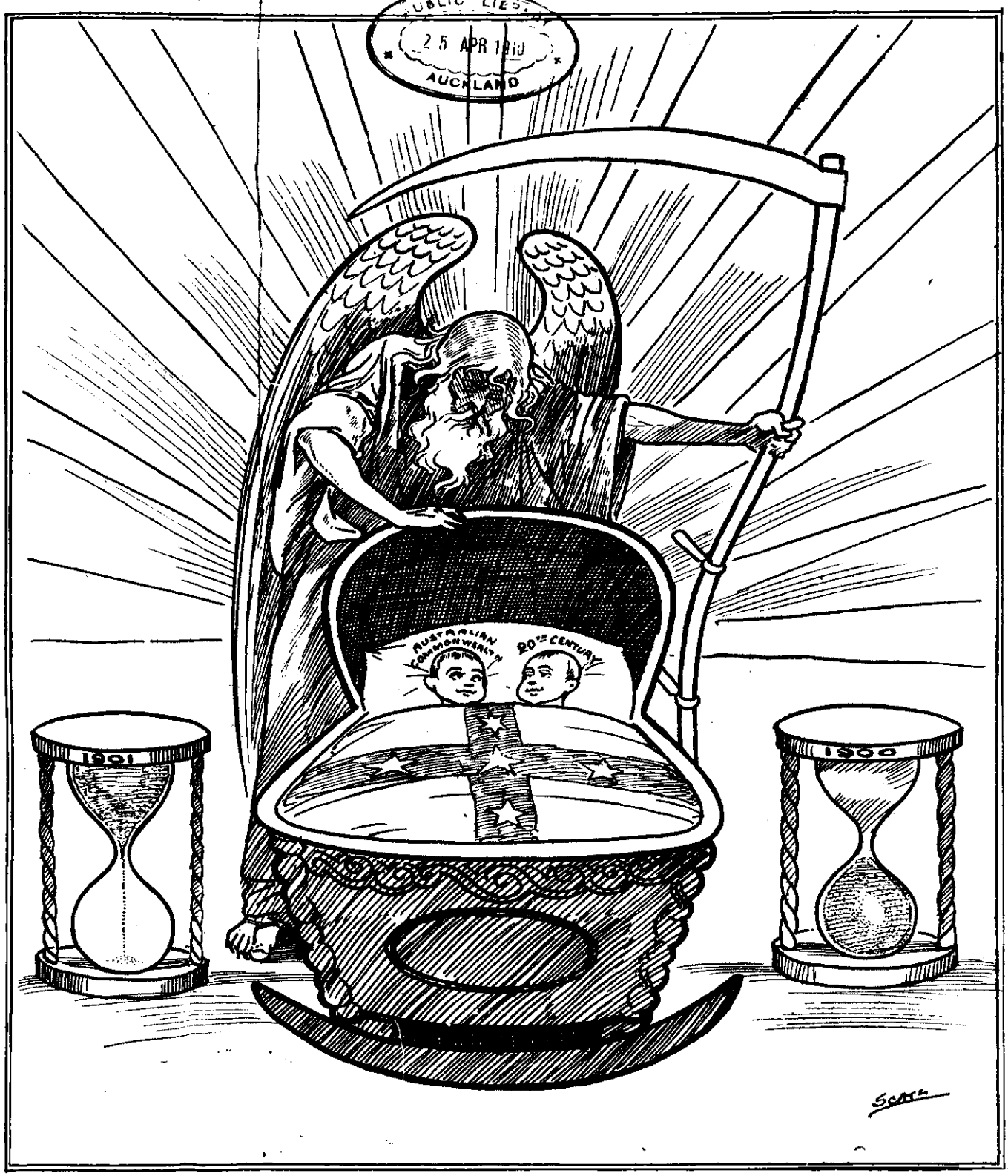

TWINS.

Serial Story.

THE MYSTERY OF THE CLASPED HANDS.

By GUY BOOTHBY.

Author of "A Bid for Fortune," "Dr. Nikola," "The Beautiful White Devil," "The Fascination of the King," "Pharos, the Egyptian," "A Maker of Nations," "Long Live the King," &c.

CHAPTER I.

"I never knew such a fellow as you for ferreting out these low foreign eating-houses," said Godfrey Henderson to his friend, Victor Fensden, as they turned from Oxford-street into one of the narrow thoroughfares in the neighbourhood of Soho. "Why you should take such trouble, and at the same time do your digestion such irreparable injury, I cannot imagine. There are any number of places where you can get a chop or steak, free of garlic, in a decent quarter of the town, to say nothing of being waited upon by a man who does look as if he had been brave enough to run the risk of washing once or twice within the last five years."

His companion only laughed.

"Go on, my friend, go on," he said, blowing a cloud of cigarette smoke. "You pretend to be a cosmopolitan of cosmopolitans, but you will remain insular to the day of your death. To you, a man who has not the good fortune to be born an Englishman must of necessity be dirty, and be possessed of a willingness to sever your jugular within the first few minutes of your acquaintance. With regard to the accusation you bring against me, I am willing to declare, in self-defence, that I like burrowing about among the small eating-houses in this quarter, for the simple reason that I meet men there who are useful to me in my work, besides affording me food for reflection."

The taller man grunted scornfully.

"Conspirators to a man," he answered. "Nihilists, Anarchists, members of the Maffia, the Camorristi, and the Carbonari. Some day you will enter into an argument with one of them and receive a knife-thrust between your ribs for your pains."

"It may be so," returned Victor Fensden, with a shrug of his narrow shoulders. "Better that, however, than a life of stolid British priggishness. How you came to paint as you do when you have so little of the romantic in your temperament, is a thing I cannot for the life of me understand. That a man who rows, plays football and cricket, and who will walk ten miles to see a wrestling match or a prize fight, should be gifted with a sense of colour and touch, is as great a mystery to me as the habits of the ichthyosaurus."

And, indeed, what Fensden said was certainly true. Godfrey Henderson, one of the most promising of our younger painters, was as unlike the popular notion of an artist as could well be found. He had rowed stroke in his 'Varsity boat, had won for himself a fair amount of fame as a good all-round athlete, and at the same time had painted at least three of the most beautiful pictures—pictures with a subtle touch of poetry in them—that the public had seen for many years. His height was fully six feet one and a half, his shoulders were broad and muscular; he boasted a pleasant and an open countenance, such as makes one feel instinctively that its possessor is to be trusted. Taken altogether, a casual observer would have declared him to be a young country squire, and few would have guessed that the greater portion of his life was spent standing before an easel, palette and brush in hand.

Victor Fensden, his companion, was of an altogether different stamp. He was at least three inches shorter, was slimly built, and at first glance seemed to possess a highly-nervous and delicate constitution. In his dress he also differed from his friend. His taste betrayed a partiality for velvet coats; his ties were usually startling, so far as colour went; he wore his hair longer than is customary, and further adorned his face with a neat little Vandyke beard and moustache. Like Henderson he was also a votary of the brush. His pictures, however, were of the impressionist order—pretty enough in their way, but lacking in form, and a trifle vague as to colouring. On occasions he wrote poetry, had made one or two passable translations of Villon, and, as he had once been known to describe himself, as a preacher of the religion of Advanced Art. There were some who said he was not sincere, that his pictures were milk and water affairs, suggestive of the works of greater men, and only intended to advertise himself. If that were so, the success they achieved was comparative. Sad to relate, there were still people in London who had not heard the name of Victor Fensden; while the walls of the Academy, which he affected so much to despise, had not so far been honoured by his patronage. "The whole thing," he would say, adopting the language of our American cousins, "is controlled by a business ring; the Hanging Committee and the dealers stand in with each other. If you prefer to do bad work deliberately, or at any rate are content to be commonplace, then you're safe for admission. But if you prefer to do something which may, or may not, please the multitude, but will last longer than Burlington House, or the National Gallery itself, then you must be content to remain outside." After this tirade, regardless of the implied sneer at his work, Godfrey would laugh, and turn the matter off by proposing dinner, luncheon, or some other distraction. He knew the value of his own work, and was content to estimate it accordingly.

Having reached the end of the street down which they had been walking, when the conversation already described occurred, they found themselves before the entrance to a small eating house. One glance was sufficient to show that it was of the foreign order so derided by Henderson a few moments before. They entered and looked about them. The room was long and narrow, and contained some ten or a dozen small tables, three or four of which were already occupied. Pictures of the German school, apparently painted by the yard, and interspersed with gaudy portraits of King Humbert with his moustache, Victor Emmanuel with his wealth of orders, the latter cheek by jowl with Mr Garibaldi in his felt hat, decorated the walls. The proprietor, a small, tubby individual, with the blackest of black hair and eyes, and an olive skin that glistened like the marble tops of the tables, came forward to welcome them. At his request they seated themselves and gave their orders.

"What enjoyment you can find in this sort of thing I cannot imagine," repeated Henderson, almost irritably, as he looked about him. "If you take a pleasure in macaroni and tomato, and poetry in garlic and sour kraut, the divine instinct must be even more highly developed in you than your warmest admirers believe. We might have gone to the club and have had a decent meal there."

"And have had to listen to a lot of supercilious young idiots chattering about what they are pleased to call 'their work,'" the other replied. "No, no; we are better off here. Set your imagination to work, my dear fellow, and try to believe yourself in Florence, with the moonlight streaming down on the Ponte Vecchio, or in Naples, and that you can hear the waves breaking on the rock under the Castello del Ovo. You might even be hearing Funiculi-Finicula for the first time."

"Confound you! I never know whether you are serious or not," replied Godfrey. "Is it a joke your bringing me here to-night, or have you some definite object in view?"

He looked across the table at his companion as if he were anxious to assure himself upon this point before he said anything further.

"What if I had an object?" the other answered. "What if I wanted to do you a good turn, and by bringing you here to-night to help you in your work?"

"In that case," Henderson replied, "I should say that it was very kind of you, but that you have chosen a curious way of showing it. How a low Italian restaurant in Soho can help me in the work I have on hand I cannot for the life of me understand. Is it impossible for you to be more explicit?"

"If the critics are to be believed, you ask too much of me," returned Fensden, with one of his quiet laughs. "Are they not always declaring that my principal fault lies in my being too vague? Seriously, however, I will confess that I had an object in bringing you here. Have I not heard you grumbling morning, noon and night, that the model for your new picture is about as difficult to find as—well, shall we say, an honest dealer? Now, I believe that the humble mouse was once able to assist the lion—forgive the implied compliment—in other words, I think I have achieved the impossible. It will take too long to tell you how I managed it, but the fact remains that I have discovered the girl you want; and, what is more, she will be here to-night. If, when you have seen her, you come to the conclusion that she will not answer your purpose, then I shall be quite willing to confess that my knowledge of the beautiful in woman is only equal to your appreciation of an Italian dinner in a cheap Soho restaurant. I have spoken."

"And so you have really brought me here to eat this villainous concoction," Henderson answered, contemptuously regarding the mess before him, "in order to show me a face that you think may be useful to me in my work? My dear fellow, you know as well as I do that we think differently upon these matters. What you have repeatedly declared to be the loveliest face you have ever seen, I would not sketch upon a canvas; while another, that haunts me by day and night, does not raise a shadow of enthusiasm in you. I am afraid you have had your trouble in vain. But what abominable stuff this is to be sure. Order some wine, my dear fellow, for pity's sake."

A flask of chianti was brought them, and later some goat's milk cheese. Upon the latter, bad as it was, Henderson elected to dine. He had scarcely finished what was placed before him when an exclamation from his companion caused him to turn his head in the direction of the door. Two women were entering the restaurant at the moment, and were approaching the table at which the young men sat. The elder was a stout and matronly person, dark of eye, swarthy of skin, and gorgeous in her colouring, so much so, indeed, that not the slightest doubt could have existed as to her nationality. She was a daughter of Italy from the top of her head to the soles of her ample feet. Her companion, however, was modelled on altogether different lines. She was tall, graceful and so beautiful, in a statuesque way, that Henderson felt his heart thrill with pleasure at the sight of her. Here was the very woman he had been so anxious to discover.

If he had hunted the Continent of Europe through he could not have discovered anyone better suited to the requirements of the work he had in hand. Since it was plain that it was she for whom Fensden was waiting, it looked as if their tastes, for once, were likely to be the same.

"What a perfect face!" exclaimed Godfrey, more to himself than to his companion. "At any hazard, I must induce her to sit to me."

Fensden looked at his friend's face, made a note of the admiration he saw there, and smiled to himself.

"What did I tell you?" he inquired, with a note of triumph in his voice. "You pooh-poohed the notion that I should ever be able to find you a model. What do you say now?"

"She is perfect," Henderson replied. "Just look at the eyes, the beautiful contour of the face, the shapely neck, and the hands! What is a woman of her class doing with such hands? Where did you meet her?"

"In another of my contemptible restaurants," Fensden answered. "Directly I saw her, I said to myself: 'This is the model for Godfrey!' I inquired her name, and, finding that she was willing to sit, made an appointment to meet her here this evening."

By this time Godfrey's antagonism had entirely left him. His only desire now was to secure this woman, and, with her assistance, to bring about the end he had mapped out. As soon as the doors of Burlington House should be thrown open, that face should look down upon the picture-lovers of England, or he'd never touch a brush again.

The two women, by this time, had seated themselves at another table; and it was almost with a sense of disappointment that Godfrey observed his ideal embark upon her meal. To watch her fill her pretty mouth to overflowing with steaming macaroni was not a pleasing sight. It was too human and too suggestive of a healthy appetite to harmonise with the poetic framework in which his imagination had already placed her.

When the ladies had finished their meal, the two young men left their own table and crossed the room to that at which they were seated. Fensden said something in Italian, which elicited a beaming smile from the elder lady, and a gesture of approval from her companion. It was not the first time in his life that Godfrey Henderson had had occasion to wish he had taken advantage of his opportunities to acquire a knowledge of that melodious language. "The signora declares that there is no occasion for us to speak Italian, since she is an accomplished English scholar," said Fensden, with a sarcastic touch that was not lost upon Henderson. "The signorina also speaks our villainous tongue as well as if she had been born and bred within the sound of Bow Bells."

At this supposed compliment the elder lady smiled effusively, while her daughter looked gravely from one man to the other as if she were not quite sure of the value to be placed on what he had said. Having received permission, the two men seated themselves at the table, and Henderson ordered another flask of wine. Under its influence their acquaintance ripened rapidly. It was not, however, until they had been talking some little time that the all-important subject was broached.

"And it is Teresina's portrait that your friend would paint, signor?" said the elder lady, turning to Fensden, when she had heard everything. "And why not? 'Tis a beautiful face,

though I, her mother, say it. If the signor will make the—what you call it—'rangements, it shall be done."

Less than a minute was sufficient to place the matter on a satisfactory basis and it was thereupon settled that the Signorina Verdi should attend at the studio at a certain hour every week-day until the picture was finished. Matters having been arranged in this eminently friendly fashion, the meeting broke up, and with many bows and compliments on Fensden's and the signora's parts, they bade each other adieu. A few minutes later the two young men found themselves once more in the street.

"My dear fellow, I don't know how to thank you," said Henderson. "I've been worrying myself more than I can say at not being able to find the face I wanted. I owe you ten thousand apologies."

But Fensden would not hear of such a thing as an apology. His only desire was that the picture should be successful, he said.

"I had no idea that the fellow was so fond of me," Henderson remarked to himself that night, when he was alone in his bedroom. "Fancy his hunting through London for a model for me. He is the last man I should have thought would have taken the trouble."

Next morning Teresina entered upon her duties, and Godfrey set to work with even more than his usual enthusiasm. The picture was to be his magnum opus, the greatest effort he had yet given to the world. The beautiful Italian proved to be a good sitter, and her delight as the picture grew upon the canvas, was not to be concealed. Meanwhile Fensden smoked innumerable cigarettes, composed finde-siecle poems in her honour, and made a number of impressionist studies of her head that his friends declared would eventually astonish artistic London. If the picture were to be completed in time for the Academy, there was no time to be lost, as Godfrey was well aware. Already he had several half-formed notions in his head for future work in which Teresina's beautiful face would play an important part. At last the picture was finished and sent in. Then followed the interval of anxious waiting, so well known to those who have striven for such honours as the Academy has to bestow. When it was discovered that it had passed the first and second selections great was the rejoicing in the studio.

"It is your face that has done it, Teresina," cried Godfrey. "I knew they wouldn't be able to resist that."

"Nay, nay," said the signora, who was present, "such compliments will turn the child's head. Her face would not be there but for the signor's skill. Well do I remember that when Luigi Maffoli painted the portrait of Monsignore ——"

No one heeded her, so she continued the narrative, in an undertone, to the cat on her lap. The day, however, was not destined to end as happily as it had begun. That evening when they were alone together in the studio, Fensden took Godfrey to task.

"Dear boy," he said, as he helped himself to a cigarette from a box on the table beside him, "I have come to the conclusion that you must go warily. There are rocks ahead, and, as far as I can see, you are running straight for them."

"What on earth is the matter now?" Godfrey asked, stretching himself out in an easy chair as he spoke. "I know the poise of that head is not quite what it might be, but haven't I promised you that I'll alter it to-morrow. Teresina is the very best model in the world, and as patient as she's beautiful."

"That's exactly what I am complaining of," Victor answered quietly. "If she were not, I should not bother my head about her. I feel, in a measure, responsible, don't you see? If it hadn't been for me, she would not be here."

The happiness vanished from Godfrey's face as a breath first blurs and then leaves the surface of a razor.

"My dear fellow, I am afraid I don't quite grasp the situation," he said. "You surely don't suppose that I am falling in love with Teresina—with my model?"

"I am quite aware that you're not," the other answered. "There is my trouble. If you were in love with her, there might be some hope for her. But as it is there is none."

Henderson stared at him in complete surprise.

"Have you gone mad?" he asked.

"No one was ever saner," Fensden replied. "Look here, Godfrey, can't you see the position for yourself? Here is this beautiful Italian girl, whom you engaged through my agency. You take her from beggary and put her in a position of comparative luxury. She has sat to you day after day, smiled at your compliments, and—well, to put it bluntly, has had every opportunity and encouragement given her to fall head over heels in love with you. Is it quite fair, do you think, to let it go on."

Godfrey was completely taken aback.

"Great Scott! You don't mean to say you think I'm such a beast as to encourage her?" he cried. "You know as well as I do that I have treated her only as I have treated all the other models before her. Surely you would wish me to be civil to the girl and try to make her work as pleasant as possible for her? If you think I've been a blackguard say so outright."

"My dear Godfrey, nothing could be further from my thoughts," answered Fensden, in his usual quiet voice, that one of his friends once compared to the purring of a cat. "I should be a poor friend, however, if I were to allow you to go on as you are going on without an expostulation. Cannot you look at it in the same light as I do? Are you so blind that you cannot see that this girl is falling every day more deeply in love with you? The love-light gleams in her eyes whenever she looks at you. She sees an implied caress even in the gentle pats you give her drapery when you arrange it on the stage there; a tender solicitude for her welfare when you tell her to hurry home before it rains. What is the end of it all to be? I suppose you do not intend making her your wife?"

"My wife," said Godfrey, blankly, as if the idea was too preposterous to have ever occurred to him. "Surely you must be jesting to talk like this?"

"I am not jesting with you if you are not jesting with her," the other replied. "You must see for yourself that the girl worships the very ground you walk upon. Yet there is still time for matters to be put right. She has so far only looked at the affair from her own standpoint. What is more, I do not want her to lose her employment with you, since it means so much to her. What I do want is that you should take hold of yourself in time and prevent her from being made unhappy while you have the opportunity."

"You may be quite sure that I shall do so," Henderson replied more stiffly than he had yet spoken. "I am more sorry than I can say that this should have occurred. Teresina is a good girl, and I would no more think of causing her pain than I would of striking my own sister. And now I'm off to bed. Good-night."

True to his promise, his behaviour next day, so far as Teresina was concerned, was so different that she stared at him in surprise, quite unable to understand the reason of the change. She thought she must have offended him in some way, and endeavoured by all the means in her power to win her way back into his good graces. But the more she tried to conciliate him the further he withdrew into his shell. Victor Fensden, smoking his inevitable cigarette, waited to see what the result would be. There was a certain amount of pathos in the situation and a close observer might have noticed that the strain was telling upon the actors in it, upon the girl in particular. For the next fortnight or so the moral temperature of the studio was not as equable as of old. Godfrey, who was of too honest a nature to make a good conspirator, chafed at the part he was being called upon to play, while Teresina, who only knew that she loved and that her love was not returned, was divided between her affections for the man and a feeling of wounded dignity for herself.

"I wish to goodness I could raise sufficient money to get out of London for six months," said Godfrey one evening, as they sat together in the studio. "I'd be off like a shot."

Fensden knew why he said this.

"I am sorry I can't help you," he replied. "I am about as badly off as yourself. But surely the great picture sold well?"

"Very well—for me, that is to say," Godfrey replied. "But I had to part with most of it next day."

He did not add that he had sent most of it to his widowed sister, who was very badly off and wanted help to send her boy to college.

A short silence followed, then Fensden said: "If you had money what what you do?"

"Go abroad," said Godfrey, quickly. "The strain of this business is more than I can stand. If I had a few hundreds to spare, we'd go together and not come back for six months. By that time everything would have settled down to its old normal condition."

How little did he guess that the very thing that seemed so impossible was destined to come to pass."

(To be continued.)

More Than He Expected.

Englishmen know little of the geography of the "States," and what little they do know does not object to putting Philadelphia next door to Boston, or San Francisco alongside New York. An American and an Englishman, who had become friends aboard ship, had a pleasant encounter about distances on reaching New York.

They breakfasted together, and the following conversation ensued:—

"I guess I'll turn out to see Harry after breakfast," said the Englishman.

"Harry?" queried the American, softly.

"Yes, my brother," explained the Englishman. "I've two here. Harry lives in San Francisco and Charlie in Chicago."

"But you'll be back for dinner?" facetiously asked the American.

The Britisher took him seriously. "Sure for dinner, if not for lunch," he answered. And accompanied by his friend, now thoroughly alive to the humour of the incident, he found himself a few minutes later in the line of ticket buyers in the Grand Central station.

"An excursion ticket to San Francisco, stopping at Chicago station on return," he ordered.

The ticket agent put about a quarter of a mile of pasteboard under his stamp, pounded it for a minute or more, thrust it before the explorer, and expectantly waited payment.

"When does the train go?" asked the Englishman.

"In ten minutes," was the answer.

"How much is it?"

"One hundred and thirty-eight dollars and fifty cents."

"What?" gasped the Englishman "How far is it?"

"Three thousand miles."

"Dear me! What a country!"

Serial Story.

(PUBLISHED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT.)

A DAUGHTER OF MIDIAN.

By JOHN K. LEYS.

Author of "A Sore Temptation," "The Thumb-print," "The Broken Fetter," "In the Toils," "A Million of Money," etc., etc.

PART III.—MR MITCHELL'S SECRET.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE PROFESSOR'S WARNING.

"What is is that you desire?" asked Signor Zucatti, regarding his visitor with a fixed stare. Under that calm, deliberate gaze Durant was conscious of a certain uneasiness which he tried to shake off by assuming a free and easy, devil-may-care manner.

"I wish you to take a look at my hand and tell me what you read there. That is your profession, isn't it?"

"That is my profession," said Zuccatti without the bow that Durant expected.

"But first," said the visitor, "I want to know—Do you know who I am?"

"I do not. I have never seen you before."

"Is the man lying?" Durant asked himself, but he could not feel sure about the answer. Certainly, nothing in the Italian's face or manner betrayed the fact that he had ever set eyes on his visitor before.

"I remember you, however. I saw you at a certain murder trial in Italy, a good many years ago."

"I think you must be mistaken."

"Oh, no. I am not mistaken. I never forget a face that I have looked at attentively."

"So be it. I am ready to examine your hand now."

And Durant, who had intended asking the Professor a few questions before offering his hand for inspection, found himself meekly yielding his palm for examination.

All the time the Italian was tracing the lines on the smooth palm of his consultant, his subtle brain was rapidly forming conclusions from what Sybil had told him of this man, from his knowledge of his position at Inveroran Castle, and what he saw in his face, and heard in the tones of his voice. Still keeping his head bent over the hand he began to speak in those clear level tones which he always brought into requisition when practicing his art.

"You have the artistic temperament, but you are not an artist by profession," he began. "For some time past you have practiced no profession. You have unfortunately fallen in love with a lady——" he paused for the fraction of a second—"who is indifferent to you."

Durant gave a low, mocking laugh.

"There you are in error, my good sir. The lady in question will not show herself indifferent to me, whatever else she may feel, or I am vastly mistaken."

"I only speak of what I see," said the Italian tranquilly.

"Oh, all right. Go ahead!"

"You will shortly set out on a journey——"

"Correct!"

"Which will have great issues for you. The line is weak and broken. I advise you not to go."

"Do you think the lady would give me the same advice?" asked Durant, in the same bantering tone.

"I have not the lady's hand before me, therefore I cannot tell you."

"And yet you know her. In fact, I have seen you together."

It is probable that if it had not been for the generous wine he had been drinking, Durant would not have spoken so freely; but he was curious to know what the nature of the connection between the oddly assorted pair really was.

"I think you must be mistaken," said the Italian coldly.

"Oh, no. You and she visited a place called Inveroran last summer."

"We are not here, sir, to discuss my affairs, or those of third persons."

"May I ask if you are related to the lady in any way?"

"That is your business is that of yours?"

The cool insolence was straining the Italian's temper to breaking point.

"Oh, nothing very much, only one likes to know something about the relations of the lady one proposes to marry."

The Italian made no reply, but bent his face once more over the hand that still lay palm uppermost before him. If he had glanced up at that moment he would have seen that his visitor's face wore a malicious grin.

"I had the honour of mentioning that you contemplated a journey," said Zucatti, after a pause; "and I warned you that it would be wise to delay that journey, or give it up altogether. I now repeat that warning. The meaning of the lines in your hand is unmistakable. If you go, it will be at the peril of your life."

"Enough of this nonsense!" cried Durant, snatching away his hand. "If you must know, I came here to get information, not childish warnings. Will you tell me what is the nature of the relationship between you and Miss Sybil Grant? Are you merely friends? Was your meeting at Inveroran accidental or pre-arranged? You will not tell me? Never mind. She will tell me fast enough. Good day."

Before leaving the room he took a sovereign from his pocket and with a contemptuous gesture threw it on the table. It rolled off and fell on the floor. The Italian let it lie.

"If you neglect the warning I have given your blood will be on your own head."

The tone in which these words were spoken was so deliberate, so passionless, so free from anything ranting, that Durant was sobered for a moment; but the next instant he had regained his self-assurance. "No use, my friend. That little trick won't serve your turn this time," said he, and with another contemptuous laugh he quitted the room.

When he reached his hotel Durant sat down and wrote a telegram to the caretaker at the Lodge, which he still retained, telling her that she must have the place ready against his arrival on the following day, and he then wrote a letter to Mr Mitchell. He saw no reason in beating about the bush, and he told him in so many words that he knew all about the assignment of the Lonely Gully mine, and that it was in his power to ruin him in purse and in reputation alike. More than this, it was in his power to have him sent to penal servitude; but he proposed to stay his hand—on conditions, of course. He must forthwith surrender one clear half of his shares in the Lone Gully Company and half of the remained of his fortune, and also do his best to incline Miss Sybil Grant to give him her hand. On these terms Mr Durant would say nothing of the somewhat important secret he had discovered. He added that he proposed to go to Scotland on that or the forthcoming day, and he would then hear his decision. He had little doubt what that decision must be.

More in a spirit of mischief than from any other motive Mr Durant added a postscript to the effect that if Mr Mitchell wished to keep Inveroran as his share of the spoils the castle and estate must be valued, so that an equivalent in cash might be paid to him.

Having despatched this letter, Durrant set about making preparations for his journey north.

When the Italian was left alone by his tormentor he gave himself up to a fit of rage. Throwing himself upon the floor he tore his hair and cursed the man who had come and boasted of his success with the woman he had loved so long. The glitter of the sovereign thrown down by Durant caught his eye. He seized it, and opening the window flung it with a fresh curse into the street. He could not rest, not even sit down, and was for the time like a madman.

Then his fit changed. He grew calm and became master of himself, and immediately he resolved that he would start for Scotland at once and if possible reach Inveroran before Durant. He would then ascertain whether Durant was telling the truth—whether Sybil loved him, or was willing to marry him. He would at the same time plead his own cause. If Sybil did not love him now what hope was there that she would ever come to love him? That interview must decide his fate.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PROFESSOR LEARNS HIS FATE.

"A gentleman, ma'am, to see you," said the parlourmaid, handing a card to Sybil. She took it and bit her lip. She knew that Miss Dalrymple, and Sidney too, for that matter, were watching her curiously, and for the moment she did not trust herself to speak.

"Did you show the gentleman into the library?" she asked the servant.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Very good. Tell him that I shall see him immediately. A gentleman I knew in Italy," she went on, answering Miss Dalrymple's unspoken question. "I wonder how he came to know that I was staying here."

With these words she rose and crossing the floor left the room and went slowly towards the library. She wished that the professor had stayed in London, all the more because her conscience was by no means easy with respect to him. She had made use of him, and now she felt that she would like to drop him, and she felt ashamed when she confessed as much to herself. It was in vain that she told herself that he had offered her his services with his eyes open, and that it would be absurd to maintain that she was bound to return the affection of any man from whom she accepted a favour. Her feeling was that, none the less, she had, by accepting the professor's offers of help, placed herself in a very disagreeable position.

She opened the door and went forward timidly into the room. The Italian sprang up as soon as he caught sight of her and was by her side in a moment.

"You are not looking well; you are anxious about something," were his first words.

"No," she said, smiling. "Nothing has happened lately. I told you what I had overheard of the conversation between Mr Mitchell and the factor, but nothing has come of it. Mr Mitchell seemed to have forgotten in the morning that he had something of importance to say to my sister and me. We have heard nothing more of it since, and I have persuaded my sister to stay on here and keep me company, for it is dreadfully dull here in winter."

"That I can understand," said the Italian, and as he spoke he took from his pocket the packet of Australian newspapers which Sybil had sent him, and laid it on the table. "This is a dreary, melancholy land. Why not come with me to Italy—to Italy, where it is always spring—to Italy, the land of music, of flowers, of love! What holds you to this wretched country, which for half the year is uninhabitable? Tell me, Sybil, that you will come with me."

Sybil said nothing, and sat with her eyes fixed on the floor. She did not dare to raise them and encounter the living flame which she knew was burning in the eyes that were reading her face as though they would pierce to her very soul.

She thought it best to affect to misunderstand him.

"Yes, it is true," she said, throwing her arms over her head with a pretence of stretching herself in weariness. "It is very dull here and Italy is very gay and very charming, and it would be delightful to have done with this miserable scheming and suspecting and plotting and counter plotting."

"Ah, so it would," cried the professor. "And what have you gained by it? Nothing. Is it not so? Nothing."

"Not much, certainly."

"With me, on the contrary, in sunny Italy, this wretched intriguing would be heard of no more. We would spend our days in music and painting and in gathering grapes and flowers."

Sybil shook her head and laughed rather hysterically. "You would tire of that in a week," she cried.

"But I would not tire of you, my angel, my queen."

The fiery Southern blood had at last overleapt the restraint of prudence, and unconsciously the Italian went back to his beautiful mother tongue, pouring out in its soft, liquid tones the lava torrent that rose in his burning heart.

Sybil listened, and something of her lover's passion thrilled her soul. She lifted her eyes and saw a middle aged, sallow cheeked man, whose hair was turning grey—a man she did not love and never could love. As she looked her heart became harder and harder till it felt like a stone.

"Please say no more, Signor Zucatti," she said, when the Italian paused for an instant in mid-stream. "I am very sorry, but you know that what you ask is impossible."

Signor Zucatti did what nineteen men out of twenty would have done in the like case. He stopped short, drew himself up a little, and asked in a harsh, dry voice, very unlike that in which he had been pleading, "Why impossible?"

"Because—because—" How could she tell the man that his age was in itself a sufficient barrier to a union between them, that he was queer and decidedly ugly, and that she would rather die than marry him?

At that moment Signor Zucatti recognised for the first time that his cause was hopeless. He knew that he would never clasp that beautiful form in his arms, never rain down kisses on that fair face turned up to meet his own, and the sharp steel entered into his soul.

For a little while he was speechless. And then a great tidal wave of jealous wrath arose in his heart and swept all before it. He was ready to sacrifice anything—Sybil's regard, his very life, as a victim to this fierce resentment.

Sybil, mistaking his silence for a wordless reproach, nervously put away the packet of newspapers he had restored to her, and then in stammering words began trying to excuse herself, telling him how grateful she was, and ever would be, for the help he had given her in the time of her need, but he sternly interrupted her.

"Tell me this one thing. Has this man—there is no need to mention names—has he stolen your heart? Do you love him?"

Sybil thought he was speaking of Ronald Keith.

"How—could you—know?" she faltered.

"Is it true?" he demanded fiercely.

Sybil was prepared to bear much from the Italian, for she knew she had good reason to be grateful to him, but his peremptory tone stung her into a quick response.

"Yes, it is true. I see no reason to be ashamed of it."

On the instant his voice fell, and became soft as a mother's when she speaks to her favourite child. "Ashamed? No. There is no reason for you to be ashamed. But for him—he has cause, not for shame, but for fear. I cannot live without the hope of winning you, my angel, and I shall not die alone. I will kill him. He at least shall never be your husband. I swear it."

At first Sybil did not think he was serious. She put down what he said as Southern exaggeration—the ravings of a disappointed man. But when she looked in the Italian's face and marked the wild, fiery resolution that was in his eye she trembled.

"You cannot mean what you say?" she stammered out. "You would not be so wicked."

"Hear her! A man steals my purse, or a turnip from my field,

or a chicken from my hen roost. He is put in prison. Perhaps, if the theft is a serious one, he is sent to penal servitude. But if a man steals what is dearer to me than life, the law cannot touch him, and if I try to avenge my honour and revenge myself for the intolerable wrong done to me you cry out, 'How wicked.'"

He left his seat and resting one hand on the table at his side spoke in a firm, equable tone, as though he had been discussing something of grave and sober interest.

"Do you remember the day you came to me in London, when I read your fate in your hand?"

"Yes, I remember it only too well. I wish with all my heart that I had never seen the house, the street, in which you live. It may be ungrateful to say so, but I can't help it."

A spasm crossed the Italian's face as he listened, but he made no reply. He went on, in even, regular tones, as if she had not spoken.

"On that day our fate was revealed. Do you not remember what you saw in the crystal—what I saw, for I will acknowledge that I saw it, too? There was nothing supernatural in the production of the picture ——" He broke off suddenly, and muttered, as if speaking to himself: "How can I tell what is supernatural and what is not? The image was natural, for the picture was real. But how was it that that picture, of all the others, should have escaped destruction? How was it that, without intending it, Pietro put that slide in place of the right one that day? If ever a fate was foreshadowed it was yours and mine that day!"

The last words, uttered aloud, were addressed directly to Sybil; and the girl shrank back and turned pale. She had not forgotten the mysteriously fading scene—the woman crouching behind the rock, the form of a man lying stiff and motionless before her, and the white, evil face peering over the edge of the precipice. She shuddered, and shrank farther away from the calm, impassive man standing over her.

"The day must come," said the Italian, "when that vision must translate itself into actual fact. And that day is at hand. The vision must be fulfilled. The man who would marry you dies by my hand."

The Italian paused, and when he next spoke it was with the voice of one to whom the actual is a phantom, and the visions of his memory and his imagination the real.

"I know the place—the very spot," he said, in quiet, dreamy tones. "You know it, too. The Black Corrie. We have been there together—do you remember?—in the summer time. He will come to me there. And he shall die."

Sybil stole a look at him; and calm as was his voice, she saw a gleam in his eye that was to her the index and the menace of madness. Again she shuddered, and hid her face.

The sound of a closing door told her that she might look up. Yes, he had gone. She was alone. The man who had been her friend and her helper had gone out into the winter twilight with murder in his heart and in his eyes.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"THIS MAKES A DIFFERENCE."

The short gloaming was already changing into night, but it was not dark. The moon was rising, and the glamour of her shining was stealing over the steel-blue expanse of the loch, the far, shadowy mountain tops, and the bare hill sides.

Sybil stood at one of the windows of the Castle that looked down on the loch. Its shadowy, mysterious beauty entered into her soul. She had been shaken by her interview with Signor Zucatti, who had left her but an hour since, but she had now recovered her self-control. The sadness, however, and the fear that the Professor would do some mad thing that would bring about the fulfilment of his own prophecy, remained with her. The Italian was gone out of her life. In all probability she would never see him again. But his influence had not left her. She still seemed to see that tall, spare form; the calm, even voice, which she had instinctively felt to be to the man's utterance what a mask would have been to his features, still haunted her. When she closed her eyes she saw that face, with the strange light gleaming in the deep-set wells beneath his brows.

As she stood there watching the first glimmer of silver sheen on the loch from the rising moon, she was startled by a tall figure appearing in the carriage drive—someone taller than the laird, and not nearly so stout as the factor. Who could it be? Sybil wondered, for hardly any man's foot, putting aside the laird and the factor, had trod the gravel on the drive since the beginning of winter.

Was it possible ——?

The girl drew back hastily, and the next moment bent forward, her eyes flashing, and her heart beating wildly. Another minute and she was sure—it was he!

What object could have brought this young man of fashion to that remote Highland glen in the depth of winter but the master passion of humanity? "It must be me he is coming to see! It must! It must! It can only be me!" Over and over again these words rang in her ears, and the beating of her heart seemed as though it would stifle her. But she crossed the room and sat down by the fire with a demeanour as calm and composed as if she were going to receive a visit from a dressmaker.

"Is that actually you, Mr. Keith?" cried Sybil, when the young man was ushered into the library. "How good of you to come and cheer our loneliness!"

"So you have been a bit lonely?" said the Honourable Ronald, coming forward and holding out his hand.

"Lonely isn't the word for it. I have been on a desert island since you—and your sister—left us in September. I'm sure there are plenty of desert islands twice as lively as Inveroran Castle in winter. So you know what you have to expect. Shall I tell them to put you into your old room?"

"Wouldn't that be a little premature, seeing that Mr. Mitchell is not at home?" asked Ronald, with a touch of nervousness. This was so unusual a failing with him that Sybil could not help noticing it.

"You mean, taking a liberty? What nonsense! Surely you know that Mr Mitchell would be glad to see you here at any time. And you can't imagine that we are not all glad to see you."

"Are you really?"

"Of course we are."

"And you—Sidney?"

The name made Sybil start. She had forgotten that he knew her by the name of Sidney. But she merely answered quietly, "Of course, I am glad to see you."

"I am happy to hear it, for I have something to say to you. I have come a long way to say it—"

The speaker came to a halt, as if he found a difficulty in expressing himself.

"Don't you think I had better give orders for your room to be prepared?" asked Sybil by way of relieving the tension.

The Honourable Ronald roused himself. "No; not yet," he said. "I may stay to-night, but I may not. It is possible that I may go over to Glenartney and ask them to put me up."

"But how could you get there to-night?"

"I could walk. It is not far."

"The path leads by the Lodge, doesn't it—past the Black Corrie?" The last words forced themselves from the girl's lips.

Her lover looked at her in surprise, for she was very pale, but he answered, "Yes," and his next words made Sybil forget what he had just said.

"I think you can guess what I have come here to say. It is the old story, Sidney. I love you. You are dearer to me than all the world. Will you be my wife, Sidney?"

Sybil was trembling from head to foot. She could not yet accept the love that was lying at her feet.

"Do you know who I am?" she said, in a strange, unsteady voice.

"I know only this—that you are the dearest and sweetest, as you are the handsomest girl in the world," and he rose impulsively and seized her hands, longing to fold her in his arms.

"Stop a moment," and she gently pushed him away. "You know that I have no family—that I am nobody; but are you sure you know even my name?"

"Why, yes, of course! Sidney Grant."

"No. My name is Sybil. I took my sister's name without her consent for a purpose of my own—so that I might gain a footing here."

"Sidney! I mean—are you telling me the truth?"

"The simple, literal truth."

"And does Mr Mitchell know this?"

"He knows it now."

His words went like a stab to Sybil's heart, not for themselves, but for the tone they were spoken in.

"It is very strange," said the young man, regarding her with wide-open eyes and parted lips.

"Yes, it is strange." And there are other strange things," said the girl. It was evident from her voice that the strain was telling on her. She was becoming hysterical. "There are other strange things," she repeated, "things which perhaps you ought to know. My mother—but you had better read it for yourself."

She rose, and taking the packet of Australian papers from behind a pile of books, she put it into Ronald's hands. "Read the marked passages," she said, drawing herself up to her full height, and looking her lover straight in the face, "and then come to me and tell me that you love me—if you can. But I will tell you this—that I believe my mother to have been innocent of the crime she was charged with. And it shall be the object of my life to free her memory from that terrible stain. Now, read."

There was no lamp or candle in the room, but the pine branches on the hearth gave sufficient light to read by. Without looking at her Ronald Keith took the newspapers and bent down to read them. She saw him give an involuntary start and grow pale. She heard him draw his breath with a sound like a sob; but he said nothing and she remained silent.

When the last word had been read he mechanically folded up the papers and gave them back to her. Then he rose and stood before her, his eyes on the ground.

"Thank you very much for telling me this," he said speaking slowly and painfully. "It was very good of you. Very few girls would have done such a thing. I need't say that the secret is safe with me, and I hope from my heart that you will be successful in—in clearing your mother's memory."

There was a long pause and then he went on, his voice husky, and scarcely louder than a whisper:

"Of course, this makes—a difference. One could never be sure when a thing of that kind would come out, and I have—my family to consider. Perhaps it would not be fair to them to say nothing about it; and, yet, of course, they cannot be told. I think I had better take a day or two to think over what had better be done."

To all this Sybil answered nothing. She was not silent from indignation; she was conscious of a gnawing pain, a dreadful sense that the light of her life's happiness was going out, and that soon it would be all darkness. There were no doubt some conventional words of farewell spoken, but she could not afterwards remember whether it was or not. The last thing she remembered saying to Ronald Keith was: "Read; and then come and tell me that you love me—if you can!"

Again she was alone.

She was dimly conscious that she had heard the sound of wheels, and that someone came and told her that Mr Mitchell had come back from Glasgow, and had immediately gone out, without saying where he was going, or when he would return. She listened like one in a dream, and fell to brooding over the fire again.

Suddenly she started, and sat upright. She had forgotten the Italian and his threats of vengeance. If Zucatti had been a Scotchman she would have given little weight to what he had said in the bitterness of his disappointment. But she had lived long enough in Italy to know that such threats were not always made in vain. And she remembered only too well the look in the Italian's eyes. Besides, Ronald Keith must pass (if he carried out his intention of going to Glenartney that night) the very spot which Zucatti's superstitious forebodings had made him select as the scene of his revenge. He must pass the Black Corrie! He had said so!

Sybil sprang to her feet, and hurried towards the door, but ere she reached it she stopped short. Surely it was too late! Unless Ronald had gone back to the inn, and made a fresh start from there, he must have passed the Black Corrie long since. But then, he might have gone to the inn, and so delayed his start; or—and she shuddered to think of it—he might be lying wounded and helpless in the Black Corrie, and if so might die before he was found. She felt that unless she wished to be an accomplice in his death she must go and see whether he had passed the fatal spot. She might be in time to warn him.

Without saying a word to anyone, she put on her hat and her thick boots and a warm cloak, and set out for the path that led up to Durant's shooting lodge, and thence by the head of a lonely, uninhabited valley, to Glenartney.

It was bitterly cold, and Sybil drew her cloak more closely around her as she hurried on. The moon was fairly up now, and the road was clear, though the snow lay thickly in the hollows, and more sparsely on the bare hillsides. As she went her fears increased. Oh, why did she not think of this before Ronald left her? How was it that the warnings uttered by the Italian had made so slight an impression on her? Her mind had been full of other things. But what if Ronald should come to his death through her neglect? She should feel like a murderess!

With panting breath she struggled on, till at length she came to the spot. The Black Corrie, a pot-like hollow in the hill, lay to the right. She could see far above her the great boulder that lay on the margin of the path between it and the steep edge of the corrie. Surely, she thought, there could be no danger now? In any case, she was in time. No one was in sight.

The path was slippery with half-melted ice, as well as steep; so she left the well-defined track and took to the hill-side, meaning to cut off a corner, and in this way save some yards. She was now at the lower opening of the corrie; the big boulder, her landmark, was nearer now, right above her, and slightly to the left.

The ground was rough with fallen stones, and she had to pick her way carefully, for the moon was behind a cloud.

She was standing in some uncertainty, thinking that she had gone too far and must go back in order to return to the path, when the loud report of a gun echoed over the hill; and the next moment the body of a man appeared on the very edge of the precipice at the side of the path. For an instant it paused, then fell headlong down—down—down.

Sybil looked up, her hands clasped, speechless from horror. Then the face of another man appeared, peering round the big boulder, as if to see whether he had finished his work. Sybil gazed at him like one fascinated, though she was too far off to distinguish the features. Then the face suddenly disappeared, and a wild eldritch screech went up to heaven. It was echoed from below. With that one scream Sybil had fallen like a dead woman on the snow.

(To be concluded.)

Copyright Story.

LIFE'S PROMISE.

By JEAN MIDDLEMASS.

Author of "Hush Money," Etc.

"Gold on her head, and gold at her feet,
And gold where the hems of her kirtle meet,
And a golden girdle around my sweet."

She was an only child, and life's promise was without a cloud.

Her parents were in a high position, and a Princess had held her at the font.

Now she stood on the threshold of hope, and the first dawn of womanhood and love slowly approached her, mistily and mysteriously, as comes the opening morn. Those around her whispered that Elfie Dashwood, the Birkenhall heiress, would, ere long, make what society calls "a brilliant marriage," and with her beauty, her bright intelligence and her gold, would perchance, even mate with royalty itself.

But, whatever contact with the world might mould her into later on, Elfie was, as yet, a visionary. She dwelt in the mystic land of dreams, where ambitions had no place.

To be happy—ay, to be happy, was all she craved—and life's promise was fair.

She was sweet, sympathetic and gentle, "so unfit," everyone said, "to buffet with the tempests that not infrequently surge around a woman's path, that it was well she would never need to face them."

Mr Dashwod and Lady Elvira both had become devoted to their sweet young daughter. How could they do otherwise since, among other gifts, that of softly gliding into every heart had been given to her? For awhile, during her early childhood, her parents had been cold, so cold that the neighbours had cried shame on them. They could not forgive Elfie for being a girl—a boy surely were the correct inheritor of their great wealth, the transmitter of their name, for Mr Dashwood's money had, like that of many another Englishman, been derived from successful trade in which his grandfather had embarked, and he had looked forward to further generations of Dashwoods and their alliances with aristocrats.

Neither Mr Dashwood nor Lady Elvira were wanting in ambition, and it puzzled them not a little that their child should be so absolutely insensible to its promptings. Of late years they had somewhat set their disappointment on one side, or, rather, they had merged it into the hope that Elfie would even surprise society by the position she would attain by marriage.

Their town house in Belgrave Square was re-decorated and refurnished as though for the reception of a Queen—a ball was to be given, to which all the great ones of England would be invited, and at this ball Elfie would make her debut, since her presentation at Court could not, owing to official arrangements, take place for a month.

While the many preparations that these coming events necessitated, were in progress, Elfie dwelt on at Birkenhall, as though in wilful ignorance of what was expected of her, and she asked no questions, and apparently took no interest in details.

A pretty white washing frock and a large flapping straw hat, were far more to Elfie's taste than the dainty and original toilettes of Worth and Paquin. Nor even when they were tried on, or she saw the lovely gowns littering about her dressing-room, did she wholly realise that they were meant for her.

Devoted though she was to her simple-minded, loving daughter, Lady Elvira was becoming bored, and just a little bit angry at the absence of interest on Elfie's part.

"Every other girl adores finery and gaiety," she said, petulantly. "I wonder what you are made of, Elfie, that you are so callous about your own interests. Why don't you take a page out of Lucy Fortescue's book?"

"Oh, mother, Lucy is going to marry Sir Edward Burleigh."

"And a very sensible young woman, too. That is just what I mean, she knows her own interest, you do not.'

"Is marriage one's interest? Marriage without love?"

A sad, querying look came into the sweet face, that irritated Lady Elvira, when it ought to have pained and sorrowed her.

She, however, had the wisdom to say no more. Time and the rush of events would soon change Elfie's opinions—she hoped and fully believed.

The short maternal lecture at an end, Elfie strolled into the grounds, her favourite deerhound by her side.

It was spring-tide.

"When daffodils begin to peer
With heigh the doxy over the dale,"

but, on Elfie's face, Nature's smile was scarcely reflected. She was sad—sad at the thought of leaving Birkenhall, for she scarcely looked forward to pleasurable emotions being evoked by a participation in the gay frivolities of a London season.

At the bottom of a little copse there was a gate. Elfie stood for awhile beside this gate, and, leaning over it, looked yearningly at the vast expanse of meadow that lay beyond, as though she were bidding it a long farewell.

Walking rapidly out of the far horizon, there came a figure, the sight of which brought the crimson colour to Elfie's brow. She turned as though about to take instant flight. Then, on second thoughts, she stopped.

"Why should she not stay? Why not bid him good-bye with the rest of the old life?"

He was a well-built, handsome young fellow, and as he approached the gate and stood beside Elfie, no one could gainsay, but that they were thoroughly well-matched in beauty of form. Yet Giles Moberley was only the son of the worthy man who worked the Home Farm—and Elfie was the heiress of Birkenhall!

"I am going to London next Tuesday, Giles. Going to have a ball given in my honour, and to be presented to Her Majesty. I am glad to have met you now to say good-bye."

She spoke fast, as though she wished to get the announcement over, but her tones were very gentle.

"Going, Elfie—going! What shall I do without you?"

So it had come to that! The son of one of Mr. Dashwood's dependents called his daughter—"Elfie." It scarcely augured well for the future. A cloud, even though it appeared no bigger than a man's hand, lay athwart life's promise.

"You will have to do without me, dear boy," she said, softly. "We have been happy playmates, but play days are nearly over for us both."

Giles knew it as well as she did, nevertheless he did not wish to accept it. He loved Elfie Dashwood, the beautiful heiress, not for her money's sake, or because she was of high position, but for herself—for her beauty, her tenderness, her charm. Little more than a boy, as Giles was, he had not yet discovered how unsoundable was the depth that lay like an abyss between him and Mr. Dashwood's daughter. To him, as well as to Elfie, life was full of promise, and the hope that sprang up in his heart gave him the belief that he should win her.

It was a mad, foolish expectation, in which none but an inexperienced youth would have indulged. If his father, the honest farmer, had even guessed it, he would have sent him across the seas out of the way of temptation. But a crisis was at hand.

Even as Giles was murmuring, "Oh, Elfie, my beloved Elfie, I can never live without you," Mr. Dashwood came up.

He had not heard the words, or probably he would, in a fit of passion, have killed the youth for his temerity; but he saw the expression on the faces of the two culprits, and it was enough. He spoke roughly. Giles, who had till now been a favourite, became an outlaw from the good graces of the lord of the soil, who forthwith ordered him in future to keep within bounds of the palings that surrounded the Home Farm, and not to dare to leave them until an arrangement for his expulsion from the neighbourhood had been arrived at with Farmer Moberley. It was a harsh verdict, harshly pronounced, and scarcely wise treatment, had Mr. Dashwood known aught of the young fellow's temperament.

A few kind words of admonition would have won Giles to see how foolish were his aspirations. Now, as he raised his hat in deference to his superior's dictum, and then walked sullenly away, it was with anger and hatred at his heart.

In the very midst of Mr. Dashwood's own people an enemy had arisen, and a regrettable warfare anent class-distinctions had already begun; with no giving in on Giles Moberly's part.

"I will win her, so help me God, unless I die in the effort—I will win her."

Meanwhile Mr Dashwood was no less irate, storming and fuming with rage.

"How dare he—how dare he presume ——," he muttered repeatedly, as he walked by Elfie's side towards the house. She did not answer him. She was crying softly, without sobs or wails or protests.

It was the first disruption she had as yet known, and to face it was a cruel effort.

If only she might comfort Giles, was her longing.

With her father's anger she had no sympathy. To Elfie, in her ignorance and simplicity, class distinctions were incomprehensible.

Yet she did not know that she loved Giles Moberley; save as a playmate, she had never thought of him—only from this sudden thwarting had love suddenly burst into being, and though she tried to tell herself that she only wanted to comfort Giles, she could not rid herself of the feeling that she was sadly in want of comfort herself. Nor did she obtain it from Lady Elvira, who was even more angry than was Mr. Dashwood, when an account of the little episode was given to her; being a practical woman, she did not waste her anger in mere words.

She advanced the time of the start to London, arriving in Belgrave Square on Saturday afternoon, when the servants—who had not expected her till Tuesday—had by no means finished the preparations.

It was not long, however, before Elfie, in her pretty new toilettes, was taken about from one social function to another.

Lady Elvira had not intended that she should be seen until the night of the ball, but the little affaire with Giles Moberley had, from her standpoint, completely changed the complexion of affairs. The Prince, or Duke, for Lady Elvira would consider no one in a less elevated position, must be found, at once.

"If Elfie has no sense of what is socially expected of her, she must be married forthwith, and put out of danger."

So Lady Elvira told her husband, to perceive, however, that her dictum was not received with the amount of consideration it usually obtained, for, in the Dashwood family, Lady Elvira's word had ever been law.

A day or two after the incident by the gate, Mr. Dashwood began to look anxious and worried, which was not his wont, he being, as a rule, an easy-going, kindly man.

"Could it be possible that Mr. Dashwood had relented, and was on Elfie's side in the matter? Nonsense, this was wholly impossible," Lady Elvira could not bring herself to believe it, "the affair was very trifling, mere childish silliness. Elfie herself had already forgotten it, impressed as she must be by her new surroundings.

So reasoned this worldly mother, even against her own convictions, knowing full well as she did that ever since that eventful afternoon the cloud had not lifted from Elfie's brow, and that she took no interest in the sayings and doings of the new world into which she had entered.

But worried about Elfie as Lady Elvira was, though she would not acknowledge it, she was far more worried about her husband. As days went on, the shadows on his brow seemed to darken rather than to lighten, and on the night of the ball he looked so livid and ill, that not a few of his intimates questioned him closely about his health. "Dashwood must have got some internal complaint," was the general verdict.

Ay, so he had, but not of the nature they suspected. Even amid the gay and festive throng that had flocked to his house at Lady Elvira's bidding, he could not throw off the weight that oppressed him.

Lady Elvira, with her woman's cleverness, was afar more successful in concealing her feelings, or perhaps she set them entirely on one side and revelled in the pleasure she experienced, for Lady Elvira loved to entertain, and on this occasion the pleasure was considerably enhanced by the admiration Elfie was receiving.

More than one great parti bowed before the debutante, but it was on Lord Claymore that Lady Elvira smiled. A kinsman of her own, he was heir to his grandfather's dukedom, and had been destined for Elfie—in Lady Elvira's mind—ever since they were both children.

Owing to some manoeuvring on Lady Elvira's part, he had not seen Elfie for more than two years. Reculer pour mieux sauter was a French saying in which this astute lady thoroughly believed, and when Elfie suddenly crossed the young lord's path, a vision of beauty and sweetness, the impression she at once made on him filled the maternal heart with joy.

"His dukedom and Elfie's thousands—could any amalgamation be more desirable? Of course the family will be quite delighted to receive Elfie as the future duchess, for the duke's lands are heavily mortgaged, and Elfie is one of themselves, not a mere American heiress."

The last guest had departed and Elfie had gone to bed more weary than elated by her first peep at fashionable life. Lady Elvira threw her arms about her husband's neck, though she was not wont to be demonstrative.

"It is as good as settled," she said. "Claymore is quite epris. Of course it will be a match."

"So soon! Oh, Elvira, you are too sanguine," and the feeblest effort at a smile played round Mr Dashwood's lips.

"Really, John you are too tiresome. You never will believe anything, not even where our dearest child is concerned will you relax your scepticism.

I suppose you will withhold your consent for some imaginary and foolish reason?"

"As no marriage for Elfie will I more gladly give my consent if it is asked, and there are no difficulties in the way, for I know Claymore to be a worthy, honourable young fellow, always straight about money, though he is as poor as a church mouse; but—"

"Oh, that dreadful word. Why but? And why do you look so jaded and tired? I feel quite brisk."

"I suppose I am tired. Let us discuss the subject at another time when there are more details, for I presume Claymore has not yet proposed."

"Of course not, but he will; I know he will," and she went off, humming gaily and bestowing no further thought on Mr Dashwood's weary appearance. Nor did she apparently hear a deep sigh that escaped him as she left the room.

The London season ebbed and flowed on in its usual manner, its votaries being now elated by some burning scandal, now depressed by the monotony of the old routine. Lord Claymore was devoted to Elfie, but to Lady Elvira's surprised annoyance he had not yet "spoken." She felt the more annoyed, perhaps, because she was obliged to keep her feelings pent up.

Elfie would not respond on the subject of Lord Claymore as a lover, though she delighted in the lovely flowers "her cousin" Claymore constantly sent her. It was probably the essential essence of cousinliness with which he saw the young girl was pervaded that kept Claymore from giving expression to his matrimonial feelings. Nor could Lady Elvira do aught, even by occasional sharp lectures. Thus she was compelled to let matters drift, and drift they did, into a channel for which she was scarcely prepared.

"The season was nearly at an end. Surely it would be settled then," she supposed. And so it was, but not in a manner she had in the very least anticipated.

Lord Claymore did propose, but not to Elfie. Urged by his family, who saw wealth for him in this alliance, he went straight to Mr Dashwood, laid his prospective strawberry leaves at his feet and asked him if he would place them on Elfie's brow, since she was too coldly indifferent for him to seek to do so himself.

Mr Dashwood had just returned from a few days' absence during which he had been to look after the large ironworks in the North, from which the bulk of his fortune was derived. He had not been in the habit of going there very often, leaving the management for the most part, to agents, as is the wont of rich men; but of late he had paid the works several visits.

He had been travelling all night, and having breakfasted alone in his study, was sitting with the morning paper in his hand looking even more tired and pale than he had been doing of late.

Under these circumstances the unexpected descent at his feet of a coronet of strawberry leaves was at the least startling. It should, of course, have given him pleasure, but it apparently caused pain.

He winced, and then he looked with a benign expression into Lord Claymore's handsome, young face, for Mr. Dashwood was a kindly man, who was always ready to take the larger share of any trouble.

"My poor boy," he said, and he patted Claymore affectionately on the shoulder.

"Mr. Dashwood, you do not—you cannot mean—that she does not care for me."

"I do not know about my little Elfie—but it is useless, my boy. Your people will never consent to the marriage, even if I do so."

"But they are most anxious——"

"Were anxious, yes. To-day—by this time, they will urge you to forget the existence of——"

He stopped. Emotion was too strong, feebleness came over him, and he lay back half fainting in his chair.

Lord Claymore was so astonished that, for the moment, he could offer no assistance. Meanwhile Mr. Dashwood recovered sufficiently to murmur two or three words of explanation.

"Bankruptcy," he muttered—"ruin to-day."

Then the man who had been struggling for weeks with a heavy load of responsibility and trouble, succumbed to its weight and lay back in his chair inert and unconscious. There could be no further thought about the offer of strawberry leaves—not then, or perhaps ever.

Lord Claymore summoned the butler, who, in his turn, went for Lady Elvira. Mr. Dashwood was taken to his bed, her ladyship giving the usual explanation: "He is only tired—so foolish to travel all night."

Nevertheless she called in the family doctor, in fact before many hours were over several doctors and nurses had invaded the house, but so lately instinct with joy and laughter.

None of the professional comers had, however, learnt the secret of how a broken heart can be cured.

Not for his own sake, but for Elfie's, had Mr. Dashwood suffered his losses so acutely, and now that bankruptcy was imminent he had not the strength to face it, but lay passive and uncomplaining for a while, till death came to end the torture of mind which, Lady Elvira, keen-sighted though she usually was, had never perceived. She had therefore inadvertently added to his sufferings by withholding sympathy. Now she was all tears and regrets, but whether for her own lost position or for the loss of her husband, those who knew her queried.

But it was on sweet Elfie that all kindly thoughts were bestowed. She was heart-broken.

"I loved him so—I loved him so," was all that she could wail, and when her lost thousands were mentioned she looked wonderingly as though astonished that the loss of them, in the face of this far greater loss, should engender a regret. Elfie had never loved show and pomp; the life of a mere country maiden, with a few hundreds a year which might be saved from the wreck, was far more to her taste.

That the strawberry leaves had been offered she never knew, therefore the fact that they were never again laid at her feet did not surprise her. Lord Claymore was very kind and solicitous and cousinly at the time of the death, but how could he, a poor man himself, wed with poverty?

"It has been a lucky escape," people said.

Probably he echoed the sentiment, for he eventually married an American heiress. Yet he was "an honourable man, so are they all—all honourable men," those who are accepted as the "curled darlings" of London's fashionable society.

A very few weeks after Mr. Dashwood's death, Lady Elvira and her sympathetic, loving daughter settled down in a pretty cottage, over the porch of which a Virginia creeper gracefully trailed. It belonged to Lady Elvira's brother, and he offered it to her as a refuge in this hour of storm—a refuge for which she seemed scarcely grateful, since her entire time was passed in bewailing the height from which she had fallen, and regretting the money she had lost. Not even Elfie's witcheries and gentle patience could wean her from the constant contemplation of her own losses.

Of course, Elfie could not marry now, "moneyless girls never marry."

So she decided, and even in her mind gave up the husband quest. From a young-looking, fashionable woman she lapsed into a dowdy, irritable old frump, with whom it was not easy to deal, so everyone avoided her, save the angelic daughter who devoted her life to the amelioration of her mother's lot. Occasionally relations, who happened to be visiting in the neighbourhood, would pay them a visit, and, experiencing some regret for Elfie's changed fate, would invite her to stay with them, for Elfie was more beautiful than ever; her sweet, grave face had become, as it were, "spiritualised by sorrow." She would, however, shake her head and gently decline their invitation.

She could not leave her mother, she told them. Moreover, what to other girls would have been tempting, Elfie set on one side with no feeling of disappointment. Her peep into London fashionable society had not afforded so much pleasure that she wished to repeat her experience. So months passed, even years. To Elfie the time had scarcely seemed long, filled up as it had been by the accomplishment of good works and the engagement in rural pursuits. Yet never a word had reached her from Giles Moberley. "Playmate of her childhood as he had been, he might have sent a word of sympathy when the dear father died and trouble came," so she had often thought during the earlier weeks at the cottage. Of late she had sought to put Giles out of her thoughts, as she did all the dear remembrances of Birkenhall.

And the even life in which Promise no longer existed, calmly glided on its monotonous way, till change once more was noted on the horizon. Lady Elvira looked each day more and more shrunk and ailing, making claims for attention on her devoted child, that were well-nigh sapping all the strength out of her young life.

Then one late evening, when the setting sun

"Reddened the fiery hues and shot
Transparence through the golden,"

she died, and Elfie was alone.

Relations came and went, but she remained on at the Cottage, almost morbidly revelling in her loneliness.

"She would not impose her presence on others while the hand of grief lay so heavily upon her, perhaps later she would come."

So she said repeatedly until they were all gone, and she stood by the little rustic cottage porch watching the last departure.

A sigh was on her lips, tears in her clear, sweet eyes.

"Would she be able to bear it, the dead quiet, the hushed voices, yet what had she in common with the rich and——?"

An arm was round her, she was clasped to a warm heart.

In terror for a moment she felt inclined to scream, then the cry of "Giles" rose to her quivering lips.

He had come at last to solace her. Where had he been during all these years?

"Working for my love," he answered, "heaping up riches that she may gather them—no, not riches, Elfie, but enough to keep the wolf from the door, and comfort in the home. Will you trust me and come with me——"

"To the world's end, Giles."

"It is well," he said laughing. "For it is on a long, long journey that I am inviting you: away to distant Florida, I have found a farm and prosperity. It is a fair and lovely spot, my Elfie, not perhaps altogether resembling lost Birkenhall, but beautiful after another fashion. No dukes or lordships flitting about, but honest folk notwithstanding, who will give us friendly greeting."

It was evident that Giles knew more about Elfie's history than she knew herself, for of Lord Claymore's escape from wedding her she was absolutely ignorant.

She only knew that he was wedded, and she was thankful.

None of her rich relations made any objection to her marriage with Giles Moberley; of course, among themselves, they called it a mesalliance, but then they decided that "as she was going to Florida we need never mention her!"

So they sent her handsome presents in testimony of their goodwill, but on the day of her departure as a wife they did not honour the "send-off" with their presence.

Elfie, however, was perfectly happy and content. She wanted no more on earth, since Giles, the playmate of her childhood, was by her side, and though for her Life's Promise had scarcely been fulfilled, yet the new vista that the future opened out to her was not marred by a single regret.

Complete Story.

A DUAL DECEPTION.

By CHARLES LAVELL.

CHAPTER I.

It was evident to Mrs Scannen, as she peered through her Venetians at No. 21 across the road, that young Mr Heyde-Paulker had come home this afternoon in a shocking temper, and that gossipy old lady felt, or imagined she felt, a thrill of pity for his wife, as the gentleman whom she eyed with such interest closed his gate with a crash, and proceeded up the garden path. Now, if Mr Scannen (poor man!) had ever come home like that Mr Charles Augustus Heyde-Paulker closed the door noisily, and thumped his walking-stick into the rack, whilst the same unnecessary vigour accompanied the opening of the sitting-room door. He was a good-looking, sprucely dressed young man of about seven-and-twenty, and his features wore an expression of vexation and trouble, which had not escaped the sharp eyes of his inquisitive neighbour.

The sitting-room was in partial darkness, contrasting strongly with the sunlit atmosphere he had just left, and this state of things seemed to, if anything, add to his displeasure.

"Well, Hetty, how are you this afternoon?" he said, with a ring of indifference in his tones, addressing a rather pretty girl, who lay upon a sofa drawn under the carefully shaded window.

"How noisy you are, Charley! No one would think, to hear you come in, that I am as ill as I can be," she said, fretfully, pressing a white hand to her brow. "I am certainly no better, and I think you might be a little quieter in your movements."

"Sorry, dear, but I fancy you'd make a noise if you had dropped a cool hundred over 'Doras,' as I have today. I'm sick and tired of the whole business, and if this state of things continues it means ruin—blue ruin," and he dropped into an easy-chair, and with cruel indifference to his wife's helplessness flicked his boots with one of her favourite antimacassars.

She lay with closed eyes, oblivious of the sacrilege, only remarking in a weak voice, "You really ought to be more cautious."

A look of intense disgust overspread her husband's face, and he rose from his chair.

"Cautious—rot!" he remarked, emphatically; then with a pointed allusion to the wrapper Hetty was wearing, "aren't you going to dress for dinner?"

"No, Charlie, I don't want any dinner; I couldn't eat any," she answered, in a voice broken with tears, "and besides, Lizzie left me at a moment's notice this afternoon, and I—I couldn't—didn't feel able to prepare dinner myself."

"And isn't there any?" demanded her spouse, in tones betokening gathering indignation.

"No, dear, there isn't. How could I get it?" and the invalid turned a pair of swimming eyes upon her lord and master, whose losses had apparently not included his appetite. For the first time in two years of married life Mr Heyde-Paulker gave way to anger."

"Then it's a great pity you can't," he replied, with heat, as he prepared to leave the room. "And it's another great pity that you don't spend less of your time upon that sofa, full of imaginary ailments, and a little more in looking after your household affairs. No wonder Lizzie cleared out. Women who can't control servants properly shouldn't marry!" and with this parting thrust the sage quitted his wife's presence, even more noisily than he had entered it, leaving her bathed in tears. A moment later he was striding down the garden path with the intention of dining at his club, providing for Mrs Scannen fresh grounds for wonderment.

"He's a perfect wretch, dear, and if I were you, I'd never speak to him again," commented Miss Laura Manners, a bosom friend of our suffering heroine's, upon the conclusion of the recital of woe, as she poured herself out another cup of tea. Hetty listened to her remarks with tear-filled eyes.

"And what will you do without a girl?" exclaimed Laura, in accents of sympathetic despair.

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Mrs Heyde-Paulker, helplessly, the mere thought of her servantless condition making her feel worse.

"I don't believe he cares a bit. He's gone off to his club, and if I starved he wouldn't mind at all."

"Well, dear, he is a wretch, and you ought to teach him a lesson — you really ought."

"But what can I do, Laura? He never takes me seriously, even when he is all right; he only laughs at me when I want him to be serious, and what can you do with a man who tickles you every time you put on a straight face; at least, he used to."

Her friend sighed enviously.

"But do you really think he is growing indifferent?" she asked.

"I'm only too afraid it is so," replied Hetty, sadly. "He won't believe I am unwell, and says it is all fancy on my part, and he seems to get quite angry with me for not being well and strong."

"Then you'll have to cure him, dear, and I think I see a way to do it. There's nothing like a shock for cases of this kind, and I have a plan. Listen to this, dear." In a few moments the versatile Laura unfolded her scheme, which she calculated would bring the "wretch" to his knees.

When she had finished, Hetty said, slowly:

"Well, Laura, I think I will try it, although I don't quite like the idea, especially as Charley has lost so much money on 'Doras'—I think that is what he called them—although I'm sure the change is what I want. But if he won't give me the money to go away with, how then?"

"You must make him. Tell him you absolutely must go away, unless he wants to see you die in the house," said Laura, mendaciously. "I feel sure he'll give in—and then!"

"Very well," replied Hetty, doubtfully, as she reached for her smelling-salts, "I will try it. At all events," she added, sadly, "I shall really know whether he still cares for me or not."

CHAPTER II.

"Phew! Didn't think she'd take it like that," muttered Charlie, as he put on a cigar outside the house and proceeded to the station on the morning following the events just chronicled. He was fresh from a terrific encounter with Hetty on maters financial generally, and sea-side trips in particular, his refusal to accede to her wishes having raised a whirlwind of reproach about his ears anent his own expenses.

"Hello! old man, you do look blue. What's the matter?" and Will Harbour boisterously slapped our hero on the back when the two met after lunch in the smoke-room of the Junior Amphora. In a few moments Charlie had poured into his friend's sympathetic ear an account of what had taken place before he had left home that morning.

"Nice state of affairs, isn't it," he asked, plaintively, as he puffed smoke rings ceilingwards.

"You're right, old man. But why don't you let her go? asked his volatile friend.

"Well, it's like this, old chap: I'm horibly short of cash just now. I've dropped a pot of money lately, and, under the circumstances, £20 is a lot of money to spend on a mere fad, because that's all it is. She wants a month's holiday at an expensive sea side resort just because she knows I haven't got the £20 to do it with," and Charlie looked appealingly at his friend for corroboration of his views.

"But is her health really bad?" queried the astute stockbroker.

"Bad? No!" replied the other, decisively; "but she has got an idea that it is, and for weeks now she has done nothing all day but lie on a sofa and drive the girls we get frantic. The truth is, Will," said Charlie, in a melancholy undertone, "I believe she is quite tired of 'yours truly.' She is not a quarter as fond of me as she used to be, and does nothing but lie about and sigh, and answer in monosyllables. Lively place to go home to, I can assure you."

"Look here, Charlie," said his friend, decidedly, "if you take that tone I don't know where you'll end. You must let her go away. It may do her good."

"Awful rot, Will," exclaimed the disconsolate husband; "far better spend the money on a separation. She only wants to get away from me—that's all."

For a few moments Will sat deep in thought, a faint smile hovering around his lips, and Charlie gazed modily at the smoke wreaths rising from his cigar. Then Will spoke:

"Look here, old chap, suppose——"

For a moment the fun-loving young stockbroker was convulsed with silent laughter, and the melancholy features of his friend took on a severe form,

"Look here, Will, I don't like being laughed at," he said in an annoyed tone.

Forcibly smothering his mirth, Will rose, and taking a sheet of the club notepaper from a stand, he wrote upon it "I O U £20," and pushed it towards Charlie.

"Sign that with my name," he said, and mechanically Charlie added the words, "W. H. Harbour." Carefully taking it from him, Will folded it up, and tucked the slip into his pocket-book, abstracting at the same time two £10 notes, which he pushed across the table to his amazed friend, who sat watching him open-mouthed.

"Now, old chap, d'ye know you've committed a forgery?" asked Will, in a gleeful whisper.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Mr Heyde-Paulker, in a shocked voice, as he glared at the two bank notes. "Here, hand that IOU over. What's the joke?"

Then Will unfolded a scheme, the gist of which was to sound the depths of Hetty's affection for the man she had sworn to cherish and obey, and after arranging to meet that evening over the nefarious plan the two parted for the afternoon in an atmosphere of chuckling good humour.

"There, Charlie, what do you think of that for a diplomatic note?" and Will thrust a letter over his mahogany to his married chum.

As Charlie read it through an expression of doubt crept over his features and he gingerly handed it back to the irrepressible Will.

"Not bad, but, I say, don't you think it is going a bit too far? It would frighten her into fits, and I don't want it to upset her too much."

"Pooh!" answered the bachelor. "Not a bit of it. You leave it to me. I know how to manage a job of this sort. It'll do her a world of good."

"But are you sure it won't upset her too much?" queried the still doubting one.

"Positive, certain," replied the other, tersely, as he placed the letter in envelope. "If this doesn't bring her to her senses my name's not Will Harbour. Comprenez?" and he grinned like a satyr. "You can arrange for her to go away to-morrow if you like. You can come and stop with me. And there you are, don't you know."

Charlie remained silent and Will went on:

"Is that Miss Manners who is going away with her the one I used to be sweet on two years ago—Laura?"

Charlie assented.

"H'm! Nice girl, charming girl; can dance, by Jove! Haven't seen her for months. Wonder if she's forgotten me?" he soliloquised softly, and raising his eyes to put some further questions concerning her discovered that his friend had disappeared from the room.

CHAPTER III.

"Do you know, Laura, I can't help wondering what made Charlie give in like he did," said Hetty, a few days later, as she and her friend were slowly traversing the "front" at Bognor. "After carrying on like a pickpocket in the morning, at night he came home like a lamb and gave me the money without a murmur. But I haven't forgiven him for his disgraceful behaviour."

"No, dear," agreed Laura, "and didn't you ask him where he got the money from?"

"Well, yes, I did," Hetty admitted, as she lay back in the bath-chair and raised her parasol; "but he seemed uncomfortable and evaded the question, so I thought it best to take what the gods provide, and here I am. Now, dear, will you post the letter, and I hope it will bring him to his knees? Let us read it over first to see if it is all right," and so saying the two plotters halted by the pillar-box and read the epistle in question with considerable amusement. Then, to an accompaniment of rippling laughter, the letter fell into the box, and the two recommenced their "constitutional" along the Bognor "front."

. . . . . .

"A letter for you, dear, from London," and Laura tossed a letter across the inviting breakfast-table to Hetty, who had just appeared, looking wonderfully improved with the change of scene and sea-air.

"Whoever can it be from? Not from Charlie," and woman-like she examined back, front, and postmark, in vainly conjecturing as to the sender. Then her thoughts strayed back to town. "Poor boy. To think that he is slaving away in that horrid city, while I am enjoying myself here," and she tore open the mysterious missive, the contents of which drove the healthy blood from her cheeks as she read as follows:

"298, The Grove,
"Clapham, S.W.

"My Dear Mrs Heyde-Paulker,—I am sorry to be the bearer of evil tidings, but your husband has made me the unwilling medium through which to break some sad news. He has been charged by an old and valued friend with forgery, and prays that you will return to town at once.

"With sincere regrets for the unfortunate state of affairs occasioning this letter, which with a generosity that does him credit, he attributes to his own reckless expenditure,

"Believe me, yours very truly,
"W. H. HARBOUR.

"P.S.—Pending arrangements he is staying at my lodgings."

For a moment, Hetty gazed at the startling epistle with staring eyes and parted lips, then, as the flood-gates of her tears were opened, she cast it from her, and burst into a torrent of violent weeping.

. . . . . .

"A letter for you, Charlie," and a missive thrown from the open door by Will fell upon that young man's pillow:

"13, The Marina, Bognor.

"Dear Mr Heyde-Paulker,—You may perhaps be sorry to hear that your poor dear wife, who was so seriously indisposed when she left town, has desired me to ask you, if you wish to gaze upon her once again, to come to Bognor immediately. Her case has, I am afraid, been aggravated by neglect and a broken heart.

"With sympathy, believe me,
"Yours very truly,
"LAURA MANNERS."

Charlie read the foregoing in horror-struck amazement as he leaned on his elbow, and for a moment his brain reeled with the shock. His letter had perhaps killed her; the shock of his senseless practical joke was the cause of this, and indirectly he was a murderer. With a groan he sprang out of bed and hastily dressed himself. "Heaven help me for being such a wretch," he muttered, as he slipped into his frock-coat and dashed down the stairs.

"Read that, you scoundrel," he shouted, throwing the letter down before the startled Will, who was consuming ham voraciously. Mr Harbour suspended operations with a dropped jaw as he grasped the fact that Charlie was in a terrible state of mind, and hastily scanned the letter.

"Good heavens!" he said, as he pushed back his chair and rose from the table, "as heaven is a witness, old man, I never thought that——"

"You never thought," interrupted Charlie, with extreme bitterness, as he eyed the unhappy joker. "Will all your thinking give me back my wife now?"

Will made no answer; as Charlie, with a groan, turned his back upon him, and walked to the window. What

a terrible ending to their practical joking. The very plan which was to bring Hetty back to his arms had recoiled upon him, and perhaps, even now, she lay cold in death. He seized a time-table, and scanned its contents with feverish energy while his dejected friend sat looking into the fireplace, the picture of misery, thinking what a pair of fools they had been.

The first train he could catch was at 12.40, and Charlie groaned at the thought of nearly two hours of inaction. He walked out into the garden, musing bitterly over the events of the last few weeks. Now he could see how ill she had been and what a brute he had been to her. But this delay was terrible, and an hour before the train started for Bognor he left the house, leaving Will a prey to the keenest remorse, and was in a cab being driven breakfastless to the station. Arrived there he stood about waiting for the leaden minutes to pass with aching heart. "Poor Hetty."

At that moment a train steamed into the station, and he stood watching the few passengers disembark and disappear into the world without the station. With indifferent eyes he noticed two ladies hurrying through the barrier, hail a cab and get into it. Surely the second one was Miss Manners. Could it be? Yes, it must be. And the other, closely veiled, who was she? With wild gestures he started to run after the vehicle, but it quite out-distanced him. A few minutes later he was seated in another hansom, and torn with conflicting emotions he was carried through the busy streets. As his cab turned into the quiet street where Will's lodgings were situated he saw that the other cab had stopped and two ladies hurried from it into the house.

What did it all mean? He scarcely dared to think as, flinging the man half-a-crown, he bolted up the steps. As he turned into the breakfast parlour it was with a vague impression that Will was holding up a lady in the passage. The next moment a weeping figure started up from a chair and pushing back her veil threw herself into his arms.

"Oh, Charlie, it's all my fault."

"But Hetty, I thought you were—"

"Don't forgive me, Charlie, I deserve all your reproaches, but I—I never dreamt it would drive you to commit crime for my sake," and convulsively clasping her bewildered husband she wept salt tears of bitter anguish.

"Crime!" gasped Charlie, as his share of the muddle reverted to his mind. "But I thought you were dying, dearest, and here you are."

"It was only a test to see if you were really tired of me, Charlie, and, oh, why did you commit forgery?"

"All a joke, dear," interrupted the contrite and immensely relieved Charlie, "nothing more," and drawing her to the sofa he revealed his side of the plot. And as husband and wife gazed with moist eyes and new-born affection on each other the mists cleared and each saw the other in a truer light.

"And do you love me, dearest?" murmured Hetty, with fervour, as she clasped her husband to her.

His reply may be imagined.

"But where is Will and where is Laura?"

Hetty rose and went quietly to the door.

"They're all right, dear," she whispered, her tear-stained but happy face wreathed in smiles.

"Sitting on the stairs explaining things?" queried Charlie, with twinkling eyes.

Hetty's heart was too full for her to reply verbally.

Music and Musicians.

Art and Artlessness.

Ambitious young musicians are continually forwarding to us specimens of their work, with the request to publish them, and thus give them the opportunity to make their first round on the ladder of fame. Unfortunately, the writing of music is not an easy matter, and young composers are very apt to confound enthusiasm with inspiration. Here, however, we wish to refer to a more practical matter; the youthful, and sometimes the aged composer, very frequently attempts to write in a language of whose grammar he is ignorant; and whatever may be their other merits, 5o per cent. of the compositions forwarded show an unexcusable lack of knowledge or of harmony.

A knowledge of grammar will not make a composer, but ignorance of the grammar of music prevents a composer from properly expressing his thoughts. It seems absurd to insist on the common-place that a knowledge of harmony is a necessity to a composer of music, but if anyone should doubt that the truism needs to be repeated again and again, let him glance over the works of the composers of popular music, and be horrified by the ignorance displayed.

Let the young composer, then, remember that however valuable may be his thoughts, however soaring his imagination, he is helpless until he has thoroughly learned the grammar of his art. Art without technique is artlessness; a Raphael who did not know how to draw, to mix his colours, or to use his brush, might be filled with inspiration, and yet stand idly helpless before his canvas. What, then, shall be said of the uninspired man, whose ignorance of the grammar of his art only the more plainly shows the poverty of his ideas? Here is a safe rule to follow: Let the young composer resolutely refrain from writing until he knows how to write correctly, or at least let him keep his compositions in the secrecy of his own desk. It is curious how many geniuses of yesterday became the nonentities of next year, and even real genius is liable to do that of which its more ripened experience is ashamed.

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True to Art.

Here is an anecdote which has appeared in many of the Italian newspapers:—General Tournon, on his way to Ravenna, began a conversation with an old man who sat opposite to him in a railway car. Musical topics were touched upon, and the General expressed great aversion to German music, while the other man declared that Germany had surpassed Italy in music.

The General became more and more excited in maintaining his opinion, and finally exclaimed:—

"You may say whatever you please, but I, for my part, care more for a single act of 'Rigoletto' than for all the German opera put together."

Whereupon the other man bowed, and said: "I thank you for your very kind appreciation, for I am Verdi; but I adhere firmly to my opinion."

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Humoresque.

Father: "Do you think my daughter will ever be able to sing?"

Teacher: "Nevare, Mousieur."

Father: "Then what's the use of giving her any more singing lessons?"

Teacher: "A great deal of use, Monsieur. I give her lessons two—three months more, and by and bye I teach her that she cannot sing. That is a very good musical education for the young lady."

Father: "You are right. If she can't sing, and you can convince her she can't, the lessons won't be thrown away."

At an examination at an English music school, one reply was that the letters MS., in a piano piece, mean "mezzo soprano"; another, that D.C. stands for "de crescendo." Yet another decided that V.S. at the bottom of a page of Beethoven meant "violin solo." The most remarkable answer was that which understood "loco" to mean "with fire." The reason given was that "loco" is an abbreviation of "locomotive."

"What's that?" asked a country gentleman in a music store.

"That? Oh, that is used on violins. It is called a chin rest."

"Chin rest, is it? Well, gimme one. It's just the sort of thing I want for a New Year's present for my wife."

Hostess: "Are you a musician, Mr Jones?"

Jones (who is dying to give an exhibition of his ability): "Well, yes, I think I may claim to some knowledge of music."

Hostess: "I am delighted to know it. My daughter is about to play, and I should be very glad if you would kindly turn the music over for her."

A lady from the rural districts took her daughter to town, and after consulting a number of professors respecting her musical abilities, returned home very much discouraged, and reported to her husband the result of her expedition as follows:—"The first professor said that Almiry sings too much with her borax. If she keeps on she will get digestion on the lungs. He said she ought to try the abominable breathing. Then the next teacher told her that she ought to sing with her diagram and not smother her voice in the sarcophagus. The next he poked a looking-glass down her throat, and said that the phalanx was too small, and the typhoid bone and the polly glottis were in a bad way. I never knew that Almiry has so many things the matter with her, and I'm afraid to let her sing any more."

Elder Berry: "Our soprano was sarcastic again to-day."

Dr. Thirdly: "What did she say?"

Elder Berry: "She thought no one should be put on the Music Committee until he had passed a Civil Service examination and demonstrated that he knew absolutely nothing about music.

"I have a wonderful ear," said a conceited musician in the course of a conversation.

"So has a jackass," replied a bystander.

THE DRAMA.

THE NANCE O'NEIL NEW ZEALAND SEASON.

BRILLIANT OPENING IN AUCKLAND.

The Nance O'Neil New Zealand season commenced on Boxing Night in Auckland, and will assuredly long be remembered as one of the most notable dramatic events in the history of the New Zealand stage. Whether Miss O'Neill is the greatest actress who has visited us, is a matter of opinion, but there can be no possible question that she possesses a fire, a passion, and an individuality as impressive as they are amazing in one whose reputation is yet so young. Her versatility, too, is evidently one of her strong points, but her chiefest charm is her utter freedom from stage mannerism or convention. No doubt this latter leads to a somewhat impulsive rushing of the part which occasionally recalls amateurism, but on the other hand it allows the actress to achieve results which experience and convention would have feared to attempt, but which are magnificently successful. Moreover, no actress who has ever come to New Zealand has ever possessed the stage presence of Miss Nance O'Neil. Mrs. Brough, Janet Achurch, Mrs. Potter, Genevieve Ward the stately—all these were beautiful, but none have the absolutely regal presence of Miss O'Neil. Without for a moment wishing to detract from her intellectual performance, there can be no doubt that the talented American scores over and over again by reason of her physical perfections. A woman who towers naturally over every man on the stage, and who is a model for a sculptor in proportion, finds no difficulty in impressing one with her scorn or her anger, or, indeed, her love, when she very literally stoops to conquer. Miss O'Neill is daring and fresh in her conception of her parts, and carries them out with a vigour that is irresistible. She made her first appearance in "Magda." Herr Sudermann's play has been pronounced a masterpiece. It is of the style and school of Ibsen, and is more suited to the study than the stage in many ways. It gives, however, an unrivalled opportunity for the creation of a character part, and as such has proved attractive to such great artists as Bernhardt, Duse, and Mrs. Pat. Campbell. The play is not, however, one of great dramatic interest. It is the battle of wills between an imperious, passionate woman, whose love of liberty and the fulness of life is her most notable characteristic, with a narrow, bigoted, and fanatic autocrat of a father, whose limited intellectual horizon is admirably shown in the early scenes. We are kept from the moment Miss O'Neil appears on the highest notes of passion, and we long occasionally for a lower key. Still, "Magda" gives great opportunities, and of these Miss O'Neil certainly makes much. If there is a fault it is that we never see the actress save at white heat, and the strain is rather much, both for Miss O'Neil and her audience. In "Peg Woffington" Miss O'Neil scores an immense success. She is without doubt the best Peg ever seen in the colonies. Her triumph here is complete, and not one fault can be found with it. The company, too, are much more at home in the comedy, though Mr. McKee Rankin in the former was magnificent. To-night "Queen Elizabeth" is to be staged, when another treat is anticipated.

"The Power and the Glory," a fine sensational melodrama, has been drawing crowded houses in Dunedin.

The Biograph was one of the principal holiday attractions in Christchurch last week.

The Charles Arnold season in Christchurch was a veritable triumph. It closed on Christmas Eve in "Hans the Boatman."

"Floradora," the new comic opera, has captivated Melbourne. It is said to be even more attractive than "The Geisha."

"The Scarlet Feather" does not seemed to have altogether boomed in Australia, and but for Nellie Stewart would probably have fallen rather flat.

Despite the awful weather, Wirth Bros.' circus did good holiday business in Dunedin in Christmas week. The show is said to be one of unusual merit even for Wirth Bros., which is saying much.

"With Flying Colours," a war drama with a huge quantity of soldiers and scenery, was the Bland Holt holiday attraction in Melbourne.

January 4 is to be devoted to a free theatrical performance to the poor of Sydney. Including standing room the theatre managers offer accommodation for 8,300 persons, but as crowds of children will be invited, 10,000 will probably represent the numbers present. The theatre managements undertake everything but getting the audiences together, which duty has been delegated to the Government Charities Department. The only expense Government will be put to is the issuing and printing of tickets; the theatres generously provide for all else. But great care will have to be bestowed on the necessary arrangements in order to get the entertainments safely through.

Topics of the Week.

Looking Backward on 1900.

Now that we have fairly started on our partnership with the new year and the new century, it is not without interest to turn retrospectively to the year that is behind us for ever, and to recall in the briefest compass the main events of the past twelve months. The year, it will be remembered, opened gloomily enough. The fortunes of war had not been with us in the previous few months, and the outlook was not particularly bright. But the young year speedily brought comfort to our pride. Early in the month a very determined attack on Ladysmith was repulsed, and a day later a fresh feeling of national hope and confidence was aroused by the arrival of Lord Roberts at Capetown. For New Zealand the middle of the month will ever be sadly memorable, for it saw the gallant charge of the New Zealanders, when poor Connell and gallant Gouriay were killed in the brave execution of their duty. About the same date a brilliant young nobleman was killed in the Earl of Ava, the son of the brilliant Marquis of Dufferin. The second New Zealand Contingent left on the 20th of January, and a few days later we were first elated with the news of the capture of Spionkop, only to be disheartened later to hear that owing to inexcusable blundering and maladministration Spionkop could never be connected with glory in the annals of the war, but must always painfully recall inaptitude and disaster. February opened in a manner calculated to entirely dispel the feelings of dejection caused by the blundering at Spionkop, and all things considered was probably the most successful month of the year, so far as the war was concerned. The seventh of the month saw Hector Macdonald successful at Koodoosberg, while five days later we tasted the first of a series of exciting triumphs in the relief of Kimberley by General French. Hardly had we ceased congratulating each other on this splendid event before there arrived the greater news that the aged but invincible "Bobs" had defeated Cronje at Koodoosraad, and that the great Boer general, with 3,000 of his men, had surrendered to the British. This was great news indeed, and when, on the very next day, the cable arrived that Ladysmith had been relieved, we all went half delirious with gratitude and joy. Those were days which will live long in all our memories and make the month of February a red letter one in our lives, however long we may live. March witnessed the first sign of Kruger weakening. On the ninth of the month he attempted a bold "bluff" by proposing peace with the guaranteed independence of the Republics. Naturally there was but one answer to such a proposal. On the 13th Bloemfontein fell into our hands, and the Transvaal Peace Delegates left on their futile mission to Europe. The confidence of the British nation in the Government, and in her army, was in this month shown by the fact that the "Khaki" loan for the war was enormously over-subscribed, not less than £500,000,000 being offered to the Treasury. The third and fourth New Zealand contingents left at the end of the month, on the last day of which was received the news of the disaster at Koornspruit, when 200 gallant fellows were killed and 17 New Zealanders were captured. In New Zealand the month saw the death of W. Crowther, M.H.R. for Auckland, a man whose sound common sense, uprightness, and blunt honesty had won him the respect of political friends and opponents alike.

The Queen's visit to Ireland was not merely the most noteworthy event of the month of March, but was in many respects the most important event of the year. It was in every way a brilliant success, and how far-reaching its good effects may be, it would be almost impossible to predict. A dastardly attempt to shoot the Prince of Wales at Brussels station miraculously and providentially failed on the 4th of the month, the 15th of which witnessed the opening of that splendid but foredoomed failure, the great Paris Exposition. On the 27th, the Duke of Argyle, one of the ablest controversialists of our day, died at a ripe old age. The famine in India began during this month to seize hold on the public imagination and sympathy, and large subscriptions were sent to relieve the 45,000,000 persons stated to be actually starving. The tendency for disasters to occur during the last days of the month will no doubt have been remarked on as a coincidence, and the 27th of March added to the score with the fire at Ottawa, when damage to the value of over £1,500,000 was done. New Zealand, it will be remembered, immediately went to the assistance of her sister colony.

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The Retrospect Continued.

May will ever be associated with Mafeking in our minds, for on the 18th of the month that gallant little garrison was relieved after a siege of seven months. Few will be able to recall without a smile the exuberant delight of the public, and the quaint way in which the most staid and reserved inhabitants of this colony expressed their pride and their relief on that occasion. It was a national outburst, when joy for once broke through the British reverence for stiffness and convention.

The Boxer troubles in China began to loom large on the horizon in May, and there were serious riots and outrages in Pekin on the 27th. For once, however, the month closed with an auspicious event, for on the 29th of May Lord Roberts entered Johannesburg unopposed.

June saw the arrival of Lord Roberts at Pretoria, and the majority of the war critics at once announced the end of the war. As we now know this was extremely optimistic, and there seems every possibility that it will be next June before matters are settled.

Affairs now assumed a very dark shade in China, and in June the news of the war from the East entirely eclipsed in interest and sensationalism that from Africa. The attack on the Legations, the capture of the Taku forts, and then the repulse of the relief force under Admiral Seymour followed in rapid succession, and on the last day of the month the warships from Auckland left for China, thus bringing colonial interest even more strongly to bear on the trouble.

July was ushered in by the awful Hoekbecken Dock fire in New York, and from this to the middle of the month came conflicting accounts of the trouble of the Legations at Pekin. On the 15th, however, circumstantial details of the supposed massacre were given, and all of us gave up hope.

In South Africa July was important, witnessing the surrender of Prinsloo's 500 Boers to General Hunter. Once again the month closed darkly with the murder of Humbert of Italy, and the death of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, sometime Duke of Edinburgh.

Lord Hopetoun's appointment as Governor-General of the Commonwealth was gazetted in July.

August gave the lie to all the ghastly stories of the massacres at the Legations, and on the 15th of the month it was known they had been relieved. It also witnessed the discovery of a plot against Lord Roberts at Pretoria, and the sack and looting of Pekin.

The main events of September were the Galveston tidal wave tragedy, and Kruger's flight and resignation; also the promotion of Lord Roberts to the supreme command of the British Army.

October was a month of importance to New Zealand, for on the 1st Lord Ranfurly left to annex the Islands, and on the 8th the Cook Group was made part of the Empire. Kruger left for Europe on the 22nd of October, and on the 27th the Transvaal was formally annexed.

The rest of the year is too recent to need recalling, but looking back it must be admitted that the last year of the Nineteenth Century was by no means the least eventful.

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The Duration of the War.

It is curious to look back now to the time when we sent off our first New Zealand Contingent to the war, and to remember how freely expressed was the opinion that they would not arrive in South Africa till the fighting was over. As each succeeding contingent was despatched the same opinion was expressed, but each time with decreasing confidence and slackening unanimity. Now that we are in the second year of the war, there is yet another contingent to be despatched, and not one is found who dares to hope or to prophecy that they will not be required to take their share of fighting, and mayhap stand the brunt of several sharp engagements. It is obvious now that even so astute a judge as the veteran "Bobs" was somewhat optimistic in his expressed opinion as to the probability of an early cessation of hostilities. The duration of the war is indeed one of those things in which it is very unwise to attempt prophecy, and even in hazarding an opinion it is better to allow an ample margin of "ifs and ands." It is the generally expressed belief of men who have been at the war, that should De Wet be captured the last hope of the Boers would be extinguished. Undoubtedly if we can get hold of that brilliant, brave and daring guerilla general, we shall have done much to break that indomitable pluck which has carried the struggle on for so long. As a fact, we know the Boers are sick to death of fighting. They are methodical, easy-going folk, fond of their quiet simple life, fond of their farms, and anxious to be at work again. To suppose that they are continuing to fight because they are being deceived with lies of British reverses and coming foreign reinforcements is, according to no less an authority than Mr Patterson, absurd. The average Boer is not the unintelligent ignorant man who has been so often painted for us. He knew perfectly well how many men would be sent against him, and all the stories we were told of the Boers believing the whole British Army was but a few thousand strong, were grotesquely incorrect. But the reason of the fighting is bitterness. The racial bitterness is stronger than we can comprehend. We are accustomed to think of it as a Dutch feeling. It is not. It is an Afrikander feeling, and it is absolutely universal in South Africa. We are hated with a bitter hatred and distrusted with a profound distrust—a distrust which it will be almost impossible to eradicate, so deeply planted is it in the national mind. But famine, ruin, and the approach of absolute starvation are doing their work. Every day the natural easy going nature of the Boer, and his love for his farm makes fighting more irksome, and with a bad grace he may now at any time submit. But those who look for a restoration of amity between the Afrikander and ourselves, and the creation of a feeling of confidence in British rule, have a long time to wait for that millennium.

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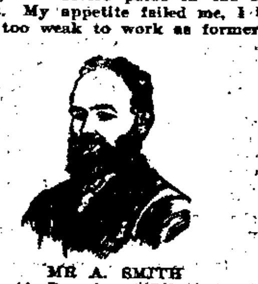
Settling Down Again.

The holidays are over, and most of us are settling down resignedly for another prolonged spell of "the daily round, the common task." No doubt we are the fresher and stronger for our few days of leisure, but with these short holidays the first effect is, to the majority of us, not altogether satisfactory. Even when our work is pleasant and congenial, there is something very trying in the resumption of effort after a brief period of idleness. We feel a distaste and disgust for tasks which in the ordinary course we attack with all cheerfulness, and even interest, and we possibly commiserate ourselves as being little better than slaves. Often in this mood we freely anathematise holidays as being more trouble than they are worth, and at first sight there is something in this objection. Many of us have to work so hard before and after a holiday that they do really seem of doubtful benefit. But though we cannot perhaps always see it, I think even the most dearly bought holidays are of benefit. They practically compel us to take our minds off every-day affairs, and the very distaste with which we approach their resumption shows that the rest was necessary. Moreover, after we have settled down, after we have, so to say, "got into our stride again," there is an increased vitality and interest at once noticable, and which is distinctly traceable to the holiday respite. The benefit of these intermittent breaks in the routine of work would be even more pronounced if we went about our holiday-making more thoughtfully. That very phrase, for instance—holiday-making—gets at the weak point of the usual system. We insist on "making holiday," that is, on doing something more or less energetic. We go for more or less tiring excursions, or spend, perhaps, the day at a racecourse endeavouring to win other folks' money. Of all forms of downright hard work, this is the hardest, and if, as is usual, we lose our money, it is not wonderful that the holiday leaves us more tired physically and mentally than it found us. It has been said that we British take our pleasures sadly, but it would be more correct to say we take them as we take our rest, energetically. We make too much of a business of both. It is a good fault in the main, and has made us what we are in the world; but it would doubtless prolong most of our lives if we were able to import some of the capacity of the Latin race for idling into our too energetic natures. To see an Italian or a Spaniard enjoying his dolce far niente is to take a lesson in the true art of being idle. Only with them it is not art, but nature.

SELECTORS' MOMENTOUS RIDE.

In giving his experiences to the press recently, Alfred Smith, selector, of Upper Taylor's Arm, Nambucca River, N.S.W., made reference to a ride which had a marked influence on his after life.

"Three days before Christmas," he remarked, "I was so busy unloading corn and sheep that it was night before I turned homeward. During my twelve mile ride home I caught a severe cold, which settled on my chest and developed into pneumonia. I was attacked by diarrhoea, fainting fits, extreme drowsiness, a dry hacking cough, and severe pains in the left breast. My appetite failed me, I become too weak to work as formerly,



MR A. SMITH
(A Prominent Selector).

and my heart palpitated alarmingly after the least exertion. I took various alleged remedies and pills, but derived no benefit. Several who knew of the good effects of Dr. Williams' pink pills recommended them, and I began to take them. After using the second box my appetite returned and I regained some strength. Later on the diarrhoea ceased, and the drowsiness went away. Five boxes completely cured me. I am now strong and healthy, and have been free from every symptom of pneumonia since."

At this season pneumonia is very prevalent and should be guarded against. Dr. Williams' pink pills tone the nerves, enrich the blood, and strengthen the system in such a manner that pneumonia, consumption, bronchitis, fevers, and skin diseases can be successfully resisted. They also cure ladies' ailments, loss of vital strength, paralysis, locomotor ataxia, etc. Sold by the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Wellington, three shillings per box, six boxes sixteen and six, post free, and by chemists and storekeepers. Sufferers should write for free instruction.

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Current Comment.

Marvellous De Wet.

De Wet's achievements as a lightning-change artist are eliciting universal admiration. He seems to be as intangible as a mirage to the operations of our forces. No sooner has the British officer placed his field glasses to his eyes to discover what it is all about than he has to get out his long-range telescope, and then he pines for that of the Lick Observatory, for having disconcerted and confounded his antagonists, the Flying Dutchman is over the hills and far away recruiting and cleaning his weapons for another sally, and so the game goes on ad infinitum. There seems to be an impression that all this failure to be up to time is due to the preciseness and red-tapeish routine of the British War system, which are delicately exotic amongst the Boers. It is better that i's should be left undotted and t's uncrossed if these niceties of penmanship are to cost so much loss of life and humiliation. It would be well, too, to permit subordinate officers to exercise some power of initiative, if prompt action be necessary to catch the enemy on the hop.

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A Vital Question.

The duty of the State, it cannot be too clearly understood, does not begin and end with the children attending the public schools, but embraces all the children of educable age in the colony, for whose future the State is responsible as to their personal well-being and their relations to society. It may be regretted that the advantages of the State school system are not participated in by all; the facts have to be dealt with as they are, not as they might be—possibly with benefit to the community. Private and denominational schools are recognised by law, and as long as that is so, it is, we emphatically declare, the duty of the State to secure and insist, not only that the education given in denominational schools shall in all respects be equal to that imparted in the public primaries, but that the same tests of efficiency shall be applicable to all schools.—Dunedin "Star."

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Australasia and Imperial Federation.

Lastly, if Imperial Federation does come and Australasia commits itself to all the chances and expenses, "The Bulletin" trusts that it will be specified, at the very beginning of the movement, that none of the politicians who take a leading part in it at this end shall be rewarded with any title, bauble, decoration, handle or gew-gaw whatever. For it would be a sad, sad thing, when this country faced the bill later on and had a sudden spasm of regret for what it had done, if it began to call Seddon and Ward and Lyne and people like that so many mean, degraded, low-down Iscariots, who had sold their country for a title, and betrayed their trust for dirty, sordid considerations. The business should be kept clean. If it is the kind of business which can't be kept clean it should be kept no dirtier than is absolutely necessary. If it is understood that the Australian politicians who bring about Imperial Federation (supposing it ever is brought about) will only get such reward as Australia thinks fit to give them, the position is fair enough. But if Britain rewards them for bringing about an arrangement whereby this country commits itself to large risks and expenses on Britain's account, it will look too much as if they were a crawlsome gathering of traitors who had sold their country and were collecting the price of their iniquity. So long as all the titles and all the small decorations for which the souls of our politicians hunger, come from Britain, no title-hungry politician can be trusted to take a fair and honest view of any question where the interests of Australia are on one side and those of Britain on the other.

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An Interesting Street Betting Decision.

By an Act passed in 1896 the Victorian Legislature has specially provided for checking the practice of betting in "streets"—a term which, being interpreted, signifies every highway, road, street, lane, footway, or thoroughfare, or any public or private property, and also extends to any enclosed or unenclosed land (not including houses or racecourses) within any city or town. In New South Wales, however, the old law still prevails, and consequently Mr Justice Cohen had, the other day, to decide what amounts to a "place" within the Betting-houses Suppression Act of 1866. Can a street in New South Wales be a statutory "place"? The issue arose thus. It was shown that the defendant on a given day was under the verandah of an hotel at Albury, leaning against the brass railing which protects the window. He, apparently, remained in about the same spot for practically the whole day, and during that time made several bets with the public, which bets, in the ingenuous language of the prosecutor's witness, he wrote down in some sort of a book. By repute the defendant was a "bookmaker" of about two years' standing. The magistrates dismissed the charge of having used a "place" for betting within the meaning of the Act. The Court, however, set aside this ruling, and held that defendant ought to have been convicted. The view of Mr Justice Cohen was that the defendant had localised himself at the spot under the verandah, so that anyone who wanted to find him for the purpose of betting knew where to go. The Court had not to look merely at the nature of the locality occupied to determine whether or not it was a "place," but must also consider the kind of use which the defendant made of it. It seems, thus, to follow that betting in streets or highways is illegal in New South Wales if any fixed or definite locality is occupied for the purpose, but that the law would not be infringed by the mere fact of betting in a street, unaccompanied by other circumstances.—"Australasian."

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The Present Position of Things in General.

Strangely variant are the aspects in which the annual festival of all Christendom presents itself at the end of the nineteenth century. On the one hand the world is apparently as far off as ever from the reign of universal peace. On the other, it finds itself in possession of powers undreamed of but yesterday—able to transmit through space without tangible medium. No vision of the student of mystic arts could equal the reality attained by the research of Marconi, who has made possible to "ships passing in the night"—perhaps in "storm and stress,"—to convey by an effort of will, as it were, to points far distant their needs or wishes. Meantime the contest for supremacy in South Africa, which seemed near its close this time last year, is still waged in desultory fashion, and while welcoming home the war-worn fragments of contingents that went eager for the fray, the colony is called on to render further tribute to the exigencies of the Empire. In the Far East chaos shows as yet no sign of resolution into order—the nations that have intervened are "beating the air" in their negotiations with an intangible Government whose every action is characterised by "treachery and duplicity." The latest note of the Powers makes it "indispensable that reparation should be made for the crimes committed; and sure guarantees given for the prevention of their recurrence; the most severe punishment fitting the ringleaders' crimes; reform of the Tsung-li-Yamen, the fortification of the diplomatic quarters of Pekin; revision of the commercial treaties, and to promote trade relations." Nebulous is the only term applicable to these conditions formulated by the Allied Powers, who stipulate that until they are complied with they can hold out no hope of the withdrawal of their troops. If the situation were stated in plain terms it would read "The Allies are negotiating on a basis of mutual distrust. The dismemberment of China is a foregone conclusion, but each hesitates to declare what share of the spoil would satisfy its desire for aggrandisement."

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Futile Prohibition Prosecutions.

Mr. C. C. Kettle, S.M., has fined a man named Lyons £50, and sentenced him to three months' imprisonment, for sly-grog selling at Taihape. Although the usual questionable method was adopted by the police for securing a conviction, the Magistrate evidently held that the end justifies the means. The evidence revealed the fact that at Taihape, where "no license" obtains, the law was being fragrantly defied. Notwithstanding that a policeman was located in the town, barrels of beer were openly taken off vehicles and rolled into business premises. Whether the punishment imposed upon Lyons will have a deterring effect remains to be seen. Previous efforts in this direction, however stringent, have proved unavailing. The whole thing shows the utter absurdity of attempting to suppress the sale of liquor by legislative enactment. Prohibition has proved a delusion and a snare. It has been productive of sly-grog selling, vice, criminality, sneaking, thieving, and lying. The lessons adduced by the experiments at Clutha, Taihape, and other places should have a wholesome effect when the time comes for consulting the people on the question of substituting a legitimate trade for sly-grog selling and the multifarious evils attendant upon it. As Commissioner Tunbridge says in his annual report: "It is futile to attempt to enforce a law which has not the respect of a large percentage of the population."—Wairarapa "Star."

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The N.Z. Chief Justice on Ourselves and the Commonwealth.

We belong to a mighty Empire, but, save through its literature, we are not much in touch with the impulses that form the nation. To belong to a great nation and to have a share in its government, and to be swayed by the emotions of the people of the nation, can hardly be estimated by us. There is incorporated in the race a sense of greatness, that acts and reacts on the race. The English people were not developed in England—they had much to do in France and in Europe. India, North America, and Australia have influenced them. If they had remained shut up in their islands, and only concerned with their island affairs, they would have been "Little Englanders" indeed. The wide outlook, the big aim, the great future, the grave responsibility have all played an important part in making the Briton what he is. To incorporate in a race high aims, a wide grasp of affairs, a Continental view of things, is worth much. The educative effect on New Zealanders of belonging to a vast Commonwealth cannot be adequately estimated. It raises men to a higher platform, and that is of more value to a race than many thousands of pounds per year. The effect of environment on a race, who can adequately realise? How are we to be kept free from mere parochialism? Literature will help, but a wide political life would help more. The mental effect in our sons and our sons' sons to many future generations ought not to be overlooked in dealing with this Federal question. The question stands thus: A union with Australia will not destroy our legislative independence, and will not impair our own control of our local affairs. It may cost us about £70,000 a year—or say £100,000 a year. For this expenditure we get free trade with a vast continent, and we will have our share in shaping the destinies of what is going to be one of the great nations of the world, and our people's views will thereby become widened and broadened.

Minor Matters.

Sorry He Spoke.

He had bought a nice little place in the country, lock, 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."

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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!"

Suiting 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 new-comer, 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.

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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 has 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.

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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 repast was ready, the host offered her his arm; but at the table no attention was paid to her save by an old dowager 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!"

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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 "gape 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.

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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.

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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, sho I jus' brought her in out of the cold."

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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, as 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!"

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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."

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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.

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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."

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The Barmaid's Repartee.

There is often found amongst barmaids 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 'suspoot' it they will flatter you very much."

Sports and Pastimes.

TURF FIXTURES.

January 29, 30, February 2 — Takapuna Jockey Club
April 8, 9, 13—Auckland Racing Club
April 23, 24—Avondale Jockey Club
May 24, 25—Takapuna Jockey Club Winter
June 8, 10, 12—A.R.C. North N.Z. Grand National Meeting

DATES OF COMING EVENTS.

January 22—Wellington Cup
January 25—Takapuna Cup
February 20—Egmont Cup
February 27—Dunedin Cup

NOTES BY MONITOR.

AUCKLAND RACING CLUB'S SUMMER MEETING.

Very pleasant weather conditions were experienced during the opening days of the Auckland Racing Club's Summer Meeting, and on both occasions the attendance was large. Indeed, on Cup day the number of people who went out to Ellerslie was so great as to constitute a record, there being fully 12,000 present to witness the struggle for the big race. Everything looked at its best, both the track and lawn being fresh and green, while the flower beds were a mass of colour. The fair sex were especially in evidence on the first day, and many of the costumes shown were strikingly pretty. As usual, Colonel Banks officiated in the judge's box, and although he had more than one very close finish to adjudge, yet his decisions were not called into question. The starting was carried out by Mr S. Cutts, who succeeded on the whole in a satisfactory manner, while the general arrangements were effectively looked after by Mr W. Percival and a large staff.

The curtain was rung up on the summer campaign with the Trial Handicap, for which Rosella was made favourite, the Seaton Delaval mare just running home ahead of St. Ursula.

The Great Northern Foal Stakes proved a gift to Mr G. G. Stead's Menschikoff, the opposition being of the weakest. It was a pity to find such a valuable race as this only attracting four runners.

The Auckland Cup, the "star" event of the meeting, attracted a field of eleven, and so open was the issue that every candidate came in for warm support, the actual favourites being Coronet and Bluejacket, while heaps of money went on Dayntree, La Gloria, Skobeloff, and Fulmen. The race was a good one, Knight of Athol making play for the bulk of the journey, when Ideal, Skobeloff, and Bluejacket closed up, and the latter coming on with a wet sail won fairly easily by two lengths.

In the Handicap Hurdles there were but five competitors, Miss Drury being elected a pronounced favourite, but she played a very unimportant part in the race itself, finishing a bad last. Old Bellman proved that he is not done with by any means, as after running in front for most of the journey he easily stalled off a challenge by Cannongate, and won by two lengths.

For the Railway Handicap which followed Renown was sorted out as a good thing, and that this was the correct solution of the case was proved by the son of Dreadnought winning somewhat easily from Formula and Takapuna.

The Nursery Handicap was considered to lie between Calibre and Crecy, but Mr D. O'Brien's colt failed to show prominently, Crecy winning by fully three lengths from Sparkling Water. Lady Avon was made a hot favourite for the Pony Cup Handicap, and she quite justified the confidence reposed in her by fairly walking away with the race.

The Christmas Handicap was the concluding item of the first day, and the followers of St. Ursula rallied so stoutly round the mare that she went to the post a warm favourite; Firefly being next in request. Honesty and Doctor made most of the running, when the favourite put in her claim, and stalling off a rush by Cavalerio, won by a length from Mr Harris' gelding.

The following are the particulars of the racing:—

TRIAL HANDICAP of 100sovs. Seven furlongs.

507—Messrs L. D. and N. A. Nathan's br m Rosella, by Seaton Delaval—Rote, 4yrs, 9.0 (J. Gallagher) 1
398—Mr J. Chaafe's b m St. Ursula, 5yrs, 8.11 (J. Chaafe, jnr.) 2
137—Mr A. B. Edwards' br m Honesty, aged, 7.10 (Stewart) ..... f
161—Mr D. O'Brien's b h Peerage, 5yrs, 7.7 (R. Smith) ..... f
Also started:—174, Cavaliero, 8.11 (W. Clarke); 26, Jim Kean, 7.7 (Thomas); 32, Rosiphele, 6.9 (W. Bird); 124, Zealous, 6.8, (Jones); 22, Crusade, 6.7 (Abbott).

The field were released to an even start, the colours of St. Ursula, Rosella, and Peerage being most conspicuous. Running through the cutting Rosiphele was in front, closely followed by Honesty. Just below the distance the latter forged ahead, and when the Derby stand was reached it was anyone's race, the field being all bunched. Here Rosella put in her claim, and coming fast scored a neck victory from St. Ursula, with Honesty and Peerage a dead heat a length further back; these followed Zealous, Cavaliero, with Rosiphele last. Dividend, £2 16/. Totalisator, £1581. Time, 1.31 1-5s.

GREAT NORTHERN FOAL STAKES of 500sovs. Six furlongs.

801—Mr G. G. Stead's b c Menschikoff, by Stepniak—Pibroch, 8.10 (R. Derrett) 1
148—Mr G. G. Stead's ch c Field Battery, by Hotchkiss—Lady Evelyn (Hewitt) 2
56—Mr J. Emmerson's ch f Sparkling Water, by St. Hippo—Waitemata, 8.5 (Whitehouse) 3
Also started:—183, J. W. Russell's br f Kissaline, by Hotchkiss—Brown Alice, 8.5 (M. Ryan).

Immediately the barrier rose Sparkling Water and Menschikoff rushed to the front, and running through the cutting the pair were four lengths ahead of Field Battery and Kissaline. At the bend Menschikoff was half a length in front of Sparkling Water, while Field Battery and Kissaline closed up the gap a little bit. When the straight was entered the leader was running well within himself, and coming on in great style the Stepniak horse ran home an easy winner by fully three lengths from Field Battery, while Sparkling Water was the same distance further back, and Kissaline last. Time, 1.19. Dividend, £1 2/. Totalisator, 1188.

AUCKLAND CUP of 1000sovs. Two miles.

857—Mr P. Chaafe's br h Bluejacket, by St. Leger—Antelope, 6yrs, 8.8 (J. Scoats) 1
514—Hon. J. D. Ormond's br m Ideal, by Dreadnought—Mount Ida, 5yrs, 8.0 (F. Davis) 2
427—Mr G. G. Stead's br g Skobeloff, by Stepniak—Pibroch, 4yrs, 7.4 (Hewlit) 3
Also started:—424, Fulmen, 8.6 (Derrett); 429, Tortulla, 8.5 (Jenkins); 870, Coronet, 8.4 (Julian); 526, La Gloria, 8.3 (M. Ryan); 207, Beddington, 7.6 (Buchanan); 97, Military, 7.0 (Abbott); 682, Dayntree, 7.0 (W. Bird); 85, Knight of Athol, 6.7 (R. Smith).

Quite a number of spectators went down to witness the start, which was a remarkably even one, the colours of Bluejacket and Beddington being first to show out. A moment later Knight of Athol was rushed to the front, the grey leading through the cutting, at which point Fulmen was last. The leader was still going strongly at the bend, being followed by Beddington, La Gloria, Dayntree, and Coronet, with the others all bunched. Passing the stand Fulmen had gone up into second place, while Tortulla was whipping in the field, Knight of Athol was still holding his own, running out of the straight, his nearest attendant being Skobeloff, Dayntree, and La Gloria. As they swept into the straight Coronet commenced to put in his claim, while Skobeloff and La Gloria were on even terms. Opposite the Derby stand Bluejacket came with a wet sail, and although Ideal and Skobeloff made a desperate effort to reach the St. Leger horse, he held his own to the finish, winning by nearly two lengths from the Napier mare, with Skobeloff third; and then followed Dayntree, Tortulla, Coronet, La Gloria, with Military last. Time, 3.33. Totalisator, 4048. Dividend, £5 8/.

HANDICAP HURDLES of 200sovs. Two miles.

311—Mr R. Hamon's br g Bellman, by Tetford—The Orphan, aged, 9.10 (A. Hall) 1
450—Mr J. Warner's br g Cannongate, 6yrs, 11.11 (Stewart) 2
154—Mr T. Crummer's b g Tim, aged, 11.7 (Katterns) 3
Also started: 110 Nor'-West, 12.0 (R. Hall); 614 Miss Drury, 9.8 (Hall).

Bellman was quickest to negotiate the first hurdle, closely followed by Tim, and running through the cutting to the next obstacle the pair had a dozen lengths lead of the field, Nor'-West lying last. Passing the stand the order was Bellman, Tim, Miss Drury, Cannongate and Nor'-West, and in this order they ran round the far stretch and through the cutting. Here Miss Drury commenced to tail off, while Cannongate was first making up ground. Coming into the straight Bellman was still holding his own, and although Cannongate made a strong effort to get up, he had to put up with a two lengths defeat from the son of Tetford, Tim was third, Nor'-West fourth, and Miss Drury last. Time, 3.52 2-5. Totalisator, 1859. Dividend, £4 16/.

RAILWAY HANDICAP of 300sovs. Six furlongs.

348—Hon. J. D. Ormond's ch c Renown, by Dreadnought—Lyrebird, 5yrs, 8.11 (F. Davis) 1
343—Hon. H. Mosman's b f Formula, 3yrs, 7.6 (Tate) 2
121—Messrs R. and R. Duder's br c Takapuna, 3yrs, 7.0 (Satman) 3
Also started: 300 Hohoro, 10.10 (Jilling); 72 Malatua, 9.0 (T. Clarke); 128 Sir Peter, 9.0 (J. Chaafe); 111 Hastings, 7.11 (Buchanan); 308 The Needle, 7.9 (W. Bird); 13 (St. Elmo, 7.6 (McGuire); 105 Winsome, 7.6 (Whitehouse); 74 Tommy Atkins, 7.3 (Miller); 90 Vai Rosa, 7.2 (Hewitt); 40 Landlock, 6.8 (McKinnon).

The Needle and Hastings were quickest on their feet, and the pair were in command going through the cutting. At this point Formula was taken to the front, while Renown and The Needle were her nearest attendants. At the bend Formula still held a slight advantage over Renown, but directly their heads were turned for home the Napier colt drew away, and running on won somewhat easily from the daughter of Hotchkiss, who was followed home by Takapuna, Hohoro, Hastings, The Needle, Winsome, and Malatua. Time, 1.16 4-5. Totalisator, 3194. Dividend, £3.

NURSERY HANDICAP of 100sovs. Five furlongs.

623—Mr W. Ryan's br f Crecy, by Hotchkiss—Crescent, 8.5 (M. Ryan) 1
59—Mr J. Emmerson's ch f Sparkling Water, 7.12 (Whitehouse) 2
161—Major F. N. George's ch f Rattler, 7.5 (Tate) 3
Also started: 853 Calibre, 8.10 (T. Clarke); 282 Scotty, 8.8 (S. Lindsay); 32 Little Bess, 7.0 (Abbott); 13 Hesper, 7.0 (McKinnon); 21 Rita, 7.0 (W. Bird); 87 Real Blue, 6.11 (Satman); 12 Jessamine, 6.10 (Speakman); 29 Despatch, 6.7 (Jones).

Rita became prominent when the barrier flew up and she showed the way to Crecy and Despatch round the top stretch. Entering the straight Rita was still in command, but when the Derby Stand was reached Crecy put in her claim, and coming on won very easily by three lengths from Sparkling Water, with Rattler in third place. Time, 1.6 1-5. Totalisator, 2152. Dividend, £3 2/.

PONY CUP HANDICAP of 100sovs, seven furlongs.

1092—Mr J. J. Ralph's blk f Lady Avon, by Soult—First Love, 3yrs, 7.0 (J. Scoats) 1
217—Mr O. Bryant's b m Cuisine, 6yrs, 7.9 (Tate) 2
308—Mr Thos. Barr's br f Orange and Blue, 3yrs, 6.7 (Barr) 3
Also started: 514 Blue Paul, 9.6 (R. Derrett); 458 Pipiwharauroa, 8.6 (Gallagher).

Pipiwharauroa and Lady Avon showed the way along the far stretch, but when the cutting was reached Cuisine rushed to the front and soon had a two lengths lead of the field. Turning into the straight Lady Avon made a move forward and easily silencing the opposition won by three lengths from Cuisine, with Orange and Blue a length further away. Time, 1.31. Totalisator, 2589. Dividend, £2 2/.

CHRISTMAS HANDICAP of 150sovs. One mile.

1158—Mr J. Chaafe's b m St. Ursula, by St. Leger—Satanella, 5yrs, 8.7 (Whitehouse) 1
303—Mr L. Harris' br g Cavaliero, aged, 8.6 (W. Clarke) 2
177—Mr D. O'Brien's b h Peerage, 5yrs, 7.2 (Speakman) 3
Also started: 630 Firefly, 8.5 (S. Lindsay); 118, Honesty, 7.4; (Stewart); 223 Paphos, 7.0 (Neary); 66 Doctor, 6.12 (Abbott); 47 Minerve, 6.9 (R. Smith); 152 The Waster, 6.7 (Satman).

There was a considerable delay at the post owing to Minerve refusing to join the field, and eventually Mr Cutts despatched them without her. When the barrier rose St. Ursula was the first to show out, followed by Doctor and Honesty, while Paphos was at the tail end of the field. Doctor then assumed command with Honesty and St. Ursula close handy. Once in the straight Honesty momentarily flattered her backers, but St. Ursula was not done with, and answering gamely to her rider's call won under pressure by a length from Cavaliero, while Peerage was nearly that distance further back. Time, 1.44. Totalisator, 2878. Dividend, £2 4/.

Total for day, £20,159.

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On the second day proceedings were started with the Alexandra Handicap, for which the top weight Jabber was a strong favourite, but the race fell to Laetitia, who won by three-quarters of a length from Tommy Atkins. Considering that there were only four runners in the Hurdle Race, the event looked wonderfully open, each horse being strongly backed, although Cannongate carried most money. Miss Drury was in command for the greater part of the journey, but in the straight Cannongate closed up and catching the leader fifty yards from home, won by a length. For the Criterion Handicap, Cressy was a slightly better favourite than Calibre. The finish proved a most exciting one, Calibre and Ragrabrush fighting it out up the straight, and the judge was unable to separate them as they ran past the post. A tremendous lot of money went on to Renown for the Summer Cup, the Napier horse going out a little better than an even money favourite, while Tortulla was next in demand. The winner turned up in the sprinter Hohoro, who proved his capability for staying the distance out all right. In the Welter Handicap, Cavalerio was sorted out as the best of a big field, while Solo was also in considerable demand. The big son of Cuirassier proved his ability to win under heavy weights, by carrying 11.3 to victory with Regalia II. half-a-length away. In the Pony Handicap, Blue Paul and Lady Avon disputed favouritism, but in the race itself, the black filly was never prominent, Blue Paul winning by a neck from Orange and Blue, after a great go. The Visitors' Plate was pronounced a certainty for Formula, and so it proved, the Hon. H. Mosman's filly having matters all her own way, winning in a canter by three lengths. The Waitemata Handicap concluded proceedings, the whole of the six contestants being well backed, although Volee was actual favourite. Once more the finish was most exciting, Regulus and Defender having a great duel in the run home, a dead heat being the result.

ALEXANDRA HANDICAP of 150sovs, 7 furlongs.

Messrs L. D. and N. A. Nathan's b m Laetitia, 4yrs, by Seaton Delaval—Miss Letty, 7.10 (Buchanan) 1
Mr C. E. Major's b g Tommy Atkins, 6.12 2
Mr John Chaafe's b h St. Peter, 9.2 (J. Chaafe, jun.) 3
Also started: Jabber, Firefly, Military, Rosiphele and Crusade.

From a straggling start the colours of Rosiphele and Firefly were the first to show out, and the pair led to the cutting when Tommy Atkins went to the front, followed by Firefly and St. Peter. Entering the straight Tommy Atkins was still in command, but opposite the Derby Stand Laetitia put in her claim, and coming on won by half a length from Tommy Atkins, with St. Peter 2 lengths away third. Time, 1.29 4-5. Dividend, £7 5/.

SECOND HANDICAP HURDLES of 100 sovs; 1½ mile.

Mr J. Warner's b g Cannongate, by Cannon—Fishfag, 12.6 (Stewart) 1
Mr E. G. Ellett's ch m Miss Drury, 9.0 2
Mr T. Crummer's b g Tim, 11.12 3

All started. Miss Drury and Cannongate were first to draw out, and they showed the way over the first obstacle three lengths ahead of Tim and Forty-seven. Passing the stand the order was: Miss Drury, Cannongate, Tim, Forty-seven. At the far stretch the latter ran up into second position. Once in the straight Cannongate commenced to come fast, winning from Miss Drury by a length and a-half, three lengths away from the third, and Forty-seven last. Time, 3.20 1-5s. Dividend, £2 2/.

SUMMER CUP HANDICAP of 500sovs. One mile and a quarter.

290—C. Lovett's br g Hohoro, by Tasman—Lady Moth, 4yrs, 8.6 (Jilling) 1
385—D. Gordon's blk m Tortulla, 5yrs, 8.10 (Jenkins) 2
161—L. D. and N. A. Nathan's b Beddington, 3yrs, 7.13 (Buchanan) 3

Also started: 172, Bluejacket, 9.4 (J. Scoats); 1038, Renown, 8.10 (F. Davis), 111, Coronet, 8.8 (Julian); 209, La Gloria, 8.6 (M. Ryan); 28, St. Ursula, 8.3 (J. Chaafe, jun.); 28, St. Peter, 8.2 (Whitehouse); 111, Dayntree, 7.12 (Gallagher); 87, The Needle, 7.6 (W. Bird).

Considerable delay was caused at the post through Dayntree playing up, but when the barrier rose Bluejacket was first to get going, closely followed by The Needle, Hohoro, and St. Ursula, with the rest all bunched together. Running out of the straight Bluejacket was still in the van, his nearest attendants being La Gloria, The Needle, and Tortulla. As the field swept out of the cutting Tortulla was at the head of affairs, and she led around the bend, and into the straight, closely followed by Beddington, La Gloria, with the others all of a bunch close up. Passing the Derby Stand Torpedo's daughter was still in front, but at the lawn rails Hohoro put in his claim, and coming with a very fast run defeated Tortulla by a length, while Beddington was a length and a half away third, La Gloria was fourth, Renown fifth, and Dayntree last. Time 2.10 1-5sec. Dividend, £7 17/. Total

WINNERS OF THE SUMMER CUP.

	m. s.
1898—Coronet, 4yrs, 8.0	2 10½
1899—Explosion, 4yrs, 8.6	2 10
1900—Hohoro, 4yrs, 8.6	2 10 1-5

HANDICAP WELTER RACE, of 200sovs. One mile.

806—L. Harris' br g Cavallero, by Cuirassier—Clio, a, 11.5 (W. Clarke) 1
6—J. R. Litherland's b g Regalia II., 5yrs, 9.0 (Hodson) 2
35—T. Davis' b g The Waster, 5yrs, 8.6 (J. Chaste, Jun.) 3

Also started:—128, Whitney, 11.8 (Jenkins); 849, Bolo, 10.6 (T. Taylor); 281, Peerage, 9.11 (T. Clarke); 30, Knight of Athol, 9.9 (Valentine); 29, Motor, 9.6 (W. Stewart); 178, Jim Keans, 9.0 (Gallagher); 213, Landlock, 8.3 (Ransom); 56, Minerva, 8.0 (Whitehouse); 32, Paul Beaton, 8.0 (Gainsford).

From an even start the colours of The Waster, Whitney, Paul Beaton, and Regalia II. were most conspicuous as the field swept along the far stretch. When the five-furlong post was reached Regalia II. was a length in front of Whitney and The Waster. Entering the straight it was anyone's race, the field being all together. At the distance Cavallero put in a strong charge, and coming with a wet nail won by half a length from Regalia II., while The Waster was three lengths away third. Time 1.45. Dividend, £4. Total, 1718.

PONY HANDICAP of 60sovs. Six furlongs.

670—Mr E. J. Rae's b g Blue Paul, by Beaton Delaval—Miss Letty, 4yrs, 9.0 (R. Derrett) 1
203—Mr Thos. Barr's br f Orange and Blue, 3yrs, 8.7 (Barr) 2
88—Mr S. Mack's br m First Whisper, aged, 7.2 (Satman) 3

Also started:—479, Lady Avon, 9.0 (Sceats); 211, Lena, 8.6 (Jilling); 42, Pipiwharauroa, 8.0 (Gallagher); 183, Cuisine, 7.12 (Tate); 43, Mamoa, 7.0 (W. Smith); 54, Rapit, 6.10 (McKinnon); 12, Chief Miss, 6.10 (Abbott).

Cuisine caused considerable delay at the post by playing up, and when the barrier lifted Lady Avon dashed to the front, closely attended by Lena and Blue Paul. They were well together as they rounded for home, at which point Lady Avon dropped back fast, while Blue Paul took up the running, and finishing very strongly won all out by a neck from the fast-finishing Orange and Blue, with First Whisper in third place. Time, 1.19 4-5s. Total, 1903. Dividend, £3.

VISITORS' PLATE of 100sovs. Five furlongs.

503—Hon. H. Mosman's b f Formula, by Hotchkiss — Formo, 3yrs, 8.9 (T. Taylor) 1
9—Mr D. McKinnon's b f Hesper, 2yrs, 7.4 (McKinnon) 2
182—Messrs L. D. and N. A. Nathan's b g Liquidator, 3yrs, 7.4 (Buchanan) 3

Also started:—22, Rona Rosa, 7.9 (Hewitt); 9, Miss Lottie, 7.4 (Tate); 12, Lady Scott, 7.4 (Julian); 57, Rita, 7.4 (W. Bird).

The colours of Hesper were the first to show prominently as they started for the five-furlong flutter. At the bend Rita came to grief, while Formula was taken to the front and from this out she had the race well in hand, winning in a canter by two lengths from Hesper and Liquidator. Time, 1.3. Total, 869. Dividend, £1 7/.

WAITEMATA HANDICAP of 100sovs. One mile and a-half.

251—Mr H. French's b g Defender, by Cuirassier—Helen McGregor, 4yrs, 8.9 (Hewitt) ..... †
210—Messrs Alison Bros.' br g Regulus, by Regel—Tamora, 5yrs, 8.12 (Satman) ..... †
535—Messrs R. and E. Deuter's b m Volee, 4yrs, 7.3 (Buchanan)..... 3

Also started:—272, Donnybrook, 7.6 (Jenkins); 169, Black Ross, 7.0 (Jones); 267, Ballbriste, 7.0 (W. Bird). Donnybrook made play for the greater part of the journey, but four furlongs from home he had shot his bolt, Defender and Regulus being left three lengths clear of the others. A splendid race between these two took place all the way up the straight, and they ran home locked together, the judge being unable to separate them. Time, 2.42 2-5s. Total, 1494. Dividend on Regulus, £3 12/; on Defender, £3.

The Carrington Stakes, the principal item of the Tattersall's Meeting at Sydney, was won by Mr. W. Mate's b m Fulminate, by Gossoon—Percussion, with Mr. C. McKeown's b h Gameboy second, and Mr. G. Ternan's Jenny Moore third. The winner carried 7st, and scored a very hollow victory, leading all the way and winning in a canter by five lengths. There were 21 runners, and the six furlongs were cut out in the splendid time of 1.14.

To-day (Wednesday) the Auckland Racing Club will conclude their big summer carnival at Ellerslie. The principal items to be discussed are the Royal Stakes, Auckland Steeplechase, and Plate. The former should give rise to an exceedingly good contest, as all the crack two and three year-olds are engaged. Mr. Stead looks like playing a very strong hand in the six furlong flutter, as the Southern sportsman has Field Battery, Menschikoff, and Formosan to represent him, and I am inclined to think that the two-year-old son of Stepniak and Pibroch will be found very nearly equal to doing the trick. The strongest opposition will come from the Napier horse Renown, who is certain to put up a fine race, while of the others Beddington and Takapuna should run forwardly.

In the Steeplechase the field promises to be not too large, but there is sufficient material for a fine contest. Nor'-West has many good deeds to recommend him over this course, but at the same time the son of Sou'-Wester has not shown anything recently, and it may be that he is not quite at his best, although Cheafe's horse is sure to put up a good go. Cannongate is, without question, a greatly improved horse, and a fine natural jumper, while another who will be quite at home over the Ellerslie course is Dingo, and I think that he or the son of Cannon will be first to catch the judge's eye.

The Auckland Plate looks somewhat in the light of a certainty for the champion Advance, as I do not see what we have to really extend Vanguard's black son at weight-for-age.

After the remarkable exhibition of riding on the part of J. Sceats, who had the mount on Lady Avon in the Pony Race on Friday, it was small wonder that the Stewards decided to take some action in the matter. The case was of such a glaring nature that it seems a pity that a very much more severe punishment was not meted out than was the case, for disqualification for the rest of the meeting is no sort of punishment for such a bare-faced act. I cannot help fancying that there was at least one other candidate in the same race whose contradictory running should have been dealt with at the same time.

During the first two days of the Summer Meeting at Ellerslie the sum of £32,994 was put through the totalisator, which shows an increase of £3,708 compared with the investments made on the similar days last year. Should the weather hold fine for the concluding days, it would appear likely that the New Zealand record will be broken.

The win of Bluejacket in the Auckland Cup was by no means unexpected, as the son of St. Leger had been going exceedingly well in his work, prior to the big race, and he carried a lot of money. Bluejacket, it will be remembered, placed this event to his credit last year, while in the preceding season he won the Great Northern Derby.

At the Lincoln meeting (England), the ex-Sydney horse Syeria was made a strong favourite for the big race of the day, the Great Town Plate, but was beaten after a desperate finish by Pellisson, who won by a neck.

The many people who considered that Hohoro would be quite unable to stay out any journey exceeding a mile got rather a set back in the Summer Cup on Friday last, which the son of Tasman placed to his credit, finishing up his task in the most resolute manner possible. It was no doubt owing to Hohoro's reputation as a non-stayer that induced Mr. Evett to let the gelding into the Summer Cup with such a light impost as 8.5, which contrasts somewhat curiously with the 10.10 awarded him in the Railway Handicap, when competing against almost the same cattle.

The Victorian horse Billow, by Atlantic, is now in the Old Country. In the Duchy Plate, at Liverpool, he ran for Lord William Beresford, going to the post at 13 to 8 on. Spartacus, one of the light weights, just managed to upset the good thing, winning after a gruelling battle by a short head.

What a great, all-round sport was the late Maharajah of Patiala. He was a finished amateur rider, a noted pig-sticker, a dashing polo player, an enthusiastic cricketer, a fine shot, and a princely patron of the turf. His green and gold colours were always popular, and he achieved many notable successes, notably with Sprightly in the Viceroy's Cup. The Maharajah will be greatly missed wherever sportsmen congregate in India, for he was liberal to a fault. Only the other day, after the race banquet at the Rajendra Club, he was carried shoulder-high round the room. His successor, the Ticca Sahib, who will be Maharajah Bhoopindra, Singh, Rajendra Bahadur, is a good cricketer, and a crack rifle shot.

The Auckland Trotting Club was favoured with splendid weather on each day of their meeting, which took place at Potter's Paddock last week. Everything passed off very pleasantly, on the first and second days of the gathering, but on Saturday the Stewards were called upon to deal with two cases of inconsistent running, and in both instances the protests were upheld. The sum of £10,666 was passed through the totalisator on the three days, which is an increase of £1,199 over the corresponding meeting held last year.

The Avondale Cup winner Toros came to grief when competing on the second day of the Thames meeting, and her injuries were of such a nature that the daughter of Regel had to be destroyed.

The majority of racegoers who speculate generally follow form, but there are those who pin their faith to the jockey, and have their little bit on the horse who carries their favourite [illegible]. It is stated that a prominent London society woman has won £19,000 this season backing the mounts of Lester Reiff on a semi-cumulative system, always playing for one-fourth of her capital, figuring on one win in every four mounts.

Mr. R. Ross had bad luck on Monday last with his pony Myrene, which while galloping on the racecourse, broke her near fore pastern.

Coeur-de-Lion showed that he has not forgotten how to gallop, as after getting six lengths the worst of the start in the Manawatu Cup, he came to the front in the straight, and won by two lengths from Paindin, cutting out the mile in 1.41 2-5. He was accorded an ovation on returning to scale.

H.R.H. the Prince of Wales was evidently much pleased with the grand deeds of Ambush II. in the Grand National last year, as he has given a big figure for the four-year-old Yeoman, by Enthusiast, from Miss Plant (dam of the winner of the great cross-country event).

CRICKET.

The Goldfields' team which tried conclusions with an Auckland eleven at North Shore last Saturday gave a very poor account of itself, being defeated by an innings and 42 runs. It must be admitted that the visitors were hardly up to senior form, but on the other hand the team was greatly weakened by the inability of several prominent players to take part in the game. Johnston, who obtained the highest score in each innings, showed promise both as a batsman and a bowler, and with practice and a bit of coaching he ought to become a really good player. For Auckland the principal run-getters were Hesmus, Hicks and R. Neill, the last-named batting especially well. When put on to bowl in the second innings the veteran showed great form, and the Goldfields' players found him a bit too good.

The Auckland reps. have not had a very pleasant time of it in the early stages of their tour. To start with, they had a very rough trip down the coast to Wellington, and when leaving that port, in the Rotomahana, they encountered one of Wellington's gentle zephyrs, and had to put back. Consequently they missed their train from Christchurch to Dunedin, and the Otago match, which was to have been commenced on Saturday, had to be postponed until Monday. It is to be hoped that our boys are having all their bad luck to start with, and that good fortune will attend them in future.

Some of the Canterbury critics considered their rep. team to be very strong in batting, and rather weak in bowling. Up here it was generally thought that they would be especially dangerous in the latter department, strengthened, as they have been, by obtaining the services of S. Calloway.

The Christchurch "Press" publishes the following batting averages of the team in cup cricket this season, which should prove interesting to local cricketers at the present time. It will be noticed that Calloway is at the head of the list, with the fine average of 56.5, so this player promises to be of great assistance to Canterbury with the bat, as well as with the ball.

Name.	Innings.	Not out.	Runs.	Most in Innings.	Average.
Calloway	4	0	226	106	56.5
Wisley	4	1	164	100*	54.3
Blue	5	0	234	109	46.8
Ridley	3	1	89	27*	44.5
Reese	5	2	96	57*	32
Pearce	5	1	87	46*	21.7
Barry	5	0	99	28	19.8
Boxshall	2	0	33	28	16.5
Orchard	3	1	31	24*	15.5
Harman	5	1	49	28	12.2
Malone	5	0	29	16	5.8

Canterbury has proved successful in their first interprovincial match, gaining an easy victory over Otago with an innings to spare. The result, however, cannot be accepted as a true test of the merits of the two teams, as Canterbury luckily won the toss and had the benefit of playing on a perfect wicket, and Otago had to bat on one soddex by rain, and consequently they made a very poor showing.

G. Mills played for Otago against Canterbury, and in the first innings obtained 15 runs, but in his second attempt he failed to score. By scoring 365 (not out) for South Australia against New South Wales Clem Hill has created a new record for inter-colonial cricket. The previous best was the 331 scored by W. L. Murdoch for N.S.W. against Victoria in 1882.

Last season Hill was somewhat of a failure with the bat, and a good many cricketers began to fear that his illness, when at Home with the last Australian team, had resulted in the permanent loss of form of our admittedly best colonial bat. However, by his latest performance Hill has proved such conclusions to be entirely erroneous, and we can look forward confidently to a repetition of his best previous displays when next he is pitted against the pick of English cricket talent.

BUSINESS WOMAN'S CARES.

TIRED OF LIFE.

A Perth (W.A.) reporter sends to his paper an item concerning an Albany business woman's method of ending her troubles.

"Mrs. Caroline Andrews, of Middleton Road (he writes) who is fifty-two years of age, has resided in Albany for thirteen years, and for many years has been engaged in storekeeping. But five years ago business cares and the heat of the climate told upon her so severely that her health failed, and she was afflicted with diarrhoea with all its weakening symptoms. During this period several doctors attended her, but they ultimately told her she would never recover. She was so weak and ill that life had no pleasure for her, and each morning she rose from bed tired out before the day began. Sometimes her hands and feet became very cold, her pulse feeble, and her skin unnaturally dry; her food gave her no strength. As she kept Dr. Williams' pink pills in stock she could not help noticing how the sales were increasing, and, hearing of many who had benefited by them, she decided to try them. The first box strengthened her a little, and later on her ailment began to abate. By continuing some time with the pills she became quite cured. Since then she has gained in health and strength, has put on flesh, and is more active and energetic than she has been for years.

Impure water is often the cause of the diarrhoea so common at this season, but bad smells, unripe fruit, decomposed food, and improperly cooked vegetables may also cause it. By increasing the blood supply, and giving tone to the organs of the body, Dr. Williams' pink pills cure diarrhoea. They also cure anaemia, debility, dyspepsia, effects of sunstroke and typhoid, chronic headaches, insomnia, ladies' ailments, loss of vital force, summer lassitude, etc. Sold by chemists and storekeepers and by the Dr. Williams Medicine Company, Wellington, three shillings per box, six boxes sixteen and six, post free. Beware of substitutes—they are always useless and sometimes poisonous.

PERSONAL NOTES FROM LONDON.

(From Our London Correspondent.)

LONDON, November 15.

The "World" has now numbered the Agent-General among its celebrities at home. The chiel that takes notes for that journal found Celebrity No. 1169 at 20, Cornwall Gardens, in a quiet plane tree shaded square, not far from the Imperial Institute. As, however, the Agent-General rents a furnished house and does not disturb "the details of the domestic milieu" the interviewer discovered "little specially characteristic of him in the lofty, comfortable rooms." However, the eye of the observer fell upon a Maori petticoat, some tasteful china, and some yellow flowers tastefully arranged by Mrs Reeves. The books were the feature most characteristic of the Agent-General, who "has much of his time taken up in dining out and in public engagements, none the less numerous because he is a first-class speaker," and who has "many New Zealand friends to be entertained, to say nothing of a wide circle of English acquaintances and relatives."

After referring to the ardour of both Mr and Mrs Reeves for cycling and describing what he saw at the Agent-General's office, the interviewer gives a concise biography of Mr Reeves and of his progressive programme, not omitting the correct version of the famous "social pest" speech, and concluding, "Generally it may be said that the squatters, merchants and professional classes regarded Mr Reeves' parliamentary achievements with the fiercest hostility. On the strength of them he was, however, in 1896, soon after his arrival in London, entertained by the Eighty Club with Mr Asquith in the chair.

The Agent-General was present as a colonial representative at the dinner of the Imperial Liberal Council last Monday, when he responded to the toast of the "United Empire," and at the livery dinner of the Salters' Company on Wednesday, when he proposed the toast of "The Master." He is one of the guests at the banquet to Lord Ampthill next week.

Mr Justice Denniston and his family returned to London last night from Berwick-on-Tweed, and will leave for the colony about 10th December.

Among the passengers by the Gothic, leaving next week, will be Mr "Len" Lloyd, of Christchurch, and his wife. Of late they have been doing the sights of London and environs in energetic fashion, and may fairly claim to have seen all that is worth seeing in the hub of the universe. On his return to New Zealand "Len" proposes to take steps to get himself reinstated in the ranks of amateur cyclists, a proceeding which appears to be somewhat in the fashion with your wheelers who have strayed into the cash prize fold. I have little doubt that Mr Lloyd will be welcomed back to the amateur ranks, and I am very glad to hear that your cycling authorities are making the way easy for those riders who, having tasted the joys (?) of professionalism, are anxious to return to the amateur state once more.

Lieut.-Colonel Francis, who has been staying at the Hotel Metropole, Brighton, came up before the Medical Board for examination yesterday.

Dr. and Mrs Chilton and their little son left Southampton last Monday on their way back to the colony in the Norddeutscher-Lloyd Company's Grosser Kurfurst. This steamer, by the way, is not only the largest vessel plying between Europe and Australia, but is about 2000 tons superior to any of the mail boats now running between England and Australia. She is 13,182 tons gross register, has a displacement of 22,000 tons, is 581 feet long, 62 feet broad and 39 feet deep, has two sets of quadruple expansion engines of 8000 horse power, and has accommodation for 350 first-class passengers, 150 second and 250 third. Her speed is expected to average 15 or more knots an hour. She is splendidly fitted, even down to such details as electric lamps in the ladies' cabins to heat curling tongs, and in the gentlemen's to heat shaving water.

The "Bute man" records the death at the ripe old age of 83 of Mr James Macintosh, formerly of Marton, New Zealand, which took place at 17, Argyle Terrace, Rothesay, on November 9th.

The Fleetwood barque Woodville, Captain Trinick, arrived in the Cable Dene Dock from New Zealand laden with wheat last week after a voyage occupying nearly 150 days.

Mr Walter Westna, Christchurch, left London at the end of last week on his return to the colony. He travels via Nice, Rome and Cairo, and joins the Rome at Ismailia.

Mr Henry B. Pegram, who has undertaken the bust of Sir Harry Atkinson, is a pupil of the eminent sculptor Mr Hamo Thorneycroft, R.A., and has for 17 years past exhibited without intermission at the Royal Academy sculptures of all kinds—groups, figures, bas-reliefs, busts, and medallions. Some of his best-known works are "Death and the Prisoner," a life-size group exhibited in 1888; "The Sybil," 1891; "Ignis Fatuis," a high relief in bronze exhibited in 1889, which was purchased by the Royal Academy, and is now in the Tate Gallery; and "Fortune," a single figure sculpture in heroic size, which attracted considerable attention at this year's R.A. show. Mr Pegram achieved a bronze medal at the 1889 Paris Exhibition, and was among the silver medallists of the great show just closed. At the Dresden Exhibition in 1897 his work gained for him a gold token. Mr Pegram has done a large amount of architectural sculpture, including that on the main entrance of the Imperial Institute, but the individual work on which he prides himself most is perhaps the new candelabra recently placed in the main entrance to St. Paul's Cathedral. They are of bronze, about 15 feet high, and the subjects are taken from the various objects of creation. Mr Pegram has done but little work on a small scale, but a charming little statuette, in silver, of the Queen, which belongs to the Mess of the Bodyguard of Gentlemen-at-Arms, is sufficient evidence of his powers in the execution of miniature work.

Mrs Kilgour, of Auckland, has returned to London after an extensive and most enjoyable tour on the Continent and in Ireland and Scotland, and now proposes to stay in the Old Country over the winter, if she finds our climate is not too trying. Whilst in Europe she visited Brussels, did the Rhine Valley, visited Oberammergau and saw the Passion Play, and thence went to Switzerland, and spent a night on Pilatus for the sake of seeing sunset and sunrise from that famous mountain top. Mrs Kilgour came back to England via Paris, and soon after her arrival in London went on to Ireland, where she stayed for some time with friends in Dan O'Connell's old home at Derrynane Abbey, and sampled life in Convent at Tralee for four days. Thence she went on to Scotland, and after visiting friends in that land and the North of England, returned to town well ready for a period of rest from travel. She does not expect to return to New Zealand for some months to come, but her movements will depend to a great extent on the nature of the coming winter.

Mr Thomas Brown, the genial head of Brown, Ewing and Co., of Dunedin, who came Home in June last with his wife, for purposes of pleasure and profit, leaves the Old Country next week by the Gothic, having had a very enjoyable spell here. He was, you will remember, one of the representatives of Dunedin at the Conference of Chambers of Commerce (his colleague being the Hon. T. Fergus), held at Fishmongers' Hall in July, and that over he and Mrs Brown repaired to Scotland, and thence on to Erin, touring those countries during August and September. Then they made an excursion to Paris, but they do not appear to have been overwhelmed with admiration for the "Exposition Internationale," indeed, Mr Brown thinks that it was an inferior show to the World's Fair at Chicago, which he saw in '93. Though pleasure was the primary object of the trip Home, a good deal of Mr Brown's time appears to have been spent in doing business on behalf of his firm.

Mr H. S. Morris, of Auckland, who after a pleasant trip by the Oruba to Marseilles, came overland to London, and spending a week in Paris en route arrived in the Metropolis late in August, has come to England with a view to pursuing his studies in Architectural Association, and has articled himself to a descendant of Sir Christopher Wren, who holds a high position among the fraternity here. Mr Morris will probably remain on this side of the water for three or four years, and then, after a tour round the world, will return to Auckland, where he proposes to commence practice.

Miss Celia Dampier was amongst the performers at the Northern Polytechnic in Holloway Road, and played very attractively to a large audience.

At the annual general meeting of the Melanesian Mission, which took place last Tuesday at Church House, Westminster, under the presidency of the Bishop of Newcastle, the chairman opened the ball with an "oiljus comparison." He remarked that Australasia had taught England how enthusiasm for foreign mission work could be maintained. In Sydney recently the greatest enthusiasm had been manifested in foreign missions, and it was a source of great gratification to them to know that about £3000 of the total sum of £8000 collected during the mission week there would go to the benefit of the Melanesian Mission, and that about £2000 of the sum would be devoted to the new ship fund. Altogether in Australia about £5000 had been collected for the mission. A real effort

was now about to be made to raise the necessary funds to provide the mission with a new and thoroughly suitable ship. The Bishop of Bath and Wells spoke of the Bishop of Tasmania's work in connection with the Board of Missions in Australia, and said that, as a result of the work of the mission, there were now some 12,000 baptised Christians in the islands wherein it laboured. There were 42 islands which the mission claimed as its special sphere, but 16 of these islands it had at present been unable to touch because it had not enough men nor a swift enough vessel. It was understood that the 42 islands were to be worked by the Church of England, and the fact that their work was now threatened with interference by others behoved them all to work with renewed energy to strengthen the influence of the mission. Admiral Sir N. Bowden-Smith, who was formerly in command of the Australian Station, when he personally visited many of the islands, testified to the excellence of the work carried on by the mission, and commended it to the support of the English people. Viscount Hampden said that both Lady Hampden and himself when in Australia were struck by the excellence of the methods adopted by the mission, and held Bishop Wilson in the greatest esteem. He did not think that hostile criticism of any kind could be directed with justice against the mission, which took the young of the islands when they could be moulded and turned them into God-fearing men and women. The Rev. J. J. Hornby, Provost of Eton, the Rev. R. P. Wilson, and others also addressed the meeting, and the Rev. L. R. Robin, the organising secretary, announced the receipt of a communication from Mr Henry Goschen, the treasurer of the ship fund, to the effect that £3225 had now been collected in this country, which, with the amount collected in Australia, made about half the total amount required for the new ship, the Southern Cross.

Picked up in the Colonial Office:—

We timid wights, who greatly fear
To go on fast with Pushful Joe,
Are much delighted now to hear
He's got a mate who'll go Onslow.

The talented author of these facetious lines was more concerned with the exigencies of rhyme than of veracity. Lord Onslow has not the reputation of lacking "pushfulness;" indeed considering the manner in which he offended his party by prematurely throwing up the Vice-royalty of New Zealand he has got on surprisingly well. Whether he will agree with Mr Chamberlain is another matter. He knows far more about the colonies than his chief does, and holds decided views on most of the vital Antipodean questions. Also he and Lady Onslow are not proud, but reserved, and their means will forbid their entertaining globe-trotting colonists, etc., as generously as they would doubtless like to do.

Some Records of 1900.

NOTABLE THINGS DONE IN A NOTABLE YEAR.

Without doubt the record records of the last year of this wonderful century can be claimed, not by human beings, but by the machines they have constructed.

On June 14th last Charron, the famous French automobilist, in winning the Paris to Lyons race, covered a distance of 353½ miles in 9 hours and 9 minutes, a speed of almost 40 miles an hour. It is perhaps a question to whom the greatest credit of such a record belongs—the man who built a machine capable of such a performance, or the man who had the nerve to drive it at such a speed for such a length of time over open highroads.

The other great machine-speed record which the year saw smashed is the voyage across the Atlantic. This has twice been lowered during the past year, first by the "Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse," which finished a passage at the rate of 22.89 knots an hour in August last, only to be beaten the very next day by her compatriot, the Hamburg-American "Deutschland." The latter ship arrived at Plymouth on August 14th, having covered the distance from New York in 5 days, 11 hours, 43 mins. The speed averaged 23.324 knots an hour, and her best day's run was 552 miles. She has since succeeded in going one better even than this, having covered the journey in 5 days, 7 hours, 38 mins., her pace being 23.36 knots an hour.

If the latter part of the summer was specially favourable as to wind and weather for such record-breaking performances, the earlier spring was equally unpropitious. Captain Brown, of the "Parisian," recorded the appearance 160 miles to the east of the Straits of Belle Isle of an iceberg bigger than he had ever seen or heard of in the Western Ocean. This record berg was 75 miles long, and in places 300 to 400 feet in height.

Although the year cannot claim a bigger ship than that prodigy of 1899, the "Oceanic," yet it has seen the construction of the record pontoon. This was built on the Tyne, and is in six sections, and will be capable of bearing 12,000 tons.

American shipbuilders have also launched a creation which is of her kind the largest in the world. This is the monster schooner "George W. Wells," the first six-masted vessel ever built. She is 345 feet long over all, and 48½ feet beam. Except one great iron vessel, once a steamer, she is the largest sailing vessel afloat, being able to carry 5,000 tons dead weight of cargo. Her masts, all of Oregon pine, tower 170 feet above the water, and on them can be spread 12,000 square yards of heavy canvas.

Britain's biggest railway station was opened early in 1900. This is the Waverley Station of the North British Railway at Edinburgh. It covers 23 acres—that is, half an acre more than Liverpool Street, London. Waverley Station has 19 platforms, aggregating 2¾ miles in length, and with an area of 32,520 square yards.

Pittsburg, America, home of millionaire Carnegie's new railroad shops, has turned out an engine which quite puts in the shade anything yet built, and has, it is said, reached the limit of weight which railway lines as at present constructed will bear. With its tender, this giant locomotive weighs 180 tons; without it, 125. The tender will carry 14 tons of coal, and the boiler exceeds the capacity of any other yet constructed by 500 gallons.

Long-distance athletes have been well to the fore. Holbein, the cyclist, has turned his attention to aquatics, and beaten Captain Webb's record swim from Blackwall to Gravesend by over seven minutes. Edward Hale has achieved another record-breaking cycling feat by covering 100 miles a day for a year, with the exception of Sundays. The total distance he covered works out at 32,479 miles.

Another notable athletic record is the jump of Mr Kraenzlein, of the University if Pennsylvania, who cleared in practice 24ft 8½in, beating the previous record by 1½in.

A Sunderland gentleman, Mr A. H. Binns, lately achieved a performance hitherto unequalled in Swiss mountaineering. He ascended and descended the tremendous peak of the Matterhorn—from the sleeping hut to the summit and back to the Mont Rosa Hotel—in eight and a half hours.

There are two curious postal records which have come to light during the last twelve months. Alexander Willis, a letter carrier of Great Shelford, began delivering letters in July, 1861, and for 38 years has never missed a single delivery. He has covered a six mile circuit daily, and has, therefore, walked in all a total distance of 84,000 miles.

The other record is less to the credit of the postal service of this country. On July 2nd, 1879, a letter was posted at Newcastle-on-Tyne. On August 15th, 1900, the letter arrived at St. Martin's and was delivered to its address in Smithfield 21 years after its posting.

Prices have been remarkably high during 1900. Coal reached a record height, and sold in London for 32/ a ton. This was traced partly to the war. So too—or rather to charitable feelings engendered by the war—was the price given at the National War Bazaar for two drinks—£70 4/. Even prices in Ladysmith during the early spring of 1900 did not match this, though some of them may stand as records. Twenty-five shillings for a threepenny packet of cigarettes, £3 for a 4lb of Cavendish tobacco, and 13/ for 12 matches will be hard to beat.

But the price record of the year was that paid by the Girdlers' Company for the lunch they gave to the Secretary of State and the members of the Council of India last summer. The estimated value of this feast was £167,000,000. It would, of course, be absurd to suppose that the actual bill was even the five hundred thousandth part of this terrific total. The way the estimate is arrived at is curious. In 1734 a Mr Robert Bell, then Master of the Girdlers, ordered from the East India Company a Persian carpet. One hundred and fifty pounds was the amount to be paid for this luxury, but in some way or other the bill was never settled, and has been accumulating at compound interest for more than a century and a half. The present Master of the Girdlers, the Lord Mayor, discovered the debt in the 166th year of its life, and an agreement was entered into that the Girdlers should wipe it off the slate by entertaining the descendants of their original debtors to a lunch. There were 75 guests present, so each one, so to speak, consumed a meal costing over £2,000,000.

In September last 21,819 individuals sat down to a banquet given by the Paris Municipality. They were the Mayors of every town in France.

Every diner had a bottle of wine. They drank between them 3000 bottles of liqueurs and smoked 22,000 cigars; 16,000 waiters were in attendance, and these received their orders from a commander-in-chief, who made signals by taps on a huge gong.

Many huge prices have been paid for animals, especially for horses. Edmond Blanc paid the gigantic sum of £38,350 for the Duke of Westminster's Derby winner, Flying Fox. But all records for yearlings were broken in the early summer of 1900, when a bay filly, a daughter of Ornament and Persimmon, sold to Mr Sievier for £10,000. Almost equally phenomenal is the £100 paid for a single Belgian hare, sent from England to California.

Complete Story.

ATALANTA.

By EDONARD ROD.

(TRANSLATED BY ELIZABETH LISTER MULLINS, FROM THE FRENCH.)

You can emancipate women as some of them and a great many men demand; you can make them apothecaries, notaries, lawyers, voters, legislators, ministers, and as they do in I know not which State of the Union, National Guards. You can allow them the free disposal of their property and of their earnings, let them exercise in all the sports, strengthen their muscles and develop their brains; you can enact laws for them, grant the equality of the sexes, substitute free-love for matrimony; you can realise the most extravagant Utopias, the most whimsical sectaries, but you will never prevent their being women. They are women incurably. When they cease to be so for an instant they soon return. Oh! we need not fear an upheaval of civilisation in which womankind will push us aside. They lose nothing we love in them. Even though it is necessary to suffer their apostles to preach for a little more justice in the division of rights, of labour and of wages, that will not harm love. Existence could be made easier by a growth of independence, and as for those we do not love—we never would love them; the others, those we call "real women," because they are to us what we are to them, an inspiration of passion, we will always yield to them at the opportune moment, provided our egotism is not baffled by their beauty, their charms. I know very well that many fine minds dispute this and alarm themselves by calculating the perils to which Woman's Rights expose the future of the race. But they are mistaken, as the story I am about to relate will testify. To tell the truth, it is but a story and I cannot ignore the fact that the case never comes to the point, that you will find in it support for all shades of opinion, and that it is poor logic to draw general conclusions from an incident. Only my story has the advantage over those of many novelists by being scrupulously true, and it seems to me what is called "representative." You will object that it proves nothing. I admit it, but I will tell it anyhow, and I believe just as womanliness makes headway in the instance of Lucy Perceval, it will often repeat itself under different forms, varying according to the medium and the circumstances.

Lucy Perceval was fourteen when I saw her for the first time.

Her father was an American gentleman, whom for a while the chances of travel made my neighbour in the country. A widower for several years, he looked quite young, although he was approaching forty; with a noble face, fine carriage and that independence in action and judgment which make the habits and fortune of Anglo-Saxons. Quoting his own expression he "lived in Europe" and treated our old Continent as if it were a garden where he wandered at leisure, carrying his camp-stool under the shade of whatever tree pleased him. A faithful friend, I have had occasion to know it, he attached himself to no place. He has lived in London, Paris, Rome, Florence, Munich, on the banks of Lake Lucerne, and of Lake Geneva, in the south and in the Alps. The only attempt he had ever made to settle himself had not succeeded. One day he bought a chateau in Touraine, but the chateau burned while it was being repaired. Mr Perceval sustained a long suit against the company in which he had insured his property and lost it. He concluded from this misadventure that he was never meant to be a proprietor, and though he preserved the ruins of his chateau, which crumbled away year by year, to him it was never anything more than a subject of pleasantry. Through this wandering life Lucy's education, as you can surmise, was entirely fantastical, her father taking charge of it himself, aided by professors recruited in the towns where they passed a month or a season. Never a governess. Lucy would not tolerate an indiscreet or tyrannical chaperon. She grew in freedom, learning what she pleased to learn and doing what she pleased to do, and thus becoming what her father called "a droll little fellow," adding, not without pride, "she has her ideas. She positively wishes to be a man. We will see what will become of her."

Mr Perceval explained all this to me the day he introduced himself to a neighbour in the old house I lived in ten years ago at Champel. The curiosity he excited in me by describing his daughter contributed perhaps as much as the sympathy he inspired me with at first sight to my haste in returning his call.

He received me in a large incongruous drawing-room, where two beautiful ancient chests contrasted with the commonplace couches and arm-chairs of a hired apartment. Then he proposed to go out into the garden, the fine foliage of which I had so often admired from my windows. He looked round and called "Lucy!"

A strong voice replied from the top of a fir tree "Father."

"Our neighbour, Mr Rod, is here, so come offer us a cup of tea."

"Yes, father."

Something came tumbling down from branch to branch, and then it fell in front of us. I saw a mat of rather short, thick hair of a pretty light ash colour, large sparkling eyes that planted themselves upon me with a singular expression of audacious frunkness, and the bright face of a merry little girl in good health. As for her costume, it would be difficult to describe it, for the usual terms would hardly suit. Her dress, for example, was not exactly a dress. Invented by Miss Lucy, it resembled as much as possible a boy's blouse, reaching to the knee and caught at the waist by a leather belt. It was made of grey corduroy, strong enough to defy wear and tear. At the neck of the waist she wore a large cravat, a perfect breastplate of bright red pierced by a gold pin in the form of a dagger. Lucy took my hand, shook it vigorously, and said in a hearty tone, "I am very glad to make your acquaintance, sir." Then she turned round and went at a gallop towards the house, calling back, "I am going to order the tea."

As I followed her with a look, smiling a little, Mr Perceval said to me, "Doesn't she run well? Racing is her forte. I have forewarned you she is a boy, or rather one of Shakspere's pages. Reminds you of Rosalind in "As You Like It." I do not object to it at all."

What I saw during the afternoon showed me that Mr Perceval had not exaggerated. He made me go through the house, and Lucy's room astonished me even more than the young lady's costume. You might have called it a cell. A plain iron bed, a square table, and three straw chairs were all the furniture. As for the decorations, they consisted in a map of the world and a panoply of foils, pistols and whips. Lucy showed me the arms, saying, "These are my dolls." Her voice and her gestures were always always those of a turbulent boy. She talked loudly, she laughed loudly, she entertained me with her projects for the future. She absolutely wanted "to do something," to follow a man's career; to be an agriculturist pleased her particularly, because her father owned large plantations in the Southern States. From time to time, whenever the woman would betray herself in her need of approbation, she would turn towards her father, asking, "Isn't that so, father?"

Mr Perceval assented.

As they accompanied me to the gate, Lucy caught sight of the postman hobbling along under his weight of letters and papers.

"Isn't he late? Poor old fellow." Then, "I will run and get what he has for us," and away she darted like an arrow.

When she returned at the same speed I laughingly called her "Miss Atalanta."

"That is just it," said Mr Perceval, "Atalanta, Atalanta."

"Who was Atalanta?" asked Lucy.

I tried to recall my classics so as to reply, "She was a princess of ancient times, Miss Lucy, whose father, furious at having a daughter, had her raised in the woods. She was nourished on the milk of a bear, and became in time a great huntress. She could run as fast as you. When she was of age to marry suitors presented themselves in great numbers, for she was, as we would say to-day, a good catch. But she declared she would only marry the man who could outstrip her in a race. Those she outran were pitilessly put to death. You would not be so cruel, would you?"

Lucy had been listening with great attention. Brought to a sudden stop, she said seriously, "No, that is no longer our custom."

"Many youths have perished on her account, when a young prince presented himself, by the name of Meilanion. He was so handsome that Aphrodite had made him a gift of three golden apples, which saved him, for as he ran he let fall one after another. Atalanta, who despite all was a woman, stopped to pick them up, and thus she was finally vanquished."

Lucy burst out laughing. "Oh, that is a good story," she exclaimed, "but Atalanta was a goose. As for me, when I run, I would never stop for such a trifle."

. . . . . .

We retained for Lucy the nickname of Atalanta, and later I was amazed to have found one so appropriate. Mr Perceval and his daughter returned for several years to spend the summer months at Chapel. They loved their beautiful garden, planted in old trees, and the fine bold landscape which stretched between the bare borders of the Saleve and the distant outline of the Jura.

Until she was seventeen Miss Atalanta wore her peculiar garb, short hair, man's cravat and boy's hat, while racing remained her chief pleasure. Nothing delighted her more than to challenge a country neighbour on the highway and then to beat him. The humiliation of her victims amused her excessively, and she enjoyed it. I do not believe it was anything more than her personal vanity, as if her victory were an honour to her whole sex. The road, which wound between flowering hedges, broken by the cliffs of the Arve, was often witness to these sports, and the occupants of the neighbouring fields, honest folks, quiet and sedate, could not refrain from being scandalized. They would ask me, "What is the matter with that strange young girl, who is so much like a boy ?"

When I explained to them that she was an American they were reassured. Anything is allowed to persons from the other Continent, even their eccentricities do not clash with our usages.

It was in the course of her eighteenth year that Lucy changed. In the spring I saw her return in the fashionable costume of her sex, and her magnificent hair smooth and glossy as silk. I recall almost word for word the conversation we had walking slowly along the road, where the year before she had raced at such a rate.

"And so, Miss Lucy, you have become a young lady in earnest."

She contented herself by saying "Pshaw," with a slight pout which was to intimate as nearly as possible, "A body could not always escape her sex, but it was not her fault and I would rather talk of other things."

However, I had the malice to insist. "Atalanta is dead."

She cried out, "Oh, I still run!"

"Not so fast, I bet."

"No, no, very well, I assure you—only, you understand," throwing a look of unmistakable hatred at her skirts, which explained to me that she had no longer the same freedom of action.

"Long skirts, long hair and jewels. Ah, ah, it is the woman that awakens. Eve, the mother of us all, you know."

She snapped her ungloved fingers in a gesture of indifference.

"Bah!" she said.

"And soon that little blue flower, love."

She burst out laughing.

"As for that, no, bless me, never."

Her laugh sounded frank and clear, so the metamorphosis was evidently not due to the sentimental motives that I could not refrain from supposing. Notwithstanding, I persisted:

"All young ladies say that, even those who cannot race."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Love," she said, "is good enough for sentimental dolls."

"It will come, nevertheless, in its time."

"Never."

"And you will marry."

"No, no, no."

She stamped the ground with her foot so as to raise the dust. Then, calming herself, she began, "Or rather——"

"If it is necessary for me to have a husband, let us see."

Then she described to me her ideal of a fiance, handsome, strong, manly, manly above all. He was the conquering prince of the legend, Meilanion overcoming Atalanta without resorting to the ruse of the golden apples, Siegfried subduing Brunehilde, the man of iron muscle, of sovereign will, a demi-god of heroic times, resuscitated in our days expressly to realise the dreams of Miss Lucy.

Mr. Perceval, who had rejoined us, listened with half-closed eyes, and a smile of approval in the corner of his lips, persuaded that his Lucy would never marry unless she met a Zeus, an Apollo, or at least a Perseus.

As for me, I asked myself what life, that great demolisher of our dreams, reserved in her case, and I awaited in advance the future disappointments of my young friend, so confidant of her destiny. Oh, the bright to be, it opens like a frail and lovely flower, to throw its colours to the light, its perfume to the winds. She raced no more, but she rode a spirited horse, a superb Anglo-Norman that answered to the name of Aster. Her father usually accompanied her, but often she would go out alone disdainful of appearances or of what people would say. At the same time she worked earnestly, her father having at length consented to allow her to take up regular studies, and she was to leave for the University of Zurich when it reopened in the autumn.

Things were at this stage when Mr. Perceval said to me one day, "We are going to have a companion in our hermitage, the son of a very intimate friend of mine who died several years ago. He has just lost his mother and is very wretched, for he is weak and infirm, so I have invited him to come and finish the summer with us. He is a man of twenty-five, and his name is Walter Leigh."

I knew enough of Mr Perceval's beneficence under an exterior of indifference to guess that there was some kindness at the bottom of that tale, so I did not press him, but contented myself by saying I should be happy to help him divert his young friend. He thanked me for my offer, and said in accepting it, "I will certainly have to have recourse to your good will, for you understand that I cannot count upon Lucy occupying herself with him."

"The fact is," I replied laughing, "that I cannot picture to myself Miss Atalanta as a sister of charity, nursing a melancholy young invalid."

And I thought of the contempt she would hardly be able to repress at having this wretched being thrown by chance into her sphere of health and exuberance. When I saw him the day after his arrival this impression was even more lively. Walter Leigh, after the idea I had formed of him, was one of those poor deformed creatures to whom nature had been doubly cruel, having pent up in weak bodies fervent spirits and having inflicted them with a keen sense of their own inferiority. His deformity was not so great, he was slightly lame, his left limb was a little too short, with a crippled foot, but above all he was distressingly thin. Well over medium height, his leanness was almost appalling, with his bones jutting out as if they were ready to break through his skin. His features had a certain beauty, and his great black velvet eyes were of unusual splendour, but his swarthy complexion betrayed a constant feverishness, while his poor weak hands with their bony fingers trembled like those of an old man. Moreover, accustomed to the indulgences of a mother who from his early infancy had cared for him like a frail object to be preserved

in wadding, he occupied himself ceaselessly about his precarious health with the unconscious inconsiderateness of a valetudinarian. At the least breath of air he enveloped himself in mufflers, the very elegance of which could not rescue him from ridicule. He only walked with measured steps. When you asked him how he felt he answered in detail—a man who knew each morning how often he had awakened during the night, who weighed his nourishment and could lay his finger upon the exact spot of his forehead where he felt a twinge of neuralgia. With all that, a quick and highly strung intellect that seemed ever on the watch for ideas, which he would seize upon with a passionate violence and immediately treat them as a blessing, of which he was both proud and jealous. When he ceased to think of himself he would become eloquent and his deep voice, with its fine metallic tone, formed a striking contrast to his poor appearance.

Well, thought I, this is a species of humanity that will astonish Miss Atalanta. But from the first evening I saw them together it was I that was astonished. Before him the young girl was not the same. She hid the abruptness she rather affected to assert wtih others. Very motherly, almost cajoling, she watched over him with the awkwardness of a big brother caring for a little sister. We were installed on the verandah, and the Saleve, great dull mass, spread out before us, sending us wafts of delicious fresh air. One of Lucy's chief pleasures was to inhale lungs full of that vivifying air, enjoying the invigoration without fearing the caprices of a climate subject to rapid change. After a scorching day, the freshness of the evening pouring in freely through the wide-open door, was truly delightful. All at once, looking anxiously toward that hospitable door left open to the balmy breeze, she asked, "Are you cold, Walter?"

He answered timidly, "A little, Lucy."

Immediately she rose from her rocking chair to shut the door without a sign of annoyance; she even feigned to shiver, saying, "True, it is quite fresh this evening."

A little later I saw her rise again, go out and return with a shawl, which she spread over his wasted knees. Walter Leigh raised his great velvet eyes to hers with a look of ardour, of gratitude. They exchanged these words:

"Are you comfortable, Walter?"

"Very comfortable, thank you, very."

Then they became silent, and you heard no sound upon the verandah, for I was in the midst of a game of chess with Mr Perceval, who was considering a difficult move. At the end of the evening, when he accompanied me to the door, I said to him, "So your Amazon is serving her apprenticesbip as nurse."

With rather a forced smile, he answered, "She doesn't do badly for a beginning."

Two or three days later I saw Mr Perceval riding Aster. It was the first time I had ever met him without his daughter.

"And Miss Lucy?" I asked.

"She doesn't ride these days."

"Is she ill?"

"Oh, no; she is afraid of humiliating Walter Leigh, that is all. And Aster must be exercised."

The animal pawed the ground fretting to be off. Mr Perceval gave him the rein, and they set out at a quick pace.

* * * * * *

Weeks passed, autumn arrived. Mr Perceval seemed preoccupied, and I saw cement between Walter Leigh and Lucy that intimacy the birth of which had rather surprised me. Now you never met one without the other, and they both changed as if they had mutually imprinted upon each other their most dissimilar traits. In long dresses, with coquettish hats poised on her beautiful light hair, Lucy had become almost like other young girls, her movements quiet and gentle, and her speech modest and harmonious, while Walter, in his turn, less preoccupied with his health, assumed a sort of an authority, which made him more like other men. You might have said that he gained in vigour what his friend had lost, and that he had become imbued with the energy she had laid aside for his sake. Often they were seated side by side, with only one book for the two, and it was no longer the books that Lucy used to like, historical and scientific works, or the most adventurous novels, those that emitted a caustic savour, such as her father allowed her to read and which she devoured, her imagination carrying her to the extreme consequences of their doctrines, like "Jude the Obscure," "The Elm Mall." Now it was poets, sentimental novelists, a volume of Lotl or of Tennyson. She read in a low voice, and he listened hanging upon her words. Then the book would fall from their hands, and they would discuss it in an undertone, as if they feared being overtaken in their confidences.

"What can they be talking about?" Mr Perceval asked me one day, indicating in a good-humoured way the lovely group they formed.

I answered, "I do not know."

Indeed, I could not make out their words, but I could have bet upon knowing their sense. Doubtless they astonished themselves, those two beings so different, by always thinking the same thing at the same time, by recognising each other everywhere in novels, in poems, in nature, hearing their inmost voices in the songs of birds, in the moan of the autumn winds, and not even being able to let their thoughts drift with the clouds without meeting at some point in infinite space. And so astonished, enchanted, they abandoned themselves, not yet understanding that the law which governs beings is as powerful and more mysterious than that which controls the universe. Tenderly, without resistance, Lucy was making herself a slave that she might be the better served. They loved to go off for long walks. Walter, who at first feared walking, as he feared all physical exertion, became indefatigable when it was a question of seeking seclusion for two, and they would sometimes go very far, so far that Mr Perceval, who was riding Aster, would return astounded to have met them at such a distance.

One day, with a slightly anxious air, he imparted to me his astonishment.

I smiled maliciously, and that threw him into a rage.

"Lucy could never love that cripple," he exclaimed violently.

"But if by chance," I chanced to remark——

He interrupted me, regaining his usual coolness. "Everyone is free to choose for themselves. However, you will see——"

Mr Perceval was an optimist in his character of American, and never doubted the happy arrangement of all his difficulties.

* * * * * *

There are situations which could be prolonged indefinitely if life, like the readers of fiction, did not hold to the denouement. Walter Leigh was in love, he knew it; but his poor heart trembled with the joy that he felt, so that he guarded his secret or thought that he guarded it. As for Lucy, far more naive than the young girls of her age, and ready to bristle up at any attempt at sentiment, she was unwittingly abandoning herself to an unconscious dream that was carrying her away. The awakening could not be long. How would she accept her defeat? I thought of Brunhilde aroused from her long sleep by Siegfried's kiss. But oh, the poor Siegfried, whom our Valkyrie should acknowledge her victor. Perhaps the vague fears of this timid conqueror were only too well founded. Maybe, if suddenly persuaded of her incredible illusion, she would rise in her pride, break the still fragile chain and regain her liberty with laughter and indifference. Are not all women capable of playing cruel games? It is true they are likewise capable of all errors, of all sacrifices. It was soon to be proved whether Miss Atalanta, "that fine little fellow" of years gone by, belonged to her sex by that pity that makes victims or that egotism which acts as hangmen. A curious observer of that little drama, I saw the slightest incident would provoke the denouement. But, as often happens in true life, that incident did not occur. Nothing came to pass but time. The meadow saffron made its appearance, spreading its soft carpet over the bare grass of early autumn, the trees were tinted in every shade and variety, the sky full of floating clouds that hovered over the Saleve, while the first snows fell on the distant mountain peaks. About the same time the year before Mr Perceval, who detested the cold, strapped his trunks for Italy.

Why then did he avoid speaking of the departure? On her side Lucy seemed to ignore the fact that the University of Zurich was about to reopen. She, who two months before had talked with such enthusiasm about her future student life, seemed to be lapsing in her leisure into a perpetual vacation. As for Walter, whose plans were at first to spend the winter in Nice, he accommodated himself so well to the early frosts that he forgot his mufflers and shawls, he even neglected to catch cold. Evidently by tacit agreement they all dreaded the outcome of a separation. Lucy for the uncertainty it presented, Walter because of the miseries which he could perhaps discount, Mr Perceval on account of the wound that menaced his perpetual pride, since, like the king in the old legend, he had never become reconciled to having a daughter instead of a son, and had long yielded to a delusion, the awakening from which would be painful.

It was he, nevertheless, who finally raised the question, for it was not in his character to long sacrifice his decisions or his habits in maintaining a state of things of which he felt the fragility.

One gloomy afternoon we were taking coffee on the verandah. A shower broke forth that had been threatening since morning. Mr Perceval arose from his rocking-chair, approached the window, his hands in the pockets of his jacket, and returning, with a slight shiver, he said in a natural tone, "Well the fine weather is breaking up, the frosts will follow quickly, so we will soon have to separate."

Those words fell like the stroke of a knell sounded during a feast. Walter and Lucy, who were conversing in an undertone, raised their heads at the time with the same gesture, like a pair of startled ring-doves ready to take flight at the sound of a shot, and I saw them exchange a look of anguish. There was a moment of heavy silence and then Walter murmured, "True, we will have to leave."

"Not yet," said Lucy.

While lighting a cigar Mr Perceval basely insinuated, "And your university—then you are not thinking of it any more? Nevertheless it is about to reopen."

Lucy avoided her father's eye.

"True," she said with some constraint, "there is the university."

The silence began again more painful than ever. As it became embarrassing on account of inexpressible circumstances I broke it by giving my advice.

"You need not let to-day's bad weather hurry you. The month of October is often very fine here, and as for the university—gracious me! you are not obliged to be on hand the very day it reopens. Why, even the professors are sometimes late. And then after all you are free, and as you are very comfortable here, why not remain where you are?"

In a voice that betrayed a slight impatience, Mr Perceval replied:

"We have already been here too long."

"And so you have had enough of it. When then will you take root in some place?"

He answered: "It was you who once used an expression to me that I have never forgotten, "Nowhere as good as elsewhere."

"As for my part," said Lucy, "I am tired of this ceaseless change."

Mr Perceval threw away his cigar that drew badly, took another, which he chose with great care, and then asked me, "Will you take a hand at chess, my dear friend?"

"Willingly."

He placed the chess board. The game had scarcely begun when I noticed both Walter and Lucy rise, stop for a moment at the window to observe the clouds, consult each other with their eyes and then go out. But their manoeuvre had not escaped Mr. Perceval, who, while taking up his knight, said the moment they opened the door.

"Take care, Walter, you will catch cold. It seems to me you are becoming very imprudent, my boy."

"But I assure you it is hardly even cool," Walter answered, "and this rain does not amount to anything."

Mr. Perceval did not insist, but moved his knight and seemed to think of nothing more except his game, which he won.

Early the next morning he rang at my door as agitated as an American could be.

"Guess what has happened," he said, after shaking hands as usual, "guess, try to guess."

I never doubted. Nevertheless I thought it discreet to feign complete ignorance. "Why, what is the matter?"

"Oh, you will never guess, never," but repeated, "because it is really too incredible. Fancy, just fancy——"

It pained him to tell it, yet it could not keep it to himself.

"Fancy—Lucy actually wants to marry Walter Leigh—an invalid—a cripple. You have had a suspicion of it—I? No, never! She who was almost a man."

I gently interlined "almost."

"She who wanted to become an agriculturist. She who is strong, who is sound, but she wants to. All that she has retained of her old self is her obstinacy. When once she has said I will there is an end to it. What can I do?"

Mr Perceval walked up and down in my study, so troubled, so wretched, that I could not refrain from suggesting, "But Miss Lucy is not of age. You can gain time and sometimes, you know, time conquers love."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"She wait," said he, "you do not know her, and as for him—I talked it over with him last evening. I spoke and his health, his lameness, his sallowness, betraying a feverish condition, he drew himself up; my dear friend, he was six foot. 'I love her, she loves me.' Do you hear that? He also wants to; and, like her, he is an American."

"And so are you. Therefore, if on your side you do not wish it, I hardly see how it will end."

Mr. Perceval seemed to reflect for an instant.

"The will is a positive faculty," he replied. "When a person wills he always does what he wills, but he can only will on his own account. Here are two with the same cause, hence they are the stronger, for I can do nothing to prevent them from willing."

All the genius of his race, its spirit, its independence, burst out in this argument, the justice of which forced itself upon him until it disarmed him. Calmer, he seated himself in an armchair. With steady gaze and bowed head he sat motionless, reasoning it out for himself, no longer bothering about me. When he raised his head all traces of the storm had disappeared and he was the perfect master of himself.

"I beg your pardon for having disturbed you," he said.

"Pray don't——"

"It is useless to struggle when you are conscious of being the weakest, isn't it? It is lost energy."

I approved by a gesture that practical wisdom which nations and individuals having ignored have so often repented.

Quietly he pursued his syllogism.

"I am the weaker for two reasons—first it affects them not me; then I am reduced to the defensive, while they make the attack. Therefore, I must yield." He heaved a deep sigh. "and I will yield."

I thought how in his place I would have resisted, fought, defended the ground inch by inch, but I should only have had to deal with European wills, and on our old Continent we do not view problems in the same light as they do over there.

"Perhaps they will be very happy," I said, to console him.

"I hope so, indeed," he replied, in rising to take leave.

"I accompanied him as far as the door, and watched him disappear with rapid strides. Mists rose from the banks of the Saleve, like the evening before, the rain began to fall and I thought of the three golden apples, of Aphrodite and of Meilanion. Walter Leigh had no need to resort to such a ruse. So true is it that myths are more complicated than life, and that the eternal tales which they relate are re-enacted from century to century, but even more simply.

"To what do you attribute your success in life?" asked the inquisitive person.

"Work," answered Senator Sorghum, positively, "hard work."

"But you never seem to be devoting much time to work."

"No. But I've hired a tremendous amount of it done."

A Fiery Ordeal.

By MAUD PEACOCKE.

PART I.

It was the height of the New Zealand summer, and the hottest, driest, summer the colony had known for years. The crops had failed; the grassy paddocks were burnt brown, and the creeks had dwindled to mere threads, so that the cattle and horses had in many cases to be driven miles to water. The settlers in the district of Orangi in the North were beginning to shake their heads and prophesy ruin and disaster. And, indeed, ruin and disaster threatened many a homestead that summer of cloudless skies and brilliant sunshine. The whole countryside was alight with bush fires. Hundreds of acres of forest were swept away in flame and smoke owing to fires lit out of wanton mischief, or carelessness, well nigh as wanton, and which spread so widely and rapidly that in a few days they were beyond control, and a sight at which men could only stare aghast while they prayed for rain.

By day the hills far and near were shrouded in smoke, and at night the settlers' homesteads were ringed round by fire. The sun rose and set like a rayless disc of molten copper through rolling clouds of smoke. One evening as the sun was setting over the distant ranges, dyeing the rolling smoke clouds with ruby hues a man was walking rapidly across a wide grassy paddock towards a low rambling house standing alone in the clearing.

Thirty years ago David Carew, his wife and two children, landed in New Zealand with two or three hundred pounds on which to start farming. He bought a piece of land in the North, and by dint of steadiness and hard work, after the fashion of the hardy old pioneers of those days, he had made for himself a dwelling-place in the wilderness. Rude and primitive it was, but he and his wife were young and strong, and not afraid of hard work. His family had increased with the years, and the original little cabin, built of slabs and thatched with totara bark, had been added to many times.

As we watch David Carew stride across the short dry grass we see in him a fair type of the old New Zealand settler. A man of medium height, broad-chested and powerfully-built, with a weather-beaten face and grizzled hair and beard. As he swung the tall five-barred gate leading to the farm yard, he overtook his son Ambrose driving the cows to the milking shed. Ambrose was a freckled-faced, bare-legged lad of fifteen. He was strolling very leisurely behind the cows and munching at an apple, while the animals themselves moved slowly, stopping now and then to crop a mouthful from the dry, burnt grass.

"Well, 'Brose lad, have you been to the ten acre?" asked Carew, pausing with his hand on the top-bar of the gate. Ambrose turned his apple about and about, and with a few rapid and scientific bites reduced it to the bare core, which after examining carefully and regretfully, he at length threw away. Then he made answer.

"Yes, me and Jack went. The fences are right so far, and we cut away and burnt the fern on each side."

Gazing westward, Carew cried suddenly, "By George, Tawhia's alight!"

Away to westward lay the bush-clad ranges, and Ambrose, following the direction of his father's gaze, saw a thick column of smoke rising distinct from the smoky haze that hid the nearer hills. The Carews' house was free from danger, standing, as it did, in a wide clearing, but at the small settlement of Tawhia, some two miles away, the scattered homesteads were mostly built on the very skirts of the bush. Carew's married daughter lived there, and he muttered anxiously, "I hope Tom has had his 'burn.'"

For miles around the settlers were fleeing their homes, some in senseless panic, before the dreaded fires had reached their boundary fences. Some stayed on to the last, fighting doggedly for their homes, but driven back inch by inch till they, too, were forced to fly. The poor homeless ones took shelter with the hospitable settlers, who cheerfully gave them welcome, though not knowing when their own turn might come.

Carew proceeded to the house. After washing his hands in the porch he passed into the low-rafter'd kitchen. His wife, a cheery little apple-cheeked woman, met him on the threshold.

"Tea is quite ready, so be quick, Father," she said smiling.

In a short time the family were seated round the tea-table, Carew at the head, his wife presiding over the tea cups; three pretty daughters, and two tall sons. Beside their own family seated at that hospitable board were a family who had been burnt out a week before; husband, wife, and two children, and a feeble old woman, who kept dabbing at her eyes with a blue checked apron and weeping copiously. The husband sat moodily, staring straight before him, while the wife, when she spoke at all, scolded the children irritably. Carew tried to keep a conversation going, but gave it up at last in despair, and said good-naturedly to the old woman, "Cheer up, Mrs Tate, cheer up; things'll be brighter soon."

The old woman shook her head despondently, and her son, suddenly rousing himself, said savagely, "Do be quiet, mother; what's the use of crying over spilt milk," adding bitterly, "It won't bring back the home or anything else we've lost."

"Please God," said she in a quavering voice, "I'll not be a burden on anyone long."

Carew broke in heartily, "There, there, Mrs Tate, don't talk so. Let's hope you'll be spared a long while yet."

But she shook her head again, muttering of the "extra mouth" and "hard times."

Just then Ambrose, who had been looking from the window in a bored way, exclaimed, "Here's Tom and Milly."

As he spoke two horses swept by the window. Carew's son-in-law came first on a bay, holding before him on the saddle a small boy, bright-eyed and sturdy; and close behind rode his wife, with a sleeping baby on her arm.

The family seated at the table rose and hurried to the door. "Gran'pa, Gran'pa," cried the little fellow on the horse, stretching out impatient arms to Carew. But for once he was disregarded. One of his aunts lifted him from the horse and set him down, while they all crowded round the riders to hear what tale they had to tell.

Tom Ashley rose in his stirrups and waved his whip excitedly towards Tawhia, where in the gathering dark might be seen a lurid glow in the sky.

"The whole side of the range is a-fire," he cried. "Merton's is burnt down to the ground, and the fire is travelling up the valley, over the scrub land, like an army of devils. I've brought Milly and the youngsters over to be out of the way, and you fellows must ride like the mischief back with me, or every stick and stone on the place 'll be in ashes before morning. The wind's rising, too, and blowing dead for the house."

In less time than it takes to tell of it four horses were caught and saddled, and leaving Ambrose to take care of the women and children, Ashley, the two Carews and Tate rode off. It was a beautiful starlight night, but the air was close and dense with smoke. On every side, far and near, might be seen the fiery signals of ruin and disaster; pillars of mingled fire and smoke, towering up to the ruddy sky, tracts of bush that had lately waved in the sunshine, now laid waste, smouldered sullenly in heaps of smoking ashes, and blackened stumps standing up gaunt and bare.

The men rode in silence. Sometimes they passed patches of blazing fern by the roadside. In the narrow tracks, where they dropped into single file, the horses were sometimes up to their fetlocks in warm ashes, that rose in clouds of fine grey dust as they disturbed it. The riders pressed on.

In a few minutes they came in sight of a long, low-backed range, covered with native bush from base to summit. Smoke hung over it now in clouds. There was no great show of fire in any one place, but at a hundred points the flames broke forth, and smoke arose in columns. As the riders approached they could hear the flames roaring and crackling in the undergrowth. Blazing fragments detached from the trees, and myriads of sparks whirled in the wind. There were several houses scattered about the valley, standing out plainly in the flickering glare. Tawhia settlement was quite a recent one, so that, though each house stood alone in its own patch of clearing, there were still patches of bush to be felled in the valley between the different farms. Only one house for years had stood alone at the head of the valley, an old tumble-down shanty, belonging to an old couple by the name of Weston, who had emigrated from the Old Country, and settled here when the colony was yet young. At one spot in the valley men were flitting about a comparatively cleared space, with torches in their hands. This was the scene of a last year's "burn"; gaunt, grey trunks of rata and kauri, flinging out leafless limbs; little patches of fern starting a fresh growth; fallen trunks and blackened stumps.

It was a strange scene. The weird glare, the men blackened and grimy, flitting about working away with axes and fern hooks, amongst the logs, stumps and leafless trees. Their object was to clear everything that might feed the hungry flames, and so prevent the spread of the fire.

At his brother-in-law's first alarm, Jack Carew, a fine strapping fellow of two and twenty, had saddled in hot haste, and in his eagerness had outstripped his companions on the road. This was not all anxiety as to his brother-in-law's property. In the lonely house at the head of the valley, lived Peggy Weston, to whom Jack had quite lost his manly heart, though in his slow, cautious way he had not spoken of his hopes yet. She was a pretty brown-eyed girl, who led a lonely enough life, with her grandparents. Their house was in an isolated position, but Jack saw with the quick eye of anxiety that it was surrounded by thickets of gorse, ti-tree and bracken fern, up to the very fences. At any time the bracken will burn fiercely, but now, with much of it as dry as tinder, after the spell of hot weather, a falling spark might set it alight any moment.

As they all dismounted Ashley gave a cry of alarm. A spark had fallen on the thatched roof of a cow shed at the back of his house, and in a moment it was blazing. A post and rail fence ran in direct communication from the shed to the gate of the farm yard.

"Chop the fences down," cried Carew, and in a few moments they were engaged hacking at the fences with might and main.

The din was indescribable. The sound of the blows of the axes, the shouts of the men, fighting with the fire, the excited, ceaseless barking of dogs; the terrified bleating and lowing of sheep and cattle, and above all, the dull roar of the flames. Every now and again some forest king would fall to the ground, crashing through the lesser trees and undergrowth; shaking the earth with a dull thud, and raising clouds of dust and ashes. Here was the dull glow of some old tough stump, burning and smoking slowly away like a huge cinder; here the quick crackling blaze of a patch of dry fern; and here some great tree, wrapped in flame, stood like a pillar of fire against the dark sky.

After the fences had been chopped down, the workers turned their attention to the fern at the back of the house. This they burned, beating the flames away from the house.

"Oh for a good downpour of rain!" groaned Ashley, looking up at the star-lit sky.

After seeing things comparatively safe here, Jack turned to look at the Weston's. To his dismay the fern on three sides of the house was in a blaze. The house stood on a slight rise, and the windows were lit with a ruddy glow. Otherwise the house was in darkness. It was now about 9.30. Jack knew the old couple retired early, and probably made Peggy do the same. It was awful to think they might be burned in their beds—his pretty Peggy, to whom he had never declared the love that thrilled him. And yet—how to get through that sea of flame? Men, selfishly, yet naturally, anxious, as to the safety of their own homes, had spared no thought for others, and now, there was only one approach to the house that was not cut off by fire, and that was on the far side. It meant a long ride, round another way, before he could reach there, and by that time, what might not have happened? The thought was agony. He ground his teeth in impotent despair, looking up at the house, and picturing horrors to himself.

Stay, was there not one way? At the back of the house was a small patch of bush, that was as yet untouched by the fire. By skirting the burning fern paddocks he might, with hard riding, gain this bush, before the flames, which were now racing towards it, reached it. It meant a race with the flames, but it was now neck-or-nothing. Jack sprang to his horse, leaped upon it, and galloped away across the clearing. Suddenly his good brown mare, Betty, pulled up, trembling in every limb.

"God!" he cried, in an agony of impatience and despair. A grim, five-barbed wire fence stretched across the path.

Jack set his teeth in grim determination, and, leaning over, patted the mare's neck. "We must jump it, old girl," he said in a dogged voice, "there's no help for it."

The mare, uneasy at the flames, shrank back with a snort of terror. Carew, galloping off to a short distance, wheeled her round again, and set her at the fence, but Betty reared on her haunches and refused to take it. Three times he tried it, and each time failed. It would have been a difficult jump, under any circumstances, but a sort of wild exhilaration had seized him, and he tried again with whip and spur.

The fourth time the mare went over like a bird, and, as they landed, Carew found himself shouting like a madman. They passed so close to the burning fern that he felt the flames scorch his face, and the terrified mare, bounding aside, was away like an arrow up the rise. No need for whip and spur now. Crashing through titree scrub; over fallen trunks and blackened stumps, scattering the still warm ashes, under her flying hoofs, she thundered on.

Carew sat close in the saddle, guiding as well as he was able her mad flight. At times she stumbled, but always recovered herself in time. At length, however, as they had almost reached the bush, she put her foot in a rabbit hole, and floundered heavily forward: almost recovered herself, then stumbled again, and fell. There she lay, panting in pain and terror; with straining eyeballs, and shaking in every limb. Carew slipped off her back, and knelt beside her, patting the glossy brown neck. A pang of remorse seized him, that he had thus done the gallant mare to death. He had heard the sickening crack as she stumbled, and guessed too well that it meant the leg was broken.

"My poor lass," he cried, a sob in his throat, "done for now, poor girl."

She looked up at him wistfully. For the time everything else was swept off his mind. He just knelt beside her, stroking her neck, his eyes blinded with tears. A roar from the fire made him look up. There was not a hundred yards between the flames and the bush now. Starting to his feet Carew cast one lingering glance at his faithful brute-companion, who whinnied faintly after him. There was a lump in his throat, and a mist before his eyes, but, setting his teeth resolutely, he hurried on.

A few minutes later he plunged into the thicket of the bush. Fortunately there had been felling done lately, and the bush had been thinned a lot,

so that a dim light stole in between the branches. There was no marked track to be followed, but Carew had been a good bushman all his life, and could make a fairly straight course to where he judged the house to be. At times in his haste he stumbled over the creeping supplejacks that strewed the way, or the fallen trunks of trees.

The bush was not more than a square half mile in extent, and he had traversed perhaps half the distance when the first puff of smoke stole in through the trees. Carew caught his breath hard and started to run. The pungent smell of the burning trees grew stronger every moment. Crashing through a thicket of fern he came face to face with the flames. He recoiled and tried another point, only to be again driven back. The whole undergrowth was blazing. Had he been in any condition to reason he might have known that the very presence of the flames showed him to have reached the outskirts of the bush, where the vegetation was dry as tinder from the long drought. It would probably have taken days for the flames to have reached the fresh, green heart of the bush. A bold rush would have taken him through the flames in safety. But, exhausted as he was, and confused by the darkness and the smoke he did not realise this. After trying at some half dozen points, always driven back, blinded and choked, the poor fellow lost his head entirely. He rushed wildly up and down through the labyrinth of trees, stumbling blindly and shouting for help.

PART II.

At eight o'clock the old Weston couple put out the lamp and prepared to retire for the night.

"Where's the maid?" asked the old man as he took his candle.

"Peggy! Peggy!" cried her grandmother, in a cracked voice.

Peggy had been sitting in the porch, watching the men at the fire. Now, she came in, her eyes shining with excitement.

"Grandfather," she exclaimed, "come and see the burn. The whole side of the mountain seems alight, and the men are working in the clearing like mad."

Old Weston laughed contemptuously. He was of the aggravating "oldest inhabitant" type. Whatever had been seen, heard, or done he had seen, heard, or done something greater.

Now he jerked a contemptuous thumb towards the mountain and said:

"Burn! Call that a burn? Why, I mind the time when the whole range was afire, like the 'burnin', fiery furnace' we read of in Scripture. Why, this'd be nothing but a bonfire beside it—a bonfire!"

He shuffled off, chuckling to himself. The old woman prepared to follow, and Peggy said, timidly, "Mayn't I stay up a bit longer, granny? I'm not sleepy."

"No, no!" was the reply. "Young maids should be abed early for their beauty sleep. I always went to bed early in my young days."

She was old and wrinkled and withered now, but at the thought of her youthful charms she bridled and smiled.

Peggy said no more but went to her room. Arrived there, however, she blew out her light and sat at the open window watching the workers at the fire and dreaming her maiden dreams, with many a blush and smile in the darkness.

By and bye she began to nod. So she threw herself dressed as she was upon the bed and was soon sound asleep. She had slept for what seemed to her a few minutes when she suddenly started up broad awake. Her room was full of smoke and as light as day, lit by a dancing red glare from without. A sound of roaring and crackling drew her to the window, and a cry of dismay broke from her. Outside was a tossing sea of fire, gorse and ti-tree and the waist-high fern burning furiously. Running from window to window Peggy saw that the house was surrounded.

There was every reason for alarm. The fern fires, though they burn fiercely while they last, soon burn themselves out, but the house timbers were old and rotten and dry as tinder. Any moment a spark might light and set the roof in a blaze. Peggy roused the old people with difficulty. They slept heavily, seeming dazed with the smoke that filled the room. The old man whimpered and shook like a frightened child, and refused for some time to leave his bed. At last they induced him to get up, and Peggy ran to the back porch to see what could be done.

As she stood there she saw a man break from the trees at the back of the house and stagger rather than walk across the yard. The next moment he stood beside her.

"Jack!" she shrieked, in mingled horror and relief.

Jack it was. Hatless, shoeless, blackened and burnt, his clothes hanging in tatters upon him.

"Water," he gasped, hoarsely, and sank down upon the step.

Peggy dashed inside and returned with a tin pannikin of water, which he drank greedily. When Carew had found his way out off, he had almost lost his reason for the time being, exhausted and dazed as he was. He had rushed about wildly, seeking a place where he might break through. At last, quite by accident, he had hit upon a cattle track, which had led him in sight of the house.

"Jack, what is to be done?" cried Peggy, and he looked up in a stupid way, muttering vaguely, "must get out of this," "not safe."

Just then a call from the house made Peggy turn and run in again. When she returned she found Carew fast asleep, with his head upon his arm, utterly done up and exhausted. She shook him by the arm, and he stirred drowsily. Evidently no help could be expected from Jack.

The poor girl felt helpless indeed. A spark lit upon an outhouse, and the roof was soon in a blaze. It caught the fence and ran along rapidly towards the house. Peggy looked longingly over the burning gorse to the right of them, where the vivid, rank, green of a raupo swamp offered a haven of refuge. But how to traverse that sea of fire unscathed? Suddenly an inspiration flashed across her mind. Somewhere in that paddock was a track that she used to drive the cattle to water every day. If they could reach that they might be saved. Confused by the darkness and smoke she could not tell exactly where it was, but she felt confident she could find it, partly because she did not dare think of failure, and partly because of an inner conviction that God always meets our greatest extremities with His surest aids.

Almost dragging Carew to his feet, and taking the trembling old woman on her arm, they set off. It was a slow, painful journey. The old people moved with tottering steps, and Carew stumbled blindly, almost walking in his sleep. Twice he threw himself down, forgetting everything in his craving for sleep.

For weeks past he had been out night after night, working against the fires and to-night he had reached the limit of his endurance. Peggy implored and prayed and commanded.

"For the love of heaven," he pleaded once, "let me sleep! Go on, and leave me." But she refused, and he stumbled on again.

The old man, too, was in a panic, and it was all she could do to restrain him from making back for the house. He whimpered and whined and besought her to "be a good maid and let him go," but she refused harshly, and he seemed cowed.

They reached the slip rails at length, and to the girl's relief she found them only charred. She let them down with trembling fingers. Old Weston declared with a piercing shriek he would go no further, and his wife hid her face in her hands and moaned. Even the girl's brave spirit shrank appalled. The passage looked so desperately narrow, and twisting tongues of flame lunged and darted across in the gusts of wind.

Carew, suddenly, made a mighty effort, and threw off the sleep that was overpowering him. Putting Peggy aside he strode forward and took the lead. The horrors of the awful journey, down that lane of fire! The distance was really very short, and the track considerably broader than appeared in the uncertain glare. The hot breath of the flames fanned their faces; and the smoke blinded and choked them. Shrinking, stumbling, they hurried on, and at length reached the swampy ground. The flames were almost down to the swamp-edge, and the heat was overpowering.

They flung themselves down on the damp ground, exhausted, and Carew immediately fell asleep again. The others lay there in wakeful silence, save for the old man's whimpering and moaning. Peggy fixed her eyes on the red glare in the sky. With a start she saw the old roof-tree that had sheltered her, all her life, was now a mass of flame. Hour after hour they lay there, chilled to the bone, fitfully dozing and waking.

When morning came a scene of desolation met the eye. The flames had died down, but a dismal cloud of smoke hung over the grey waste of ashes, and blackened stumps of gorse and titree. Here and there little fires still burned. Carew slept till the sun was high in the heavens. Then Peggy wakened him. He sat up with haggard looks and blood-shot eyes. The old people were still asleep.

Then they told of how they had spent their night to each other, and so wrought upon was the sober and cautious Jack that there, in that strange time and place, he told his love. And Peggy? Did she hesitate because he, her lover, was dirty and grimed with blood-shot eyes and haggard face? No! a thousand times no.

They waited till noon before they dared trust themselves on the hot ashes, with their well-nigh shoeless feet. Then, faint and hungry, by slow degrees, they traversed the waste lands. In the second paddock they met David Carew, Ashley and several of the neighbours, going in search of them. How wild was the joy of the meeting! How incoherent the mutual explanations. They were borne off to the nearest house and provided with food and clothes.

Pretty Peggy blushed with shy pride as her lover told in glowing terms of how her pluck had saved them all, when he was useless. Then she broke down and cried and laughed hysterically with the reaction of it all. They made quite a heroine of her, and though old Weston, quite revived by the food and warmth, declared that it was nothing to what an aunt of his had done, actually sleeping three nights and days in the river, no one paid the least attention to him.

Soon after that memorable night the welcome rains came, and early in the following spring Jack and Peggy were married. They found that gallant mare where she fell. The flames had never reached her, but her mad terror of the fire, the wild gallop and the pain had done their work. There she lay dead, and all their lives Jack and Peggy mourned her, who had lost her life in their service.

Fortunes Spent on Holidays.

HEALTH RECRUITING AT £6,000 A WEEK.

Fifty thousand pounds for a single week's holiday is rather a large sum, but this is the amount which the cotton workers of Blackburn have just laid out on their annual vacation.

In all the Lancashire and Yorkshire towns clubs are formed by those who work in the large factories for the purpose of saving money in anticipation of seven days' holiday in the summer, each person putting aside so much a week throughout the year. The money thus saved is, of course, banked by the club, and distributed when the time comes to each family in proportion to the amount saved by its various members. Last year a single family drew out from an Oldham club £74, and though at other times the recipients scarcely knew what luxury meant, they succeeded in spending the entire amount in one short week by the briny. This year the Oldham clubs are distributing £80,000 among their members, all of which will be swallowed up in seven days' diversion.

But these figures pale when compared to the fabulous prices expended by individual members of the aristocracy for a short holiday every year. A certain peer who annually hires one of the finest Scotch grouse moors openly stated the other day that the month of August necessitated his relieving his purse of £100,000 every time it came round. This enormous sum is, of course, made up of several items, the most important being the cost of entertaining, the hire of the shooting, etc., while the cartridges fired during this short period run up a bill of nearly £1500.

Paradoxical as it may seem, it costs prominent members of society far less to spend a holiday in travelling abroad than in entertaining at their country seats at home. A month's vacation for a party of six, spent in exploring the Continent in the best style, will cost anything from £1000 to £5000, while a houseful of friends could not be entertained at home during the same period for less than the last-named sum, provided, of course, that sport was freely indulged in. To prove this, it is only necessary to state that considerably over two millions goes every year in the hire of shootings, and half that sum in obtaining the fishing rights of salmon and trout streams. Should the host possess pheasant coverts of his own, the cost will probably be even greater than it otherwise would, for rearing the birds necessitates his putting his hand in his pocket all the year round.

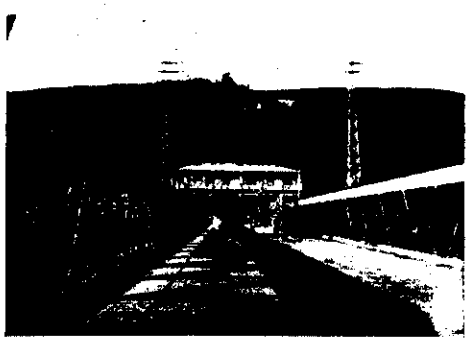
When Royalty takes a holiday vast sums of money are spent. The Queen's few weeks on the Continent every spring cost £30,000, but her recent visit to Ireland was even more expensive, and left little change out of £50,000.

The Kaiser assesses his usual visit to Cowes at £20,000, but then he spends a great deal of his time on the water, which considerably reduces the cost. In the olden days a Royal holiday in Britain was unreasonably expensive, for the visiting monarch was expected to leave never less than £5,000 in gratuities behind him. The late Prince Consort was responsible for many reforms in this respect, and a Royal visitor's gratuity bill will now never exceed £2,000.

Eastern potentates when holiday-making in Europe do so regardless of cost. The late Shah of Persia when he visited this country for the last time prior to his assassination was politely informed that it was not the Queen's wish that he should make his sojourn an expensive one, but despite this he managed to part with £80,000 during his short stay. Another prolific spender is Li Hung Chang, and his visit in 1896 cost him nearly £150,000, though the greater portion of this went in the substantial presents he gave to practically everybody he met.

The most expensive holiday of this year is undoubtedly the Shah's. During his recent visit to Europe he was recruiting his health at the cost of £6,000 a week!

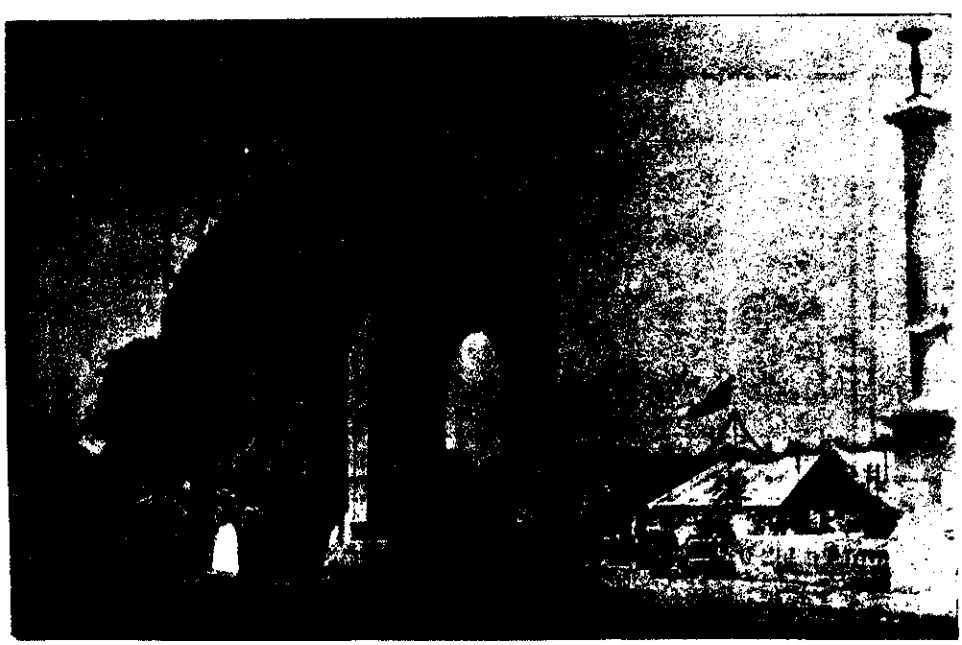
FROM WANGANUI TO ROTORUA



1. WANGANUI BRIDGE. 2. ON HIS NATIVE HEATH. 3. ON THE ROAD FROM PIPIRIKI TO KERIOI. 4. ACROSS THE TONGARIRO PLAINS. 5. PIPIRIKI. 6. THE HUKA FALL. 7. THE SULPHUR BOAT ON ROTORUA LAKE. 8. THE PA, OHINEMUTU. 9. A HOT-WATER BATH.

SALUTE ON LEAVING THE ROYAL ARTHUR—THE FIRST GUN.

GOVERNOR ARRIVING AT LANDING PLACE.



THE PAVILION.

Lassoed by a Girl.

AN ADVENTURE IN TEXAS.

Oldo John Diorn owns a ranch and several thousand head of cattle. The ranch is located on the western plains of Texas, about the headwaters of the tributaries of the Guadaloupe. He has three daughters, who have been looking after his herd for several years. It is the boast of these girls that no mustang has ever been able to shake one of them from his back. They are fearless riders, and can hurl a lariat with a precision that many a cowboy envies. Since the death of their only brother, Julius Diorn, who was killed by cattle thieves a few years ago, these young women have ridden after cattle, repaired windmills, killed wolves, and frequently branded calves. They have experienced many exciting adventures, one of which is told as follows.

One Sunday morning not long ago Norma, who is the oldest of the three, started out on her pony to "ride" the wire fence of a small pasture, a couple of miles from the house. "Riding a wire fence" is making a tour of inspection to see that the wires are all up and the posts solid. As the girl started out she swung the belt of her Winchester over the gate post, remarking that she was not going far and would not need a gun. She was hardly out of sight before an immense Mexican lion sprang out in the road in front of the pony. The beast gave a few loud roars, and then disappeared in the direction of a small bunch of cows and calves.

Starting her pony at full speed and yelling at the lion as if she possessed the power in her voice to paralyse all wild beasts, she rode straight towards the terror-stricken cattle, coming up with them just as the lion sprang upon the neck of a calf, crushing it to the earth.

The old cows instantly charged the lion, and the mother of the calf gave him such an ugly thrust with her sharp horns that he was forced to relinquish his hold on his prey. The sight of the trembling, frightened little calf aroused the girl's ire, and, swinging her rope over her head, she rode at the lion.

The girl screamed at the lion and urged her pony to pursue him. The beast frequently looked back and snarled threateningly, but he failed to find courage enough to offer battle. Suddenly it occurred to the girl that there was no reason why she could not choke the lion to death. She swung her lariat over her head, and as the trained pony sprang forward dropped the noose about the lion's neck. The pony instantly braced himself on his haunches, digging his fore feet into the ground, and the lion turned a somersault, striking the earth with his head towards his pursuers. The girl hoped she had broken the beast's neck, but he was only badly stunned, and the pain that he suffered seemed to increase his rage and courage.

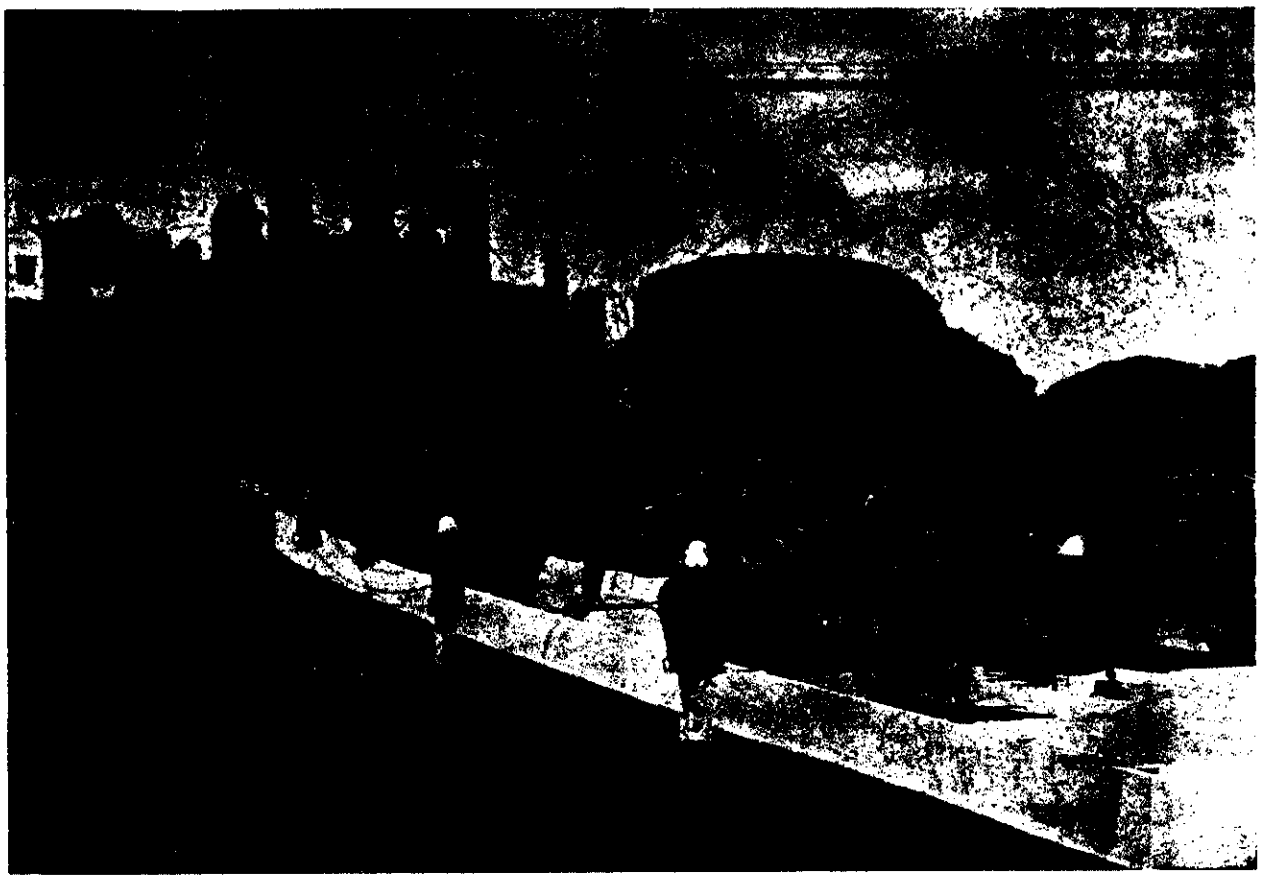
Crouching and emitting a roar, he sprang into the air with all his strength, expecting to land on the pony's neck and tear his pursuers to fragments. The agile little horse turned just in time to feel the claws of the lion grazing his haunches.

All Western horses entertain a horror of those lions, for one of their tricks is to lie in ambush on the limb of a tree near where the horses are in the habit of drinking. From these hiding places they fall upon young colts and devour them. The Texas pony knows the Mexican lion, and he fears him more than all other enemies.

So, instantly as the lion sprang forward, the pony began to run. The rope was tense, and, if she had wished to do it, the girl could not have unfastened the lariat from the saddle horn. Moreover, she knew the chances were that if the lion were released in his state of rage he would tear the pony and herself to bits. She leaned forward and urged her frightened mustang to do his best.

She reached the ranch gates at her home just as her sisters, accompanied by two young men of the neighbourhood, were about to pass through it on their way to church. "There now!" she shouted, "I have roped and dragged a lion to death." Her speech of triumph was cut short by a warning scream from one of her sisters, who noticed that the lion was about to regain his feet and renew the battle. One of the Texans sent a bullet through the animal's brain and ended his career.

THE RECEPTION OF GOVERNOR-GENERAL LORD HOPETOUN AT SYDNEY.



PROCESSION ARRIVING AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

THE RECEPTION OF GOVERNOR-GENERAL LORD HOPETOUN AT SYDNEY.

THE STATION BEFORE THE FIRE.

Edwards, Photo., Mercer. HALF-AN-HOUR AFTERWARDS.

THE FIRE AT MERCER.

Presence of Mind.

The following amusing anecdote is related of a renowned conjurer. He had travelled over almost the whole world, when he sought to try his fortune before the Sultan of Morocco. After having successfully entertained the powerful ruler with several clever tricks, he determined upon closing the entertainment with the following wonderful performance.

Taking a snow-white and a grey pigeon, he appeared to cut off the head of each, and then to place the white head on the grey pigeon, and the grey head on the white pigeon, after which they flew away just as though nothing had been done to them.

The Sultan was very enthusiastic about this performance, and having ordered two of his eunuchs, a negro and a native, to be brought forward, he commanded the conjurer to cut off both their heads and exchange them as he had done in the case of the pigeons. The performer was somewhat taken aback at this peremptory request, but managed to retain his presence of mind, and said, through his interpreter:

"Pardon, your most gracious Majesty, my apparatus to-day is only arranged for pigeons, and not for men. I require at least fourteen days to prepare for the desired performance."

"Good!" replied the Sultan, "the extension is granted."

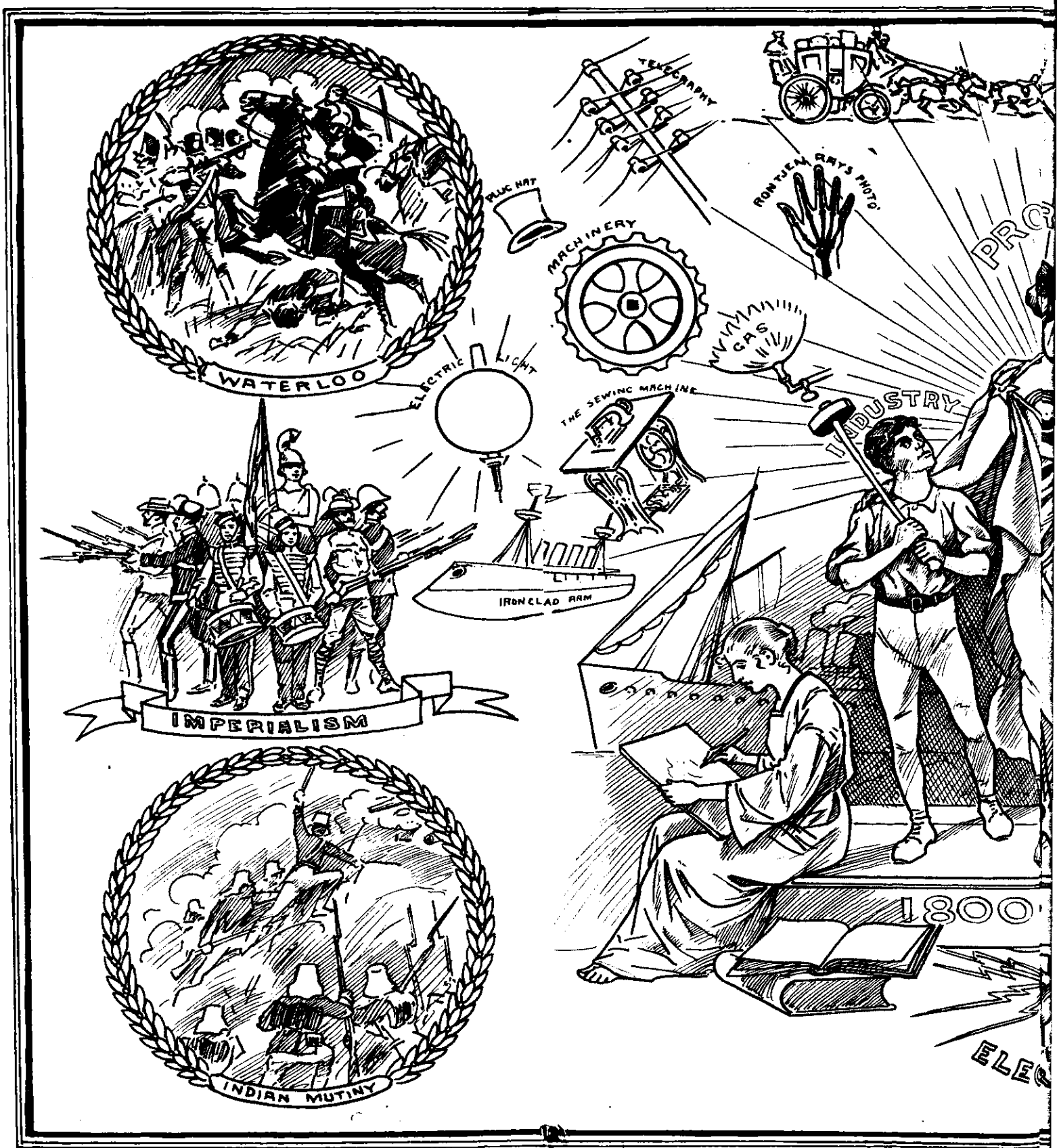
The conjurer hurried from the palace, and lost no time in getting out of the country.

The Difference.

"Yes," said his wife, "I gave the poor fellow that old black coat of yours. You have had it five or six years, and it's all out of style. You never would have worn it again. What difference will it make to you fifty years from now?"

Mr. Tyte-Phist took a sheet of paper and figured rapidly upon it for the next fifteen or twenty minutes.

"The difference," he said at last, "reckoned at compound interest for 50 years on what I could have got for that coat at a second-hand clothing-store is $197.24 plus! Woman, I believe you want to bankrupt me!"



1800– AN ERA OF M

AL CONQUEST—1900.

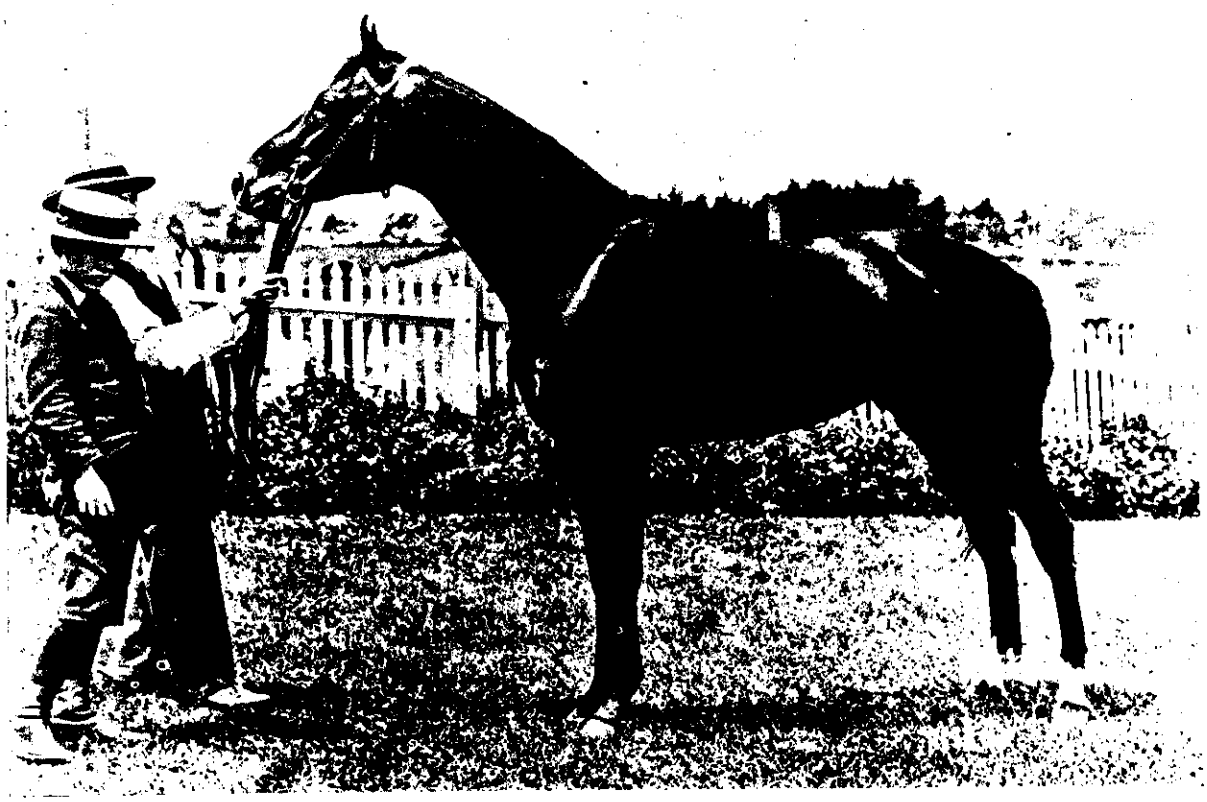
CLERK OF COURSE SELBY LEADING IN RENOWN, WINNER OF RAILWAY HANDICAP FORMULA IS TO BE SEEN BEHIND.

Walrond, "Graphic" photo. THE CROWD LEAVING THE RAILWAY STATION.

Auckland Racing Club's Summer Meeting, Ellerslie.

BLUEJACKET, 1. DAYNTREE, 4. IDEAL, 2. SKOBOLEFF, 3.

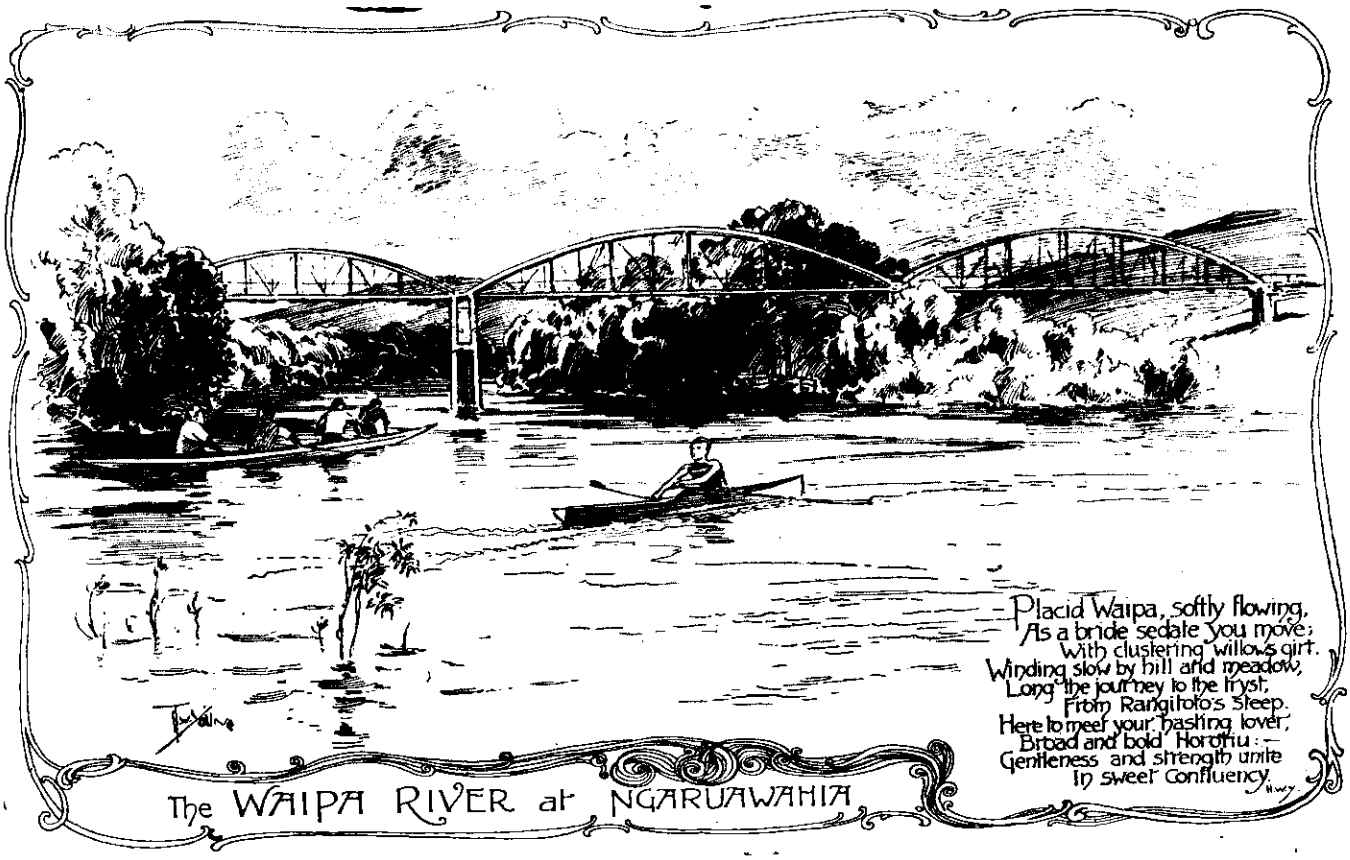
THE FINISH OF THE AUCKLAND CUP.



Photos by Walrond.

MR G. G. STEAD'S B C MENSCHIKOFF, WINNER OF GREAT NORTHERN FOAL STAKES.

Auckland Racing Club's Summer Meeting, Ellerslie.



Placid Waipa, softly flowing,
As a bride sedate you move;
With clustering willows girt.
Winding slow by hill and meadow,
Long the journey to the tryst,
From Rangitoto's steep.
Here to meet your hasting lover,
Broad and bold Horotiu:—
Gentleness and strength unite
In sweet confluency.

The WAIPA RIVER at NGARUAWAHIA

Walrond, "Graphic" photo.

THE HUIA STREAM.

Complete Story.

Afterthoughts.

By JENNIE BROOKS.

She paused often in her work to gaze abstractedly out through the little window. Around it the honeysuckle climbed, and, swayed by the light evening breeze, swung its blossoms in and out, filling the room with fragrance. A belated bee droned drowsily among the flowers, and in drunken languor staggered against the withered cheek of "young Miss Amory," as she leaned out for a last glance across the darkening fields, vainly endeavouring to discern the long white road threading them on its way to the "buryin' ground." So lately had she travelled it that the rusty black bonnet, borrowed to grace the occasion, still lay on the dresser, where she had deposited it with much anxious care for the flimsy crepe. The sea sobbed faintly, and an "on shore" wind carried on its wings the sweet sea smell. To-night the waves throbbed a solemn undertone to the weary, half-formulated ideas beating about in Miss Amory's brain. The day had been one of almost holiday restfulness, without its gaiety, however, and Miss Amory, an honoured guest in her own house. Neighbours fluttered in and out from early dawn, passing the dark "settin' room," with its awesome tenant, and, on softly-treading feet going into the bedroom to note, for perhaps the hundredth time, how the mourner was bearing her woes. Now they were all gone, and from the burying ground old Hanley and Miss Amory returned to find the house empty. To-morrow would bring an unwonted amount of labour, and, turning with a regretful sigh from the window, Miss Amory vigorously polished the blue cup she was holding, and with an air of decision placed it on the table. Supreme authority was exciting, and she struck her first note of independence by adding to the frugal meal the unusual luxuries of broiled mackerel and baked potatoes.

Hanley's surprise she stubbornly ignored as they sat together eating, while through the satisfaction of this first meal persistently recurred the thought that had crept into her mind from the first moment of the "layin' out" of her sister. Hanley, the old man, grown grizzled in the service of the two spinsters, had warned her against a "middle o' the week berrial."

"'T upsets things so," he said. "Tuesday ye'll be a-gittin' reddy, an' that 'll put off yer ironin' 'tel a Thursday. Ef she'd only hed the luck to a-died a Monday stid o' a Sunday, 't wouludn't a-put ye out nigh so much, an' 't's no sort o' use a-holdin' on o' her tel a Wens-day, noways! Land o' love! Yer sister's that stirrin' she won't like it herself alayin' here when there's things to be done! She'll want to be up an' a-doin', ef 'tis only bein' berried!"

Yes, to-morrow would be a busy day, and, having finished her supper dishes, Miss Amory sat on the low stone door-step in the dusk, conscious of a satisfaction that at least she could take her own time to the work, for, having given her sister an honoured "berrial," she was entitled at last to consider herself. In the wide room behind her the spinning-wheel stood. How ceaselessly had it whirled under Hannah's tireless hand! The moonlight shining in, threw the soft shadow of a twin wheel across the floor, and Miss Amory, gazing dreamily at the two, could scarcely realise the absence of her autocrat, who, for the first time in seventy years, had met one with a will even more imperative than her own, and yielded to his demands. "Young Miss Amory" could sit with idly-folded hands and hear no reproof; she could help herself at meals, and even revel in the delight of pouring her tea!

Hannah was gone! Hannah, who had always been both head and foot of that little kitchen table. With stern, unyielding face she had carved the roast, and then shifting around to the side of the table, appropriated to herself the honour of "pouring," while Miss Amory waited in meek patience. Not a jot of her authority had ever been yielded. In a truly narrow path had she guided "young Miss Amory" since their motherless childhood, but how deeply had she loved her! In her eyes beauty of form, and all the graces of intellect, culminated in the quaint, deprecating little figure of her sister, and in her own quiet, stay-at-home life, Hannah gloated in awful pride over the appearance of Miss Amory when "meeting day" rolled around, or the "Sisters of Jericho" had a festival, or "tradin' was to be done in the village of Middle. Baxton." She then presided over the mysteries of "young Miss Amory's" toilet, and opened all doors before the progress of her idol, who, fine in alpaca and silk mitts, stepped stately out into the lane, her heart beating high at again showing the little world about her that good blood, though at ebb-tide, lingered in the veins of the Amorys. Hannah always held the door ajar, looking out like a grim ogre, until the apple orchard hid her sister from her loving old eyes. Ah me! with the iron rule relaxed there departed also that stern affection, and at the thought Miss Amory sighed once more, then she dropped her face into her hands and communed with herself.

"It's a sheer waste," she muttered, presently, "an' I ben a-thinkin' 'bout it ever since Sunday, an' I ain't goin' to stan' it, you may depend!" No reply came from out the quiet night, then a whippoorwill called sadly from the orchard, where the blossoms lay in billows of pink and white snow on the hill sloping steeply before her to the waters of a small brook straggling under the arch of the old stone bridge. She raised her head and listened to the cry of the bird again repeated. How faint and far off sounded the surging sea! But Miss Amory did not yield to its spell, her brown, old face lost a little of its cowed look, as she straightened herself with an air of determination, and continued aloud: "I'm a-goin' to do it, I be! 'S no use thinkin' any more. 'S the only way, an' I've jes' got to do it! Hanley," she called loudly, rising from the step, "stir yourself up, 's time fer bed," and as old Hanley shuffled off to his quarters in the attic, she closed the shutters and buttoned down the door-latch. Sleep was not in her mind, for, fully dressed, she lay stiffly down on the stuffy feather-bed, and with wide-open eyes made her plans in the soft darkness. The sweetness of apple blossoms heavy with dew stole through the shutters, bringing a sudden memory of how Hannah loved them. "The smell o' them blooms," she had always said, "makes me think o' mother, dead nigh onto sixty years, an' me a-fetchin' her my pinafore full."

Young Miss Amory brushed her hand across her eyes, as if so she would wipe away all sentimental reminiscences and strengthen her determination. When the tall old clock raspingly whirred out eleven, she arose, and throwing over her frosty hair a nubia, crossing over her breast a plaid shawl and tying the ends securely behind her back, she crept silently out of the door. Hanley, deep in well-earned slumbers, heard nothing, and Miss Amory needed him not, for she knew quite well how to harness old Tom. But Tom, unused to vagaries and midnight raids, refused the bridle and her blandishments, so she finally gave up her attempts. Tucking under her arm the bundle she had brought from the house, and seizing a lantern that was hanging by the door, she started bravely forth.

"Nothin' hinders me now," she whispered, "I be goin' to do it fer a certainty. I've walked it before, an' I can walk it again, Tom or no Tom."

Down the lane, thence to the dusty road, in the fading light of the moon now far in the west. With every step she gained assurance. "My," she said, softly, "smell them apple blows! Poor Hannah! Well, she's had her day, an' land knows, 'twas a long one, an' now it's mine, it's mine!" she added, fiercely and aloud. "When'd I ever do a thing I wanted to, I'd like to know, 'less 'n she wanted me to? She oughtn't to a made me promise, 't warn't fair. Jes' because I was afraid to argue with her, did it. She don't need it noways, an' I shouldn't think ef she's an angel she'd keer a mite about it now. She hadn't ought to hanker after them things. Well, I haven't got that to settle, an' the land knows I ain' got more'n a mite o' mind left to settle anything with! Deary me! this road's a sight longer than 'twas this afternoon, 'pears to me."

Seeing a light in the house she was passing, she said, "Lem 's sick, one o' them dizzy spells ag'in. Glad there's one house 'twixt here an' there, 's kind o' company."

The white cemetery gate shone out of the dark, and, lifting the wooden latch, she stepped inside. Sturdily, and without hesitation, she strode over the grass billowed here and there above the snug house of a quiet sleeper. The vault in this old burying ground, which lay, a green triangle, at the intersection of three roads in the valley, was built or burrowed into the ground, and before its door at the end of a flight of stone steps leading down, "young Miss Amory" stopped. How the sound of the sea drummed in her ears, and how dark it was as the moon suddenly dropped below the horizon, as she removed the first stone. The lock had long ago fallen away from the rotten wood, and the heavy door must be pushed from within, so, lifting stone after stone from the crumbling side, Miss Amory thrust in her hand and the door swung outward. Miss Amory waited to light her lantern, then, holding it above her head, she stepped bravely in. Directly in front of her was the cheaply-painted coffin of her sister, flanked in the background by the black and mouldering boxes which held her mother, her grandmother and grandfather. Her father lay in deep water off the Grand Banks. On either side two small coffins proclaimed a youthful kinship with the dead. On one of these she set her lantern, and for the first time she trembled, glaring fearfully at the latest addition to this secluded company. She coughed a little and looked about to accustom herself to her surroundings. The authoritative Hannah was again invested with majesty for her, "but," she argued, standing staunchly to her colours, "she's had her day, an' her day is done." Here her courage reasserted itself, and, drawing from her voluminous pocket a chisel, she inserted it beneath the coffin lid. Clink, clink, and the lightly nailed wood yielded to the tap of the stone. Carefully she lifted the cover in her toil-strengthened arms, leaning it against the dark wall. There lay Hannah, just as she had seen her a few hours previously. The relaxing hand of death gave a softness to the hard, old face, and the dim yellow light mellowed it into a semblance of life. The drooping corners of the mouth held a suspicion of derisive mirth, as Miss Amory addressed the sleeper:

"Now, Hannah," she began, persuasively, watching her, guardedly, meanwhile, "ye know ye don't need it—ye know ye don't, an' I do. I ain't got a decent thing to wear to meetin' er to the Daughters o' Jericho, nuther. The alpaca's about gone, an' ye knew that, but mebbe ye forgot bein' 's ye was sick so long. But I do wonder at ye, Hannah, a-makin me promise when ye always took such pride yerself in my goin' out! Ye oughtn't to a-made me promise, an' I can't stan' it, nohow. I tell ye, I can't. I brought along yer linsey, an' 's good's new, an' clean, too, an' ye ain't us't to silk, an' ye know it—ye ain't never hed silk on yer back before—an' I do need it so, Hannah—I'm a-goin' to take it offen ye now—ye needn't say a word—sho! ye can't anyway! I do' know what made me so shiftless as to promise, but I kep' my word, an' ye was berried in it, an' now off it comes, an' I'm a-goin' to take my turn, fer it's as much mine as yours, an' ef ye got anything to say agenst it, now's yer time."

A long pause, and Miss Amory, leaning back against the wall, watched Hannah's lips, waiting a response. Then her face brightened as she began again.

"Sho, what a fool I be! Ye can't say nothin'—'pears like I don't seem to sense that! I can't get used to doin' all the talkin' when yer about, Hannah! Now ye know mother left that dress to us both, an' ye've had yer share, haven't ye? Ef ye'd only wore it when ye was alive ye'd had it longer, but that ain't my fault, an' so here goes." And, suiting her action to her word, she quickly unfastened the dress and raising Hannah to a sitting posture, pushed it back off the stiffened arms, groaning with the combined effort of supporting the listless Hannah and undressing her at the same time. Laying her down, she then drew the silk skirt off over the feet, carefully folding it away. With much difficulty she substituted the dress of homespun linsey-woolsey, and, as she carefully smoothed down its folds, a pair of dark green slippers caught her eye. They were family heirlooms, dear to her heart. She clutched the feet they encased, exclaiming, in outraged wrath:

"Well, I never! An' so they put them on ye, too. I didn't know that before! Well, ye don't need them, either," turning to Hannah for the denial which did not come, and, realising that remonstrances were not to be feared from that quarter, she hastily slipped off the coveted shoes, and pulling the rubbers from her own feet, reshod Hannah for her journey. "Now," she said, in satisfied tones, "ye look real com'f'table. Silk's cold, an' I hope ye will 'scuse me, Hannah, fer disturbin' ye, but ye do know it's as much mine as yours, don't ye? I done what I promised—don't ye forget that. I kinder hate to cover ye up—I do so—ye look so pleasant like, but"—this hurriedly—"I got to go—I can't stay all night." Here the old woman nearly broke down, and, lest such a thing should occur, she hastily transferred the lid to its proper place, shutting in the nonchalant Hannah, shutting out the purple and fine linen that had held royal allurements for her in ante-mortem days. Driving in the nails was a more gruesome task than drawing them out, and, as she pounded away, "young Miss Amory" continuously mumbled apologies to Hannah. The chill air betokening dawn greeted her, as with her bundle and lantern she emerged from the vault. Deftly replacing the stones, she hurried away, and with every step her spirits rose. In serene triumph she marched along, for that unusual smile of Hannah's meant approval, and the lack of this had been her only dread. The tall maples at her gate were tipped with sunlight as she passed beneath them, and the birds were carolling madly. Fortunately Hanley was yet plunged in the slumber caused by the unaccustomed exertions of the previous day, and Miss Amory gained the house without being seen. Removing her muddy shoes, she set about getting the breakfast with joyous energy. She did not sigh this morning, and her untimely cheerfulness was uncanny. The delayed ironing sped swiftly under her eager hands, and long before noon the gray silk was spread out before her on the bed, as she planned how it might be fitted to her own meagre proportions. So deeply she cogitated that when Hanley, coming from the fields, gazed affrightedly in through a window, she was wholly unconscious of his scrutiny, but when on explaining to herself how the work must be done:

"'Twas jes' right fer Hannah; her an' mother must a-been 'bout of a size. Now, ef I jes' let out these gathers, an' take it up at the top, it'll do. Hannah ain't hurt it a mite," she chuckled, "a-layin' on it."

The awestruck Hanley slunk quietly away, and when the dinner-horn blew, he lagged sadly in obeying the summons. Had Miss Amory not been so absorbed in delightful anticipation, the strange nervousness of her servitor would have warned her of something amiss.

It was one of the most beautiful of early spring days. Song sparrows chirped gayly in the hedge, bees buzzed lazily, and the sunlight, glancing through the leaves, dropped on the floor in blots of gold. Young Miss Amory sewed happily, near the open door. The gray silk rustled crisply under the clumsy fingers, and trailed its length on the floor, as she lifted it this way and that in the process of reconstruction. Every wrinkle in her seamy old face curved contentedly over happy visions of the days to

See letterpress "Children's Page."

The "New Zealand Graphic" Christmas Tree at the Children's Hospital, Auckland.

come wherein she would shine resplendent. Wheels, rolling softly up the lane, did not disturb her, and, until a shadow fell across her work, she was oblivious of any visitors but the birds; then, tossing behind her chair the telltale garment, she sprang up, erect, defiant, her small figure, regal in its consciousness of at last standing on the throne of independence. A grim trio of "selectmen" confronted her, and the spokesman said, without preliminary:

"We have been informed that ye've robbed yer sister in her grave, an' we come to see jestice done," his voice trembling with anger and vindictiveness.

"Now, Miss Amory," broke in more mildly gentle Deacon Maynard, "jis own up to it, deary, an' we'll see ye through; the neighbours talkin' 'bout mobbin' ye, now it's got 'round."

"Got round!" flung out the shaking lips, "what's got 'round? My sister an' me, we had it out last night 'bout this here dress, ef that's what ye mean, an' it's always been mine as much as hers, anyway! Yes, I berried her in it! She made me promise that, but she don't need it now, does she? An' who told ye? Who told ye? Hanley told ye! Hanley, a-shiverin' back there behind ye! Hanley we fed an' kep' year in an' year out ever sence he's too old to work! Too old fer any good on earth! Take it back, ye say? No, I be goin' to keep it! Do ye hear me?" her voice rising shrilly. "What do ye know about Hannah an' me, anyway? Have ye been like me? Have ye been in su'jection to her all yer life? Have ye done jes' what she said, an' wore jes' what she said, nigh onto sixty-five year? No, ye ain't! no! but I been doin' that"—the ashen face quivered—"an' to-day my heart's so light! I been so happy! Hannah gone—an' I nursed her good—ye all know that, an' ye know she took the silk dress with her, an' I jes' couldn't stan' it, nohow! But I give it to her, jist as she said, an' berried her in it, true, an' now"—a bitter sense of being wronged fired her once more with courage, "an' now I take it back!" and dropping into her chair, the little woman crushed the silk together, and, burying her face in its soft folds, broke into the slow, heavy crying of old age.

The selectmen looked uncomfortable. They had heard rumours of Hannah's maddening rule, but as town guardians, their business was to see this desecration atoned for, so, against her heart-broken pleadings, they gradually forced Miss Amory into the waggon, and, with the dress on her lap, she began her third trip to the burying ground within twenty four hours. In a quiet that accorded little with her outbreak at home, "young Miss Amory" submitted to be helped from the waggon and entered the vault. Her persecutors undertook the work of uncovering Hannah this time. With no apparent emotion, Miss Amory changed the garments of her sister, still smiling placidly, perhaps grateful, for the two unexpected peeps into this odd world.

"Hannah," whispered Miss Amory, as she laid her down, "ye ain't dead yet, be ye? Ye reached yer arm out after that dress ef ye didn't say a word las' night. Ye was thinkin' an' yer knew ye had yer grip on me yet!" and, turning away with the old miserable look of subjugation on her face, Miss Amory left the vault, the selectmen, and sped off homeward. 'Twas a weary walk in the rosy sunset light, her tired feet dragging heavily through the sand. Just over the threshold of her home she paused suddenly, throwing up her hands in amaze. There, as if awaiting her, lay the gay, green slippers, forgotten since morning! An exultant light broke through the gloom of her face as she bounded across the floor and snatched them up triumphantly, exclaiming:

"Ye fergot yer slippers, didn't ye, Hannah? Ye fergot yer slippers that time ye reached, an' ye was 'bliged to leave me somethin' after all!"

Tess: She doesn't look very athletic.

Jess: Who, Miss Summergal? Indeed she doesn't.

Tess: But you said she was always engaged in some college sport.

Jess: Stupid! I said "engaged to."

Copyright Story.

His Last Card.

By CECIL MEDLICOTT.

(Author of "Irene von Leyden," etc.)

"Then I am to understand, father, that your decision is final?"

"Absolutely final."

"And that there is to be no appeal?"

"None."

"Neither in this world nor in that which is to come, Amen."

"Do not be profane."

The young man gave a careless laugh and glanced at his father's set, stern face.

"I don't think it much matters what I am—now," said he.

Lord Allaford rose from the armchair from which he had passed judgment on the delinquent, and moved away to the window.

"No one shall say I am not going cheerfully to my husks," said the young man, with another laugh. "I suppose you will say 'good-bye' even though I am, as you have justly observed, a disgrace to my family—to my exceedingly respectable and vastly aristocratic family. Never you mind, father. I am not the eldest son, nor the second, no, nor even the third. Surely you will admit that the devil has shown great consideration in having left you three credits and staves and comforts for your declining years, and that kind of thing, since he has only taken a very unimportant younger son, whom no one cares for, whom no one will miss, and whose very existence will soon be forgotten history. . . . Console yourself, my dear pater, the disgrace is not indelible—it can't be, when its factor is no longer remembered." The reckless tone here changed suddenly to one that was almost wistful, as the young fellow let his eyes rest on his father's averted figure. "I—I should have liked you to have seen my little boy. . . . He has done no harm, and I should like him to have had his grandfather's blessing."

Lord Allaford made no sign beyond a slight movement, unnoticed by his son.

"I have named him Richard, after you, and Gerald, after mother and myself. We shall call him Dick. . . . Had you rather I took a different surname?"

"No!" said Lord Allaford.

"I could, you know—easily."

"You are not a criminal," said the old man sharply.

"No?" returned Gerald, lightly; "How do you know that?"

Lord Allaford turned, and looked with his keen, grey eyes full at his son.

"You are not a criminal," he repeated, with still more decision. "Heaven help us—you are your mother's son!"

"And therefore not a man who could commit a crime. All right, father, I am glad you have some opinion left of me. Perhaps I deserve it, perhaps I don't. . . . Will you shake hands with me? You need not be afraid I should take it as a sign of forgiveness; you have explained your views too clearly for me to mistake them. . . . You won't? . . . All right. It was only a fancy I had." Gerald shrugged his shoulders and turned away, without seeing that his father's hesitation had only been momentary, and that his hand had not been withheld from the prodigal. "You will tell the rest of the family that I have disappeared altogether from the scene," observed the young man, standing at the door and throwing back a glance at his father. "My reputation—such as it is—is in your hands. You can do what you choose with it. Only . . . if the child should ever come to the old home . . . in future years . . . don't let him think too ill of me."

"Gerald!"

"After all, he is not to blame, and it would be unjust to visit my sins upon him."

"Gerald!" repeated Lord Allaford, in faltering tones. "Oh, Gerald!" But in opening the door, his son had let in a sound of carriage wheels, of barking dogs and of loud voices, and the old man's cry—a cry which had perhaps escaped him involuntarily—was drowned by the noise. Gerald hesitated for a moment, but in the confusion attendant on the arrival of guests contrived, unobserved, to possess himself of his hat and stick, slip down a narrow passage and, having gained a side door, to pass through it into an unfrequented part of the garden.

A rush of memories did something to check the feeling of resentment and injury caused by the knowledge that his interview with his father, a last attempt to bridge over the chasm he had himself made, had been vain. Familiar though the house of course was, it had somehow appeared cold, formal and unnatural to-day, yet here every bush and path, every lawn and tree brought him reminders of the time that had been.

There was the old hornbeam, with its hollow trunk and spreading branches, where he and his brothers and sisters had played, and talked and dreamt. Here was the yew hedge where the wren had built her nest year after year, and where the urchin used to hide himself. This piece of grass had been their cricket field before he and his next brother had been promoted to the knickerbockers of boyhood. Along that path the little sister, whose life had been one of suffering, had been wheeled, lying prone on her poor twisted back, always ready with her patient smile and gentle interest when she was called upon to observe or admire what might be shown or told her by the others.

The formal garden with its gay box edged flower beds, smooth lawns, and straight terraces, its fountains and statues, lay on the further side of the house. The part down which Gerald was now wending his slow memory haunted way, had always been set aside for the youthful members of the family; and now that the little feet had wandered into the great world—some, indeed, into a far country where suffering had no place—now that brothers and sisters were no longer children, but grown men and women, silence had fallen where merry voices had once filled the air, and it seemed to Gerald that it was a hopeless silence, as of death itself.

With a strange reluctance he passed through the familiar wicket gate, the weakness of whose hinges had not strengthened during the years that had elapsed since he had last proved them, and so out into the lane by which the tradesmen found their way to King's Staley. At a corner, fifty paces nearer the main road, was a short, abrupt ascent, and from the summit of this miniature mountain the picturesque rambling Tudor mansion could be seen to the best advantage.

Here Gerald lingered and gazed till, to his surprise and very much to his annoyance, he felt a something rising in his throat that might have been a sob, had he not suffocated it at its birth. Then, turning impatiently on his heel, he hurried away without one backward glance or one further thought of the home he had left for ever. The future, indeed, supplied him with ample food for reflection. What would life have for him now, and—what would his wife say to his lack of success in dealing with his father?

For a considerable time the interview had been thought of and discussed in all its bearings. What he should say to his father and his father's probable replies. How much of the past had better be concealed, how much excused, how much embellished. "If he asks what your father is," Gerald had once said, "what the deuce am I to say?" His wife had looked at him in a peculiar way. "What do you think of telling him the facts?" she had made answer. "My dear Victoria!" he had said, with a short, disagreeable laugh, "My dear Victoria! Even the original prodigal would have been denied forgiveness had he had the indiscretion to have admitted with whom he had been in the habit of associating. I am not less worldly wise than he was." "Thank you," his wife had said slowly. "I understand what you mean—in spite of my faulty education—and I shall not forget your comparison." Gerald thought of this little passage of arms as he went back to his London lodgings, and rather regretted his share in it. It was ungentlemanlike to have twitted his wife about her father's position in life, a position for which she was in no way responsible. Should an opportunity offer itself he might perhaps express his regrets—perhaps, but he was not sure.

His failure in making peace with Lord Allaford was undoubtedly as much of a blow to his wife's prospects as to his own, and the common misfortune ought to draw them together. It was besides desirable to be on friendly terms with her. She was the mother of his boy, and she had it in her power to make Gerald's life a burden to him. This latter consideration weighed almost more with him than any other.

When he had slowly ascended the stairs leading to his rooms, he paused for some moments on the landing, then, throwing off every appearance of hesitation, briskly opened the door and entered the sitting-room.

Victoria was, as usual, seated in a rocking-chair, with a novel in her hand. She glanced up at her husband for a second, but her eyes were bent on her book when she spoke.

"Well?" said she.

Gerald looked at her with a frown.

"I tell you what," said he, anger leaping at once into his voice, "I tell you what—if your father had been run in and got penal servitude, you would not expect to be met with a careless "Well?'"

"Oh," said his wife, "then you've muffed it. . . . Swearing never undid the past, so you needn't waste your breath."

Gerald flung himself into a chair, plunged his hands into his pockets, and glared at the ground.

Victoria laughed.

"Stage business," said she, going back to her book.

"Do—you—expect—me—to—believe," said Gerald, speaking between closed teeth, "do—you—really—expect—me—to—believe that you are indifferent to the result of my interview with my father?"

"Indifferent? Oh, dear no. But you show pretty plain what happened, broadly speaking, and details are a nuisance."

"Then what do you consider to have happened—broadly speaking, as you say?"

"Oh, you went to your governor, hat in hand, and licked his boots, and he—kicked you out."

"Terse, if not exactly elegant," said he.

"That's what did happen, didn't it?" said she.

Gerald rose to his feet and moved to the window before uttering a gruff "About that."

"And that's your last card," said his wife reflectively.

"Yes," replied Gerald, "my very last."

"And—what next?"

"The devil may know," said he, "I don't."

"No more do I," was her quick rejoinder.

"I suppose you mean that your father is pumped dry too."

"Yes; so far as we are concerned."

"Well," said he, stretching himself and yawning, "I can see nothing for it but to skin. England is about played out; we must try a less arid and a less suspicious country."

"You may go, if you like," said she, with decision, "but, as I have told you time and again, the child and I don't leave these shores."

"Where I go, my boy goes," was Gerald's equally decided response.

Victoria sprang to her feet, her eyes blazing with anger, but after a hurried step forward, she paused, and resumed her seat. Her husband heard the movement and half turned his head, without, however, looking at her.

"We will leave the child out of the question for the present," said she, breathing quickly; "what are your plans?"

"I just told you that I didn't know—that I had none."

"That's rubbish. You made up your mind on your way back from King's Staley."

"You may say so if it pleases you, but, as a matter of fact, I didn't."

"You expect me to believe that?" cried Victoria. "Rah!"

"You mean that I told a lie," said Gerald angrily.

"Oh, you may put it that way if you choose."

"Look here, Victoria, what's the use of quarrelling. We are both in the same boat, and shall have to sink or float together." He spoke persuasively, facing her as he did so.

"Whose fault is it that there is a question of sinking?" she replied.

"Well," said he, with a slow smile, "if it comes to that ——"

"It does come to that. And I never should have thought that a man calling himself a gentleman should have received a lady like you have done me!" cried Victoria, ruthlessly murdering her royal namesake's English. "And if I could have looked forward to this, and if I could have known that you really meant to banish me and my poor innocent child ——"

"Come, come, Victoria, don't talk nonsense. The child is mine as much as yours, and it is absurd to use the term of 'banishment.' You have been extravagant, and so have I. You have had bad luck, and so have I—confounded bad luck. We can't go on like this. Neither of our families will help us, and I don't know a tradesman who is fool enough to give us a day's credit. Unfortunately, we can't live on air, so we must go somewhere and do something, to gain our own maintenance."

"I won't, and I can't!" cried Victoria, passionately. "I wasn't brought up to it, and I'm not going to do menial work, or any work. No, I won't—I won't -I won't!" and she burst into tears.

Gerald strode up to her and took hold of her shoulder.

"Don't make such a noise," said he, sternly. "We shall have the lodgers rushing in again. . . . Be quiet, Victoria. Do you hear me?"

"Oh! oh! You hurt me!" cried she. "Take your hands off or I'll scream."

Gerald's fingers tightened as her voice, high-pitched to begin with, ended in a shriek.

"Victoria! Confound it! You're a disgrace to yourself and to me Can't you control yourself, I say? Be quiet this moment."

But his wife's tears had grown hysterical, and at each of his words, emphasised as they were by a tighter grip of his strong fingers and an occasional shake, her sobs and cries became louder and more violent, until at the very climax the door burst open and a young man came hurriedly in.

"There!" exclaimed Gerald, in a tone of vexation. "What did I tell you?"

"Is anything the —er—matter?" said the new-comer, looking from Gerald's frowning face to Victoria's bowed and quivering figure. "Excuse the—er—intrusion, but the—er—the cries of feminine—er—distress——"

"Confound it, sir, who are you?" said Gerald angrily.

"Indeed, sir, I assure you—er—no one in —er—particular," faltered the stranger, retiring a step.

"Then, sir, be good enough to respect the privacy of my house," said Gerald, pointing to the door.

"Oh, certainly," replied the stranger, taking another step back, "but the—er—lady?"

Here Victoria, who had regained her self-control, exhibited a desire to take part in the discussion.

"You are very kind indeed," she began, throwing a curious glance at him out of her dark-fringed eyes, "excessively kind to——"

"Sir!" cried Gerald, stepping between his wife and the intruder, and looking fiercely at him, "you will, if you please, relieve me of your company at once—unless you wish to be forcibly ejected. . . . There, Victoria," as the young man hurriedly withdrew, "I hope you are satisfied."

"Satisfied?" said she, with a quick, side-long glance: "satisfied? What with?"

Gerald gave a hopeless and impatient sigh.

"What with, indeed?" said he bitterly. "Oh, how degrading and miserable it all is! Who was it that cursed the day on which he was born? I'm sure I do the same hourly."

"It's as bad for me—every bit," said Victoria, moodily.

"No!" cried he, "no! A thousand times no."

"I tell you I was brought up——"

"In the atmosphere of a gambling-hell—yes!" interposed Gerald. "I," he added, in a different tone, "I was brought up at King's Staley."

"Well," was Victoria's sharp retort; "well, for all your swell family, my people have done more for us than yours have. Handsome is as handsome does, say I."

Gerald looked at his wife, and then spoke very deliberately.

"There are times, Victoria, when I think I almost hate you."

"There are lots of times when I am certain that I quite hate you, if it comes to that," said she.

"If it weren't for little Dick," said Gerald, turning towards the door.

"Where are you going?" said she, quickly.

"To see him, of course."

"No, don't!" cried Victoria, springing forward. "You would wake him. He is not sleeping soundly—he never does, so early—and he—his teeth have been troublesome again. Wait till a little later, or at any rate till I have been in."

"I could be as quiet as you."

"You might think so, but you wouldn't. Your boots creak—no! Don't go! You have waited all this while, and you may as well wait a few moments longer. I will come back and tell you directly I can be sure you wouldn't rouse him. I promise! I vow I will, Gerald! Do you hear? Sit down and read the paper—your must be tired. I shan't be long. You won't come till I fetch you, Gerald!"

"You needn't get so excited about it," said he. "There—I'll wait if you wish it so much. Only don't keep me too long."

"No, no—I won't."

Gerald looked at the small, loud-ticking American clock on the chimney piece.

"Ten minutes," said he. "I won't give you more, and shall expect you back in half the time."

"A quarter of an hour," said she anxiously, pausing at the door.

"Very well; but not a second more."

Gerald seated himself on the solitary arm-chair, trying, with small success, to avoid the many broken springs. The newspaper, thrust into his hands by his wife, was not a high class one, and was moreover of yesterday's date. He opened it nevertheless, and glanced through the list of contents. A case of forgery was the first thing that caught his eye, and though he looked up at the clock once or twice, he read it all with great attention. The forger's writing had been found out in a curious and uncommon way, and the culprit had been a considerable time successful before the law had come down upon him. The paper dealt with the case in a highly sensational manner, and Gerald grew interested and forgot to think of the hour. Below the forger's trial was one in the Bankruptcy Court, and then the detailed account of a murder that had recently taken place in the neighbourhood. Gerald's taste was not what it had been, or he would neither have read nor have become so much engrossed by such subjects. As it was, however, he devoured paragraph after paragraph till, with a start of recollection, he looked at the clock, and rose to his feet.

The time appointed had nearly doubled itself. Why had not Victoria come back? Could anything be wrong with the child? Gerald left the room hastily, and without remembering to move quietly, crossed the landing and entered the bedroom shared by the boy with his parents.

It was empty, as he saw at a glance. Not only empty, but surprisingly bare and tidy.

Victoria's virtues did not include a love of order, and her garments were wont to be flung promiscuously about, as were also little Dick's. This evening there was nothing out of place, nothing in disorder. For some moments Gerald stood quite still, too much astonished even to notice that the crib had evidently not been slept in. Where on earth was his wife, and what had she done with his boy? Half an hour since she had left him, to see if the babe's light slumbers had settled into deep sleep—only half an hour. What had happened, what could have happened in that short half hour? Gerald slowly crossed the room, looking from side to side as he did so, as though expecting the missing ones to rise from the floor. On the dressing-table in the window lay a bundle of papers, a pawn ticket and a letter addressed to himself in Victoria's illiterate writing. What freak was this of hers? But before all, where was the child? He opened the letter hastily and read as follows:

"I can't stand this any longer. Look where I may there is no chance of things improving now that your swells have thrown us over. I won't leave England. I have said so a hundred times. You can—if you want to. But a man without a copper will get on just as well by himself, though I daresay you would make a fuss about husbands and wives not separating, or some such rubbish. I tell you I've had about enough. I found out long ago that you took me for a bad debt. It wasn't a pleasant discovery to make, I can tell you. And now you may as well know why I took you. I thought I should be a swell and have plenty of money. I was a fool. My people thought best to disappear last night, so even if they knew anything about me, you won't find them. You won't find the boy either. I haven't got him. I disposed of that encumbrance this morning. It don't matter to you where I am going—you won't find me. It was finally settled under your very nose this evening. 'You are very kind,' meant a good deal more than you thought it did. Good-bye for ever. I am going to some one who will give me all I want. I had to pawn your best clothes, but leave the ticket—also the packet of unpaid bills. The landlord won't wait beyond Saturday for the rent. The boy will do well enough where he is: it will be of no use for you to advertise, as the woman who has him doesn't know his real name nor mine. I am going to begin again, and you had best do the same. P.S.—I have made an appointment for you this evening, so as you mayn't feel lonely by yourself."

Gerald read this three times over before he could persuade himself to believe it. Was the child—gone? Was he never again to see him? Never to feel the pressure of soft clinging arms around his neck? Never to hear the toddling, uncertain steps, the baby voice, the merry laugh? Gone? Without the least preparation, the smallest notice? His boy—the one creature in the world whom he loved and who loved him? It was impossible, incredible. And Victoria had called him an "encumbrance." The tide of his feelings turned towards and against his wife, and he clenched his fist and drew a long breath.

"D — her!" said he.

Then his eyes fell on the babe's little bed, on the pillow where the golden head had lain so often, and he flung himself down on his knees by it and buried his face in the coverlet.

The lodger overhead was running through his part in a score. It was an insignificant part, and he marked the bars and half bars in which he took no share by beating with his foot on the carpetless floor. Gerald's keen and fastidious ear had found a constant source of annoyance in the third-rate violinist's performances since they had been fellow lodgers, but this evening he was deaf to all sound. His child was gone his little Dick. He should never see him again—never. Or if in future years fate should bring about such a meeting his boy would be a stranger to him and he would not know him. The whole of the child's short life seemed at this moment to lie unrolled before him—from the first throb of pride of which he had been conscious on hearing that he was a father, through the months of his baby's helpless infancy, the earliest dawning of intelligence, the days when the dimpled arms were first held out to him, when the lips stammered out their first "Dada," and the little feet came stumbling for the first time to him. And now!

Oblivious to the musician overhead Gerald was equally unconscious of the sound of men's footsteps on the stairs, or of the short, low consultation on the landing outside. The first thing that roused him was an imperious knock, followed by the immediate opening of the door and a loud:

"By your leave, sir."

Gerald staggered to his feet bewildered.

"Yes?" said he. "What's up?" Then, seized by a sudden panic lest some harm had befallen his child, "anything wrong?"

"You've got to come with me," replied the intruder. "That's wrong enough for to-day."

Gerald looked at the man and at his uniform.

"Oh," he said with sudden comprehension, "so that's it is it?"

"Aye," replied the policeman, "that's it."

Gerald threw a quick glance round the room, and in a moment the official's hand was on his shoulder.

"None of your tricks," said he sharply, as though Gerald were meditating some plan of escape. "You come quietly. It'll tell in your favour."

"Favour? What's the good of that?" replied Gerald in bitter tones.

The policeman made no answer, but produced a pair of handcuffs and in an instant had slipped them on the prisoner's wrists.

"Sharp practice," said Gerald, "What is it all about?"

"Two or three little matters to-day," was the reply.

Victoria's letter was lying on the empty crib, creased and blotted as with tears.

"I should like to take that," said he. "The papers on that table I don't want, and I don't think there is likely to be anything else in the room." He moved as he spoke and picked up the pawn ticket, which he shoved, together with the letter, into his pocket. "These bracelets make one awkward," he observed, adding, "I am ready."

"Your hat is lying in the sitting-room," said the policeman. "Roberts, this party's hat. Now, sir."

Some Recent Bulls in the Commons.

From the London "Telegraph."

To Mr Flavin the Commons have been indebted for several delightfully comical outbursts. He is a man of quick temper, but there is amiability in his anger, for it is obvious that he is angry with himself for being angry with those who are moved to laughter by the quaintness of his expressions. It was he who said, "It is all right for you to send Irishmen to the front to be killed in your wars and then to come back to spend the remainder of their lives in an Irish workhouse." From him also came the assurance that "as brave a heart beats beneath the tunic of an Irish Fusilier as beneath the kilt of a Gordon Highlander." It was one of his colleagues who rose and announced, "I am now going to repeat what I was prevented saying." The use of a wrong word by Mr Flavin once gave a peculiar significance to his eulogy of the Boers' bravery, for, according to him, there were to be found among those who took the field "the beardless boy of sixteen and the grey haired burglar of sixty."

But it is not the Nationalists who alone perpetrate a bull, for this week Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett spoke of certain schemes advocated by honourable gentlemen behind him, who he was sorry to see were not in their places. Although scarcely a ball there was quiet irony in Sir Wilfred Lawson's reference to a naval engagement which was about to commence between the Chinese and Japanese, in which a junk was seen conveying the Chinese commander to a place of safety. Another honourable member, who holds views of his own as to vaccination, urged the President of the Local Government Board to issue a return of the number of children still unborn who were unvaccinated; and it was only the other day that Mr McNeill moved that the Lords' amendments to a Bill "be now considered this day three months." E. Robertson was held to have committed a bull when he declared that the extravagance of army officers should be stamped out with a stern hand.

Absent-Minded.

Stranger (in train): A man in your business can't get home very often, I presume?

Commercial: Home! I should say not. Why, sir, I get home so seldom that I can't remember half the time where I live. Have to telegraph to the firm to send me my address!

Stranger: You don't say so!

Commercial: That's straight. Why, one time I was away so long that I forgot I'd ever been married, and I took such a fancy to a pretty woman I met in a strange town that I eloped with her.

Stranger: My! my!

Commercial: Yes, it would have been a terrible thing, but when I called on the firm during my honeymoon and introduced her, the old man told me she was my wife before.

ORANGE BLOSSOMS

LEVIEN-PRATT.

A very quiet wedding took place at Bishopdale Chapel, Nelson, on Tuesday, December 18, when Mr Nelson B. Levien, of Shannon, eldest son of the late Mr Robert Levien, was married to Miss Maude Pratt, of Nelson, sixth daughter of the late Mr J. Pratt. The officiating clergyman was the Rev. F. W. Chatterton, Vicar of All Saints', Nelson. The bride, who was given away by her brother-in-law, Mr W. R. Walker, wore a very pretty gown of soft white silk, with becoming hat to match. The bridesmaids were the Misses Ethel and Flossie Pratt (sisters of the bride), who wore dresses of white Swiss muslin with transparent yokes and sleeves, white hats to match, finished with blue chiffon. Mr F. W. Hamilton acted as best man, and Mr C. Levien, brother of the bridegroom, as groomsman. Both bride and bridegroom were prominent members of the Nelson Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, whilst in musical and athletic circles respectively Mrs and Mr Levien have been conspicuous figures. Presents were numerous and handsome, those to the bride including gifts from the Operatic and Dramatic Society and All Saints' Church choir. Their future home will be at Shannon, and they carry with them the good wishes of all their friends.

GEE—ST. CLAIR.

On Wednesday, December 19th, a very pretty wedding was solemnised at "Kia Ora Villa," Melrose, Devonport, by the Rev. R. Ferguson, the contracting parties being Mr Alexander E. Gee, late of Christchurch, and Miss Henrietta Mabel St. Clair, youngest daughter of the late George St. Clair, of Auckland.

The bride was attired in a pretty robe of white embroidered muslin, relieved with white chiffon and satin, and wore a large white picture hat. She carried a beautiful shower bouquet, the gift of the bridegroom. She was given away by her brother, Mr A. E. St. Clair.

The only bridesmaid was Miss E. St. Clair, who wore a pretty French muslin, relieved with chiffon and lace, and white picture hat trimmed with white ostrich feathers and chiffon.

After the ceremony was over the guests, who numbered over forty, sat down to a sumptuous wedding breakfast.

Among the guests were Miss Rodgers, who wore a pretty white muslin; Miss M. Rodgers, white pique; Miss T. Harle, dainty grey relieved with white silk and black velvet ribbon; Miss B. Bell, white silk skirt, white lace blouse over pink; Miss Pollard, white skirt and pretty silk blouse; Miss F. Pollard, white silk blouse and check skirt; Miss A. E. Wroath, black skirt and cream silk blouse; Miss Gee, dainty pink relieved with black velvet; Miss F. Gee, pretty blue foulard relieved with white; Mrs Peek, white silk skirt, heliotrope silk blouse; Mrs McLeod, grey relieved with white;

KEESING—CARO.

A pretty wedding was celebrated on Tuesday last at the Jewish Synagogue, Princes-street, Auckland, when Mr T. R. Keesing was married to Miss Blanche Caro, daughter of Mr and Mrs L. L. Caro, of "Stanley," Manukau Road, Parnell. Punctually at half-past two p.m. the bride and her father entered the Synagogue. The service was choral. The bride looked particularly pretty and happy in an ivory silk, the skirt had a tucked front panel, and the hem was finished with two small flounces of silk, relieved with lace, bunches of orange blossoms were arranged at sides of panel, the square cut train, which was not too long, was adorned with orange blossoms, tucked silk bodice, with cream transparent neck and sleeves of lace, bertha of tulle round corsage, relieved with orange blossoms. The bridal veil, which enveloped the face of wearer, was finished with embroidered pattern, wreath of orange blossom in hair. She carried a lovely shower bouquet of white sweet pea, columbine, roses, carnations and asparagus fern, tied with a large white sash ribbon bow, and her youngest sister, who was bridesmaid, wore a pretty empire frock of white China silk, with flounces at hem, finished with lace and insertion, tulle veil on head, fastened with a wreath of blue forgetmenots, and she carried a basket of cornflowers, sweet pea of the same hue, hydrangea, and maiden hair fern, the basket was tied with blue (Ranfurly) ribbon bow; Miss Caro wore a white Indian muslin, with tucks and lace insertion, the skirt was tucked half way down each side, transparent yoke and sleeves of lace, azure blue swathed the waist and neck, black hat swathed with pleated tulle beneath and above brim, and she carried a beautiful shower bouquet of various shaded cornflowers, lupins, sweat pea, hydrangea, Michaelmas blue daisies and asparagus fern; Mrs Caro looked distinguee in a black merveilleux en traine, pink ruched tulle at neck, and shoulder sleeves, black straw hat with pink flowers, and pink pleated tulle, and she carried a bouquet of pink and white flowers; Mrs Barry Keesing, cream serge, very much betucked, with satin corslet bodice, black hat with yellow roses and plumes, and she carried a bouquet of yellow daisies. After the ceremony the reception was held at Mrs Barry R. Keesing's residence, City Road, where congratulations were heaped upon the happy pair, and their health and prosperity toasted in champagne. A German band was in attendance, and took up their position under a spreading pear tree, where they discoursed the gayest of music. The house was gaily decorated with flags of every description, tree ferns and white flowers. A horse shoe of daisies hung at the entrance door, while in the reception room a large bell of white flowers was hung. The refreshment table was adorned in centre with the bride cake, surrounded with ices, fruits, creams, cakes, etc. A speech was made by Mr Moss Davis, and responded to by the bridegroom. The bride's going away dress was a beautiful and very becoming confection of royal blue cloth, tailor-made gown, with satin sailor collar and facings, braided with blue of the same hue, cream Spanish lace vest, smart white hat with yellow flowers beneath brim, and ostrich plumes swathed round crown, finished with tulle. The presents were numerous and costly. The happy couple left to spend their honeymoon amid showers of rice and rose leaves. Amongst the many guests I noted:

Mrs Moss-Davis, black moire with white spots, grey fur boa, black toque; Misses Moss-Davis (2) wore cream China silks, one wore black hat and the other white; Mrs Isidor Alexander, black silk, black bonnet relieved with blue; Miss Alexander, white Indian silk with tucks and insertion, satin waistband, black hat with plumes; Mrs Sidney Nathan, canary silk, veiled in white muslin with lace insertion and tucks, black straw hat with yellow flowers; and her daugher wore a dainty white costume; Mrs A. Myers, black silk costume with heliotrope collar and cuffs, black bonnet with blue flowers; Miss Myers, grey costume, cream vest, black hat with plumes; Miss Ettye Myers, white muslin with tucks and lace insertion, blue waistband, black hat with touches of blue; Mrs Coleman, black brocade with white satin yoke, black hat with white pleated tulle lining and pink flowers; and her little daughter wore white tucked silk, white hat; Mrs Keesing, black moire, black bonnet; Miss Keesing, black and yellow striped costume with flounced skirt, bell sleeves with yellow silk, white hat with cherry pink; and her sister wore mode grey, white vest, white sailor hat with white quills; Mrs Baker, fawn silk with touches of blue, brown straw hat with blue beneath brim and feathers round crown; Mrs Cossack, black silk costume with lace dolman; and her daughter wore grey brocade finished with white; Mrs L. Benjamin, black brocade faced with white silk, blue bonnet lined with black and trimmed with blue rosettes; and her little daughter wore white; Miss Stuart, fawn veiled in pink, ruched pink silk let in at the neck, fawn toque with pink feathers; Mrs Symons, electrique grey trimmed with blue velvet, black bonnet with pink; and her daughter wore white; Misses Kerr-Taylor (2), white muslins, hats to match; Miss Hanna, electrique slate trimmed with ecru applique; Mrs Goldstein, black silk with black passementerie, black hat with feather and pink flowers beneath brim; Miss Atkinson, white silk with narrow bands of black velvet, white hat with tulle and ostrich feathers; and her sister wore white pique skirt, silk blouse, blue waistband and collar, white hat finished with blue bands and white ostrich feathers; Mrs Webbe, grey costume finished with pink, grey hat with pink tulle; Mrs Gabriel Lewis, black silk, black bonnet relieved with purple; Miss Lewis, black skirt, shot pink and yellow silk blouse, white hat trimmed with white tulle edged with black; Miss Partridge, white costume with black floral design, boa, white hat with plumes; Mrs Wiseman, pink floral muslin, cream lace yoke and sleeves, hat swathed with salmon pink tulle; Messrs Isidor Alexander, Moss-Davis (2), Caro (5), Keesing (5), Symons, Benjamin, Webbe, Rabbi Goldstein, etc.

LIST OF MISS B. CARO'S PRESENTS.

Mr and Mrs S. S. Caro, gold bangles and hair clasp set with pearls; Mr and Mrs Maurice Harris, Christchurch, cheque; Mr and Mrs V. Harris, Christchurch, cheque; Mr and Mrs H. Harris, Christchurch, spirit stand; Mr and Mrs A. Harris, Wellington, cheque; Mr Ralph Keesing, cheque; Mr and Mrs M. Caselberg, Masterton, cheque; Mr and Mrs Barry Keesing, dessert knives and forks; Messrs M. and P. Caro, picture; Miss E. Caro, tray cloth; Mr A. Caro, oil painting; Master H. Caro, teapot; Mr and Mrs Charles Louisson, Christchurch, cheque; Mr and Mrs L. D. Nathan, oak and silver tray; Mr and Mrs Shrimski, silver afternoon teaspoons and tongs; Mr and Mrs Neumegan, biscuit barrel; Mr and Mrs Lionel Benjamin, dinner set; Mr and Mrs W. H. Webbe, butter dish; Mr S. Kohn, bread knife and fork; Mr and Mrs Moss-Davis, E.P. salver; Mr and Mrs I. Alexander, pair silver photo. frames; Mr and Mrs G. M. Newton, silver serviette rings; Mr and Mrs D. W. McLean, pair Japanese vases; Mr and Mrs Leo Myers, picture; Mr and Mrs John Keesing, E.P. cake dish; Miss R. Keesing, salad servers; Miss K. Keesing, vase; Miss E. Keesing, carved hand glass; Mr and Mrs Charles Russell, silver afternoon teaspoons and tongs; Mr Caminer, E.P. bread plate; Mr and Mrs R. Moss, Sydney, fish service; Mr and Mrs Gabriel Lewis, pillow slips and sheet; Misses L. and H. Lewis, pair of table centres; Miss R. Isaacs, Wellington, cushion; Misses E. and S. Gee, nut crackers; Mr and Mrs H. A. Keesing, tea set; Mr and Mrs C. H. Ponsford, serviette rings; Mr and Mrs Alf. Caselberg, Pahiatua, E.P. shell ornament; Miss Lillian Spooner, picture; Mds E. Keesing, fish servers; Miss Keesing, carved photo. frame; Misses B. and E. Atkinson, pair vases; Mr G. Harris, Christchurch, cruet; Miss Cossar, cushion; Mrs D. Caro, Christchurch, vase; Mr and Mrs J. J. Holland, silver butter knife; Miss E. Keesing, photo. bracket; Mr and Mrs H. G. Baker, bread fork; Mr and Mrs A. H. Nathan, silver jam spoons; Mrs E. M. Marks, Christchurch, bread and pickle forks; Mr A. Kohn, gold brooch set with pearls; Mr M. Keesing, butter dish and sugar and cream; Mr and Mrs H. Pollak, New York, cheque; Mr and Mrs P. Metz, Christchurch, silver serviette rings; Mrs and Misses A. Myers, picture; Misses and Mr C. Louisson, Christchurch, butter knives and jam spoons; Mr B. Myers, E.P. jam dish; Mr and Mrs S. J. Nathan, biscuit barrel; Mr Laurence Levy, silver serviette rings; Mr and Mrs J. Ziman, knife rests; Mrs Lionel Harris, Christchurch, silver photo frame; Miss Keesing, tray cloth and tea cosy; Mrs David Caselberg, Masterton, bread fork; Mr T. Phillips, set silver salt cellars; Mr and Mrs F. E. Baume, picture; Miss and Messrs Kelly, hall clock; Mr B. Lewis, picture; Mr and Mrs C. J. Phillips, silver jam spoon and butter knife; Mr M. Levinsohn, Wellington, silver-mounted card case; Mr and Mrs H. D. Levinsohn, Wellington, ink-stand; Mr and Mrs W. Coleman, sugar basin and cream jug; Mrs Stuart, D'Oyleys; Miss Stuart, sweet dishes; Mr Mark Davis, Christchurch, E.P. flower pot; Mr H. Black, Gisborne, silver back clothes brush; Mr Mendlesohn, Dunedin, E.P. butter dish; Mr and Mrs Manoy, Nelson, ice bowl; Mr and Mrs Emanuel, Dunedin, E.P. egg stand; Mr J. Hayman, Dunedin, silver back brush and comb; Mr Beaver, Dunedin, silver glove and boot button-hook and shoehorn; Mr and Mrs Hugo Friedlander, Ashburton, salt cellars; Mr and Mrs Lionel Caselberg, Wellington, silver jam spoon.

SINCLAIR—ORMISTON.

In the Wesleyan Church, Grafton Road, Auckland, recently a very pretty wedding took place, in which Miss Clara Ormiston, fifth daughter of Mrs E. Ormiston, of Carlton Gore Road, was married to Mr J. R. Sinclair, of Christchurch, brother of the Rev. W. A. Sinclair, late of the Auckland Helping Hand Mission. The church was tastefully decorated with white flowers, and for some time previous to the ceremony was crowded with friends and well-wishers. The Rev. H. R. Dewsbury was the officiating clergyman. The bride, who was given away by her brother, Mr E. N. R. Ormiston, looked exceedingly well in a soft white silk; the trained skirt and the bodice were tucked. The bodice and sleeves were enriched with lovely Honiton lace, and finished with sprays of orange flowers. She wore a tulle veil over a coronet of orange blossom, and carried a beautiful shower bouquet with white satin streamers. The bridegroom presented her with a lovely gold brooch set with rubies and pearls. The bridesmaids were Miss Alice Burton and Miss Reyburn, of Whangarei, niece of the bride, and Master Reyburn and Miss Dorothy White acted as pages. The bridesmaids were attired in dainty dresses of yellow silk, the bodices made with tucked yokes edged with ruched chiffon, and revers of fine point lace. Their hats were of white satin straw trimmed with white chiffon and ostrich plumes, and each carried a bouquet of white and yellow flowers. The bridegroom's gift to Miss Burton was a twin dove brooch set with rubies and pearls, and Miss Reyburn's souvenir was a gold initial ring. Little Miss White was daintily frocked in white, and Master Reyburn wore a sailor suit. Mr A. White and Mr A. A. Davies acted as groomsmen. The wedding guests were entertained by Mrs Ormiston at a pleasant afternoon tea, and the newly married couple left in the evening for Lake Takapuna, where the honeymoon will be passed, prior to leaving for Christchurch, their future home. The bride wore a stylish travelling costume of grey cloth with white satin facings, and a pretty toque. The presents, it may be added, were noticeable for their beauty, usefulness, and value.

Personal Paragraphs.

His Excellency the Governor was to have left Wellington on the outlying islands cruise in the Hinemoa on Wednesday last, but the heavy southerly gale and boisterous weather which prevailed prevented the vessel leaving until Thursday evening. Lord Ranfurly was accompanied by Captain Alexander and the Hon. H. C. Butler, and Dr. Collins (Wellington) also formed one of the vice-regal party.

Miss Fairchild (Wellington) left for England last week, on a visit to Mrs. Holworthy (nee Lady Buckley).

Captain Thorpe, of the Westralia, has been appointed assistant pilot at Lyttelton, and takes up his new duties in January. Capt. Thorpe has always been a most popular "skipper," and during the last passage of the Westralia from Sydney to Wellington was presented with an illuminated address and a purse of sovereigns by the passengers as small souvenirs of his popularity.

Mr. Wilford, M.H.R. for Wellington, and Mrs. Wilford, left Wellington last week to attend the Commonwealth festivities in Sydney.

The Premier and Mrs. and Miss Seddon left Wellington by the Mokoia on Wednesday for Sydney, and Sir Robert and Lady Stout were also passengers by the same boat.

Downpours of rain and a bitterly cold southerly gale completely spoilt the Christmas holidays in Wellington, and the carol singers had a most novel experience, having to sing their carols in a biting cold wind and heavy rain, more in keeping with wintry Christmas eve in England.

Mr. Charles Wilson, Editor of "The New Zealand Mail," has been appointed Librarian of the Parliamentary Library by the Government. Mr. Wilson is well known as a journalist, and was member for the Wellington Suburbs in the last Parliament.

Miss Bendall (Wellington) is visiting Mrs. Cornford in Napier.

Dr. and Mrs. Martin, and Miss Rose (Wellington), are spending some weeks at the Southern Lakes.

Mrs. J. G. Wilson, and Mrs. N. Wilson (Bulls), are spending a few days in Wellington with Mrs. A. K. Newman this week.

Miss N. Riddiford (Masterton) is staying with Mrs. E. J. Riddiford, at the Lower Hutt, Wellington.

Miss Brigham (Auckland) and her brother have returned home to "Marino" from their visit to Australia.

Quite an exodus of Wellingtonians took place last week for the Tauhaurenikau (Fetherston) races, and both Mrs. W. Barton and Mrs. W. Bidwell have large house parties there for the occasion. Among those who left were Mr. and Mrs. H. Crawford, Mr. and Mrs. W. Moorhouse, Miss Johnstone, Mr. and Mrs. C. Pearce, the Misses Williams, and Messrs. Pearce, Williams, Buller, and Turnbull.

The Misses Henry (Wellington) are spending the Christmas holidays at Wallaceville.

Mrs. Wilson (Wanganui) has been the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Wilford in Wellington.

Miss Gordon (Marton) has been appointed assistant mistress of the Girls' High School at Napier.

Mr. Field, M.H.R., and Mrs. Field, left Wellington by the Mokoia this week for Sydney, in order to attend the Commonwealth celebrations there.

Mr. and Mrs. R. McCullam (Blenheim) passed through Wellington this week, en route for Sydney, and left their family there with Mrs. Grady during their absence.

Mrs. Levi (Wellington) is visiting the Hanmer Springs, in the South Island.

We learn by advertisement that Miss Brennan, late head dressmaker at Iredale's, together with her experienced staff of assistants, have been engaged by Messrs. Milne and Choyce. Some idea of the enormous amount of dressmaking trade entrusted to this firm is gathered from the fact that they keep three head dressmakers in constant employment, and the beautiful gowns manufactured by them win admiration everywhere. And when we consider the high prices that have to be paid in London for a smart gown, we should feel thankful that we have an enterprising and clever firm that can clothe us equal to our English sisters at about half the cost.

Miss Irene Goldwater has returned from school in Auckland to spend her holidays with her parents in New Plymouth; she was accompanied by her cousin, Miss K. Hart.

Mr. MacDiarmid, manager of the Bank of New South Wales, New Plymouth, has gone to Sydney, to witness the Commonwealth inauguration.

Miss G. Brook, who has been spending a few weeks with her uncle, the Rev. F. G. Evans, New Plymouth, has now returned to her home in Cambridge, taking with her Miss Mabel Evans.

Miss Grant, of the High School, New Plymouth, is spending her holiday with her relatives in Auckland.

Miss C. Woodhouse, of New Plymouth, has gone for a trip to Auckland.

Miss Holmes, from Wellington, is visiting her sister, Mrs. Stanley Shaw, of New Plymouth.

Mrs. J. Avery, with her two daughters, Misses F. and A. Avery, and her niece, Miss G. Avery, have returned to New Plymouth after their pleasant trip to the Old Country and Paris.

Mr. W. Allen, who has been visiting his aunt, Mrs. J. Hempton, of New Plymouth, has returned to Auckland.

Miss E. Holdsworth, and Miss B. Bayly, of New Plymouth, are visiting Mrs. Sellers, of Mount Albert, Auckland.

Mr. A. Cowie, who has been visiting New Plymouth, on account of his clerical examinations, has returned to Auckland.

Miss R. Stuart, of Wellington, is visiting her sister, Mrs. Rollo, of New Plymouth.

Mr. N. Miller, of New Plymouth, has gone for a short trip to Rotorua.

Miss Blundell, of Wellington, is paying a short visit to Mrs. Thomson, of New Plymouth.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Harden, of the Bank of New South Wales, Wellington, are visiting Mrs. MacDiarmid, of New Plymouth.

Mr. Kerr, of New Plymouth, has gone for a trip to Dunedin to visit his mother, who resides there.

Masters F. and V. Innes, of the Nelson College, are spending their holidays with their mother in Auckland, and Master Rex Brewster, of the same College, has returned to his home in New Plymouth.

Mrs. Harvey and Mrs. and Miss Jolly, of New Plymouth, have gone for a trip to Rotorua.

Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Hughes, of New Plymouth, have gone for a trip to Dunedin.

Colonel and Miss Pitt, of Nelson, have gone for a short trip to Christchurch and Haniner Springs.

Mr J. Graham, M. H. R., and Miss Graham left Nelson last week for Sydney, to be present at the Commonwealth celebrations.

Lieut. Arthur Trask, Sergeant Sydney Trask, and Surgeon-Captain Roberts, of Nelson, have gone with the New Zealand Mounted Contingent to the Federal celebrations in Sydney.

Mrs Arthur Trask, of Nelson, has gone for a trip to Sydney.

Mr Greenfield, of Palmerston North, is spending his Christmas holidays in Nelson.

Mrs Hudson and family, of Nelson, are spending a few weeks in the Wairarapa with the Rev. J. C. and Mrs Andrew.

Miss J. Ledger returned to Nelson last week after a pleasant trip to Wellington.

Mrs W. Walker, who has been spending several weeks in Christchurch, returned to Nelson last week.

Mr C. W. Wright, of Sydney, is visiting his people in Nelson. He is advance agent for Miss Alice Hollander, a Sydney contralto who will make her debut on the New Zealand concert platform in Nelson on New Year's night.

Mr G. Stubbs, who has been in the Blenheim branch of the Loan and Mercantile for several years, has been promoted to Napier, and left for that place on Tuesday. He is very popular, and though his friends are pleased that he has received promotion they regret that it necessitates his departure from Blenheim.

Miss Clara Farmar left Blenheim for Wellington at the end of last week and will go with Mrs McCallum to Sydney and from there to Melbourne to meet Mr and Mrs Farmar, who are expected there in a week or two on their return from England.

Mrs R. McCallum left Blenheim a few days ago to take her children to Wellington to put them in her mother's care while she and Mr McCallum are absent in Sydney.

Mrs Moore, of Rusk House, Waihopai, Blenheim, returned on Saturday evening from Wellington, where she went to meet Dr. and Mrs Cleghorn, who arrived from England in the Waiwera a few days ago.

Mr M. A. Cheek, a well known musician of Blenheim, has gone to spend the Christmas vacation in Auckland.

Mr S. Griffiths, Stratford, has gone to spend Christmas with his parents, Mr and Mrs Griffiths, "The Barton," Blenheim.

Miss J. Browne, of Napier, is visiting her father and sisters in Blenheim.

Mr W. Groome and Miss C. Groome are returning to their home in Hawke's Bay, after a long visit to England.

Miss Marjorie Giblin has returned to Rissington, Hawke's Bay. She has been for the past three years finishing her education in England.

Mrs J. Williams, of "Frimley," Hawke's Bay, has left for Wanganui, for the benefit of her health.

Mrs Von Badelsen, of Napier, has returned from a visit to the country.

Miss Matthews, who for many years occupied the position of lady principal of the Girls' High School, Napier, but who has recently resigned that position, was, prior to her leaving the school, the recipient of several presentations, which marked the esteem and respect in which she was held by all. A representative gathering took place in the Athenæum, and amongst those present were Lady Whitmore, Mrs. A. Davidson, Mrs. J. McLean, Mrs. de Berdt Hovell, Mrs. J. W. Carlile, Mrs. J. D. Ormond, Mrs. Begg, Mrs. W. Wood, Mrs. J. Hindmarsh, Mrs. J. D. Canning, Mrs. A. Turnbull, Mrs. R. C. Pasley, Mrs. Todd, Mrs. E. Goldsmith, Mrs. H. A. P. Rutherford, Mrs. Jarvis, Mrs. F. Kennedy, Mrs. Bree, Mrs. Dixon, Mrs. Griffin and others. The Very Rev. Dean Howell made the presentation, which consisted of a set of solid and costly silver-backed toilet requisites. The pupils also held a valedictory gathering, at which they presented a silver tea kettle, handsome silver and cut glass flower vases, and a handsomely mounted scent bottle.

Society Gossip

AUCKLAND

Dear Bee,

The weather for the holidays has been very fine up to the present, though the wind has been somewhat too cool, not to say chilly, for the perfect enjoyment of those of us who had invested in muslins and other light summer draperies. Racing is, as usual at this time of the year, the fashionable amusement of the hour.

CUP DAY AT ELLERSLIE

was as usual a very brilliant affair. There was an enormous crowd present; in fact, so far as the lawn was concerned, it was the largest I remember to have seen. The dresses were, however, neither so bright nor so smart as on some previous years. Amongst those present were Mrs Mc Laughlin, black moire, white silk let in at neck, black bonnet; Mrs E. Anderson, cream muslin costume with a large blue floral design, blue empire waistband, toque swathed with tulle en suite; Mrs Atkinson, black silk; Miss Atkinson, pretty pink costume relieved with twine coloured lace; and her sister, white China silk, white hat; Mrs Ansenne, navy foulard handsomely trimmed with white silk[illegible], black hat with plumes; Mrs Alison, very handsome mauve silk veiled in muslin of the same hue and trimmed with ruched white bebe ribbon and embroidery pattern, black toque smartly turned up in front with rosettes of mauve; Miss Alison, canary coloured silk veiled in net, hat with flowers; Mrs Alfred Nathan, grey crepe de chine, the skirt was pleated on hips, and the bodice was thickly tucked, and the sleeves were finished with muslin bands, blue and twine coloured lace let in at vest, boat shaped hat of grey trimmed with black ribbon bows and blue rosettes; Mrs C. F. Buddle, pink flowered muslin, black hat; Mrs Read Bloomfield, black silk with mauve passementerie trimming; Mrs G. R. Bloomfield, lavender flowered muslin costume, hat with flowers; Mrs Grierson, navy foulard, white vest, black bonnet; Mrs Harry Bloomfield, cornflower blue foulard, the bodice was gracefully draped like a fichu and fastened by a rosette at waist, toque en suite; Miss Berry, mouse grey silk, the skirt had a deep pleated flounce edged with canary bands of silk, frills on corsage of bodice edged with canary bands, boat shaped hat trimmed with rosettes of grey tulle and white feathers; Mrs Sharland, fawn coat and skirt; Mrs Cox, blue costume, white hat; Miss Binney, biscuit coloured tussore silk, white chemisette, black hat; Mrs Alfred Buckland, greeny grey costume, black bonnet; Misses Buckland, (2) were attired in white China silks; Miss Olive Buckland, white gown; Mrs L. Benjamin, black moire, white chemisette, black bonnet with blue; Mrs Basley, black silk; Miss Basley, handsome green and white stripe; and her sister wore a canary striped costume, both wore Rubens hats trimmed with white tulle and feathers; Mrs Thos. Ching, china blue figured silk, turban shaped toque with wreath of pink, yellow, white and blue roses; Mrs W. B. Colbeck, forget-me-not blue muslin, unique toque twisted with lace and wreath of roses; Mrs Bodle, very handsome stone grey costume with bead passementerie outlining the white chemisette, black hat turned off the face with black tulle and plumes; Miss Millie Cotter, buttercup costume; Miss Winnie Cotter, emerald green with fawn lace flounce and trimming, black plumed hat; Mrs Caldwell, black satin, white chemisette, black hat with red roses; Mrs J. M. Dargaville, black silk relieved with white; Misses Dargaville (2), white costumes; Mrs Robert Dargaville, lavender flowered muslin, black hat; Mrs Bamford, dark blue silk, the bodice was tucked and finished with black bows, black lace toque with wreath of flowers and rosettes to match costume; Mrs Moss Davis, dark pine green coat and skirt with white satin facings, black and grey toque; Miss Moss Davis, blue costume, black hat turned off the face with black plumes; and her sister wore a fawn costume, white hat turned off the face with white plumes; Mrs Ernest Moss Davis, dark skirt, fawn jacket, white hat with red trimmings; Mrs Devore, black brocbe, with white silk plastron and revers, floral bonnet of two shades of primroses, black plumes and white ospreys; Mrs Collins, periwinkle lavender Ottoman silk, with fron-frou of cream Maltese lace over white front, black picture hat; Miss Lilian Devore wore a soft white silk made with numberless little tucks and insertion of Valenciennes lace, white erinoline picture hat trimmed with white chiffon and white ostrich feathers; Mrs Dufaur, mode grey trimmed with black velvet; Mrs Donald, bluey-grey crepe trimmed with black velvet, black bonnet trimmed with pink; Miss Donald, grey costume trimmed with pink, veiled in fawn lace, white hat with tulle trimmings and wreath of pink roses beneath brim; Mrs Duthie, white muslin, black hat; Mrs Crowe, black grenadine, white muslin fichu; Miss Davey, blue muslin; Miss Dunnet, royal blue relieved with twine-coloured lace; Mrs Loveridge, black satin with white chemisette, black hat with pink roses; Misses Dawson (2), white muslins; Miss Dacre, azure blue muslin, the bodice was thickly tucked, skirt tucked half way on hips, blue fichu, straw hat trimmed with

white and pink roses beneath brim; and her sister wore a white costume with fichu, white hat; Mrs Claes Ersson, white skirt, royal blue silk blouse, black hat with pink roses; Mrs Frater, black herring bone frieze, white chemisette, black hat with plumes; Mrs A. P. Friend, navy foulard, white yoke; and her little girl wore a white costume; Mrs Markham, brown holland with white bands, black hat; Miss Firth, brown holland with white bands, white hat; Mrs Foster, rich lavender silk with tucked skirt, and trimmed with white bebe ribbon, white toque with tulle and ostrich feather; Mrs H. T. Gorrie, black silk; Miss Gorrie, fawn bolero and skirt, white vest; and her sister wore brown, and another sister wore white; Mrs Craig wore a white China silk and lace insertion, and finished with pale blue at neck and waist, white hat; Mrs (Dr.) Coom, biscuit coloured costume over a silk petticoat of periwinkle blue, blue toque of flowers and parasol en suite; Mrs Goodhue, black skirt, black and white figured blouse; Miss Thorne George, very striking blue floral muslin en traine, black hat swathed with blue tulle; Mrs Thorne George, black silk relieved at neck with white; Miss Gillies, pink floral muslin, pink hat en suite; Miss Rooke, grey costume; Miss Griffiths, blue costume; Mrs Angus Gordon, black skirt, heliotrope striped blouse; Mrs A. Hanna, royal blue, with bolero and trimmings of guipure lace; Mrs Black, dark blue costume; Miss Hanna, white muslin, with lace insertion, hat trimmed with agapanthus blue ribbons; Miss Jackson, pink striped muslin; and her sister wore white; Mrs C. Brown, fawn tussore silk finished with green, hat trimmed with green ribbons; Mrs Churton, black figured foulard; Miss M. Noakes, blue figured foulard; Mrs W. H. Churton, white costume, yellow collar, yellow straw toque; Mrs H. Nolan, cream silk veiled in a cream embroidered net, cream hat with pink roses and black velvet; Miss Hesketh, cream silk with twine-coloured lace trimmings, heliotrope sash, cream hat with heliotrope flowers and black velvet; and her sister wore fawn tussore silk; Miss Waller, white costume, white hat; Mrs Hill, light brown costume, with pink let in at the neck, toque with roses; Miss Edith Isaacs, navy bolero and skirt, white vest, hat with scarlet flowers; Miss Hill (Mt. Eden), white; and her sister brown holland; Miss Harper, canary silk veiled in white muslin; Miss Chapman, white muslin costume, pink hat; Mrs Caro, black silk, black bonnet with pink roses; Miss Caro, blue striped silk, blue bodice, white hat trimmed with blue; Mrs Barry Keesing, black gown relieved at neck with cherry coloured silk, black hat trimmed with cherry ribbons; Mrs Hutchesson, blue foulard trimmed with twine-coloured lace, black hat with plumes; Miss Lennox, white silk with lace insertion, black hat; Mrs Hope Lewis, pretty azure muslin with fawn lace bolero, three flounces on edge of skirt, black hat trimmed with blue; Miss Tanner, grey check finished with white, red hat; Mrs Lyons, blue skirt en traine, black bolero finished with jet passementerie, white vest, toque with flowers; Miss Aubrey, pink silk veiled in cream muslin; Miss Little, blue flowered muslin, black velvet toque with white feathers; Mrs Wynyard, black silk, black bonnet; Miss Wynyard, blue costume, black velvet toque; Miss Horne, black flowered muslin trimmed with twine coloured lace; Misses Lusk (2) were studies in blue and pink floral muslins; one wore a black and white striped hat lined with white and trimmed with plumes, and her sister wore a black hat trimmed with plumes; Mrs Pollan wore a very striking apricot costume with trimmings of black velvet, toque of pink flowers; Mrs Lawson, biscuit coloured costume, white toque; Miss Salmon, white gown, black hat; Mrs Cattanach and Mrs Windsor were studies in bluey grey; one gown was finished with velvet and the other silk; Mrs (Dr.) Sharman, black skirt and a cloak made of heliotrope Liberty satin overlaid with black Chantilly lace in deep vandykes and edged with frills of the lace and heliotrope silk muslin, on the shoulders were puffs of black tulle over black silk muslin, strapped with narrow black velvet ribbon, black hat turned up in front with plumes; Misses Worsp (2) wore pink and blue French muslins respectively, three frills on edge of skirt, bolero bodices tucked all over, and trimmed with narrow ribbons, the ends of which were finished with small buckles, the sleeves were also trimmed with the ribbon and lace, the waist belts were of silk to match the dresses, and their large black Rubens hats were trimmed with black tulle and black feathers all awry; Mrs Mitchelson, brown corded silk, diamond shape twine - coloured lace applique handsomely adorned the dress, cream toque; Miss R. Mitchelson, blue silk with lace trimmings, white hat; Miss Wylde-Brown, shade of sage green, white vest, white Leghorn hat with black velvet and pink roses; Mrs Creagh, lovely shade of grey trimmed with embroidered flowers, black hat trimmed with grey; and her daughter wore pink French muslin, white hat; Mrs Elliott, black silk; Miss Elliott, white muslin with rose pink waistband and collar, hat trimmed with rose pink; Miss Thorpe, white chine silk, with fichu of the same; and her waist swathed with silk and finished with buckle, white hat smartly turned up in front with two black velvet rosettes and flowers; and her sister, cream delaine with green floral design, made with bolero and trimmed with narrow bands of green velvet, white hat, trimmed with black velvet and cream feathers; and her sister wore white muslin, sailor hat; Miss Leys, grey costume trimmed with pink; the skirt was in apron style, trimmed with lace insertion and pink bands, bolero bodice with pink motifs finished with gold buttons, fawn lace vest, grey hat with bouquet of flowers; Mrs Thomas Morrin, royal blue foulard, hat trimmed with azure blue tulle; Miss Morrin, white muslin, hat swathed with tulle; Mrs Sam Morrin, navy and white striped silk, black toque; Miss Laird, black relieved with white; Miss Rose Laird, white costume, black hat; Mrs Martelli, lovely white muslin profusely tucked and trimmed with insertion to correspond, black hat with plumes; Mrs Leo Myers, white pique skirt, white crepe de chine silk blouse profusely tucked, white hat, turned off the face with yellow flowers; Miss Myers, very handsome blue foulard with bands of black velvet, black velvet hat with plumes; Miss Goodwin, simple white canabric, with tucks running horizontally on edge of skirt, tucked blouse, black hat; Miss Watkins, white costume, black hat with white tulle; Mrs Morris, handsome black brocade with blue let in the bodice and fashionable full undersleeves, black hat with blue; Mrs W. Ralph (Sylvia Park), black silk relieved with white; and her daughter wore white; Miss Ralph, white; Mrs Moody, blue; Mrs Ralph (Ponsonby), dark blue plaid costume; Miss Ralph, navy; Mrs Walker (Ellerslie), black silk, green bonnet; Misses Walker (2), white muslin; Mrs Stafford-Walker, blue striped silk; Misses Jones-Parry (2), white; Mrs Woodroffe, lilac stripe, black toque with lilac flowers; their daughter wore white; Mrs Roach, green silk with biscuit-coloured lace trimmings, black hat with flowers; Mrs J. Taylor (Sydney), white skirt, blue blouse, black hat with plumes; Mrs Stuart Reid, fawn lace and blue silk combination; Miss Peacocke, white muslin finished with blue; Mrs Ranson, black barred grenadine over white silk, canary straw and tulle toque; Mrs Russell and her daughters were studies in grey; Miss McCosh Clark, blue flowered French muslin, white hat trimmed with blue; and her sister wore a crushed strawberry costume, hat trimmed to match; Mrs Richardson, grey trimmed with lace, black bonnet; Miss Percival, brown gown, hat trimmed with pink; Miss Ethel Percival, white costume, white hat; Mrs G. Wilson, lavender check costume, lilac straw hat with flowers; Miss Scherff, pink silk veiled in pink book-muslin, with flounce on skirt, and bands of fawn lace, tucked bodice, white hat trimmed with tulle edged with pink; Miss Dolly Scherff, white book-muslin, trimmed with lace insertion, white hat; Mrs Talbot-Tubbs, white chine silk, black hat trimmed with white tulle and red barries; Miss Stevenson, white finished with blue; Mrs J. C. Sn[illegible], black silk, blue bonnet; Miss Sm[illegible], buis costume, white vest; Miss [illegible]utton, white skirt, lettuce-green silk blouse, black hat; Miss — Sutton, grey costume, grey hat with pink flowers; Miss Whyte, dark pink costume trimmed with fawn lace; Mrs Jones, black silk; Mrs Ware, black silk, white chemisette, black toque wreathed with yellow primroses; Miss Ware, navy serge; Miss Dorothy Ware, white; Mrs Williamson, cherry-coloured costume veiled in black; Mrs Bell, brown gown trimmed with velvet, brown toque; Miss M. Wright, canary flowered muslin; Misses Wallnutt, flowered muslins; Miss Witchell, white muslin made with fichu, which ended in streamers in front, black hat; Miss Wilkins, black and white stripe costume; and her sister wore white muslin with heliotrope sash; Mrs Kingswell, black costume over cherry red; Mrs Harry Tonks, crushed strawberry gown; Miss Reeve, handsome mauve silk, black hat with plumes; Mrs Chamberlin, blue and black striped silk crepon, black bonnet with blue forget-me-nots; Mrs Hamley, black silk; Mrs (Dr.) Scott, grey and pink combination; Mrs Hamber, black silk with white square-cut collarette, black hat; Mrs Hamlin, black silk relieved with white; Miss Shepherd, navy foulard, toque of roses; Mrs A. P. Wilson, grey; Mrs C. Phillips, white tucked muslin, black hat.

SECOND DAY'S RACING AT ELLERSLIE.

The Auckland Racing Club were fortunate in the matter of weather for their second day of the summer meeting. Though wet and cold in the early morning, it turned into a brilliant and warm afternoon. Considering that it was an off day there was a very large attendance. Mrs McLaughlin (President's wife), black silk, the bolero was finished with band of white, white vest, white bonnet with black rosettes and violets; and her niece, Miss Nichol, white pique skirt, maring blue blouse with chiffon toque en suite; Mrs Ansenne, very stylish tucked white cambric, black hat; Mrs Alison, black silk, with white silk finishings; Miss Atkinson, white skirt, blue flowered silk blouse, hat with flowers; and her sister wore fawn; Mrs Buller, autumn brown costume, trimmed with braid, black bonnet, finished with canary; Miss Buller, mode grey tailor-made gown, white hat; Mrs G. Read Bloomfield, very handsome grey figured French muslin, pink empire sash and bunch of pink carnations on corsage, white lace sailor collar, white hat with pink flowers; Miss Griffiths, blue foulard foulard, with flounced skirt, blue sash, white lace sailor collar, white hat, with dash of blue; Mrs Alfred Buckland, mouse coloured costume; Miss Buckland, blue costume, relieved with white; and her younger sister looked sweet in a white skirt, blue flowered blouse, white hat; Mrs W. R. Colbeck, pale grey, relieved with white, white hat with roses; Miss Cotter wore an apricot coloured costume, with tucked flounce; and her sister wore a grey costume; Mrs Cottle, black brocade, black bonnet with pink roses; Miss Noakes, white pique, black hat, with tulle and feathers; Miss M. Noakes, grey mode costume, with white braid, square silk yoke, black hat, with plumes; Miss Tanner, gulois grey, with blue silk vest, grey bolero and white boa, charming black toque with blue flowers and violets; Mrs Stuart Reid, white Indian silk, white hat; Miss Hesketh, brown holland, white hat; Miss Waller, white muslin, turned off the face, white hat; Miss Wylde Brown, pretty white muslin, with green sash and collarette, white Leghorn hat, with white ostrich plumes and loops of tulle; Mrs (Dr.) Scott, pale grey costume, relieved with pink, pink straw hat, with black trimmings; Miss Sutton, sage green costume, with white trimmings, black hat; Misses Kerr Taylor (2), white muslins, white hats with bouquets of flowers; Mrs Walker (Ellerslie), black silk, green bonnet; Miss Wallnutt, brown holland, with white braid, white hat; Miss Wallnutt, red flowered muslin, with red hat, trimmed with roses; Mrs Windsor, a bluey-grey costume, white vest, white hat, trimmed with pink roses; Mrs Cattanach, royal blue foulard, with white lace trimmings, red hat, with tulle; Mrs Smith, black silk costume, floral bonnet; Miss Smith, brown, with white vest, and pretty white tulle hat; Mrs Coney, white skirt, grey figured blouse, white hat wreathed with pink roses and black rosettes; Mrs Percy Dufaur, white pique costume, white hat with cerise silk swathing the crown; Miss Davy, white pique, canary vest, canary toque with yellow roses; Miss Dunnett, black silk, finished with blue; Miss Mathews, black costume; Miss Chadwick, white muslin, white hat with pink roses; Miss Thorne George, white pique costume, hat relieved with eau de Nil green; Mrs Angus Gordon, black skirt, yellow and red check blouse; Mrs Martelli, white sailor costume with blue collar; Mrs Hope Lewis, violet foulard trimmed with ecru lace braid, black toque; and her daughter wore white; Mrs (Col.) Dawson, grey check silk, grey hat with grey silk trimming; Mrs Thomas Morrin, black silk relieved with blue, black tulle toque; Miss Morrin, white muslin with lace insertion, blue waistband, burnt straw hat with black velvet and pink roses; and her sister, white gown finished with red, white sailor hat; Mrs S. Morrin, black skirt, heliotrope striped blouse, toque with violets; and her daughter, fawn holland; Mrs Mitchelson, very handsome black silk, with crushed strawberry silk let in at neck, and vest trimmed profusely with steel passementerie, black toque finished with pink flowers; Miss Bertha Mitchelson, exquisite cream fancy silk skirt, pink silk bodice, hat with flowers; Mrs Alfred Nathan, cloudy blue brocade, with white corded tucked skirt and bodice finished with white lace, gold straw toque finished with white tulle; and her lady friend wore green check silk, white hat with tulle; Miss Townshend, black and grey figured foulard, black bonnet with white flowers; Miss Ilbert, green silk veil[illegible] cream barred net, white hat wit[illegible] of green; Mrs Otway, black sil[illegible]rs Hume fawn tailor-made costume, sailor hat; Mrs Colville, blue foulard with white facings, black toque; Miss Little, blue flowered French muslin, white hat with plumes and tulle; Mrs Kingswell, bright blue foulard relieved with white, black toque; Mrs Charton, brown holland, black hat; Mrs Roberts, very handsome black and white figured foulard, with black lace flounces embroidered with white at hem, black toque; Mrs Hutchison, black silk skirt with deep flounce, white tucked silk blouse veiled in cream embroidered net, white hat with yellow cowslips; Mrs Creagh, black silk, white hat trimmed with black; Miss Creagh, green French muslin, with black tulle rechiaga, white sailor hat; Mrs Frater, black skirt, pink silk blouse, hat with pink roses; Miss Binney, grey plaid foulard, black hat with plumes; and her sister wore a grey figured foulard, black hat; Miss Jackson, white skirt, pink blouse, sailor hat; Mrs McDonald, black; Miss McDonald, white pique, white hat finished with blue; Mrs Duncan Clerk, blue silk veiled in fawn striped grenadine, white hat with gold straw trimming; Mrs Bruce, grey crepe de chine, white hat swathed with white muslin edged with fawn lace; Mrs Markham, brown holland with blue vest; Miss Hanna, white China silk, burnt straw hat with periwinkle blue bows; Mrs Donald, grey costume, pink vest, black toque relieved with pink; Miss Donald, oyster grey costume, with black velvet, white hat with ostrich feathers; Mrs Keogh, black silk, black bonnet; Miss S. Cruickshank, white cambric, with pink finishings, black hat; Miss Percival, black barred grenadine over blue silk, hat with cherry pink; Miss Ethel Percival, white costume with black spots; Mrs W. Ralph, black silk with white yoke; and her daughter, white spotted muslin; Mrs Ralph (Ponsonby), black costume with blue plaid stripes; Mrs Devore, black silk, gold bonnet relieved with black; Mrs H. T. Gorrie, dark skirt, plaid grey blouse with white square-cut yoke of lace, black hat; Miss Gorrie, grey and white stripe; and her sisters wore white piques; Mrs Morris, white pique, white hat trimmed with pink flowers; Mrs Thorpe, black; Miss Thorpe, white pique, black hat with grey and white loops.

PHYLLIS BROUN.

NEW PLYMOUTH.

Dear Bee, December 20.

There was a very large attendance of parents and their friends at the

BREAKING UP

of the New Plymouth High School last Thursday afternoon. The chair was taken by Mr R. MacDiarmid, chairman of the Board of Governors, other members of the Board present being Messrs J. B. Roy, E. Dockrill (Mayor), D. Berry, J. E. Wilson, and

Captain Cornwall. The proceedings were opened by a spirited song, rendered by the pupils, and after the prizes were given out, and appropriate speeches made by the rector (Mr Pridham), the Mayor, Mr MacDiarmid, and Captain Cornwall, the guests adjourned to the playground to witness a capital exhibition of gymnasium, given by the boys and girls. Tea was then served by Mrs Pridham, the elder pupils acting as waitresses, which was much appreciated by those present. Among those present I noticed Mrs Pridham, very pretty dove-coloured costume, with blue silk yoke, cream lace hat, trimmed with black velvet; Miss Pridham, white with primrose coloured hat; Miss R. Ambury, white; Mrs Penn, white and heliotrope blouse, dark skirt; Mrs Goldwater, heliotrope and black costume, bonnet of heliotrope; Miss G. Goldwater, white, with cream Tuscan hat, trimmed with satin ribbons; Miss R. Hart (Auckland), blue and white flowered silk blouse, dark skirt, with empire belt of cornflower blue satin and black picture hat trimmed with the same; Mrs Allen, fawn and pink; her friend wore black and pink; Mrs Mullens looked extremely well in a dove-coloured costume trimmed with slate grey brocaded satin, hat en suite; Mrs Turton, black; Mrs W. Shaw, fawn; Miss Berry, holland costume; Miss T. Berry, heliotrope blouse, white skirt; Mrs Hursthouse, blue coat and skirt; Miss Hursthouse, cream and blue, hat to match; Miss E. Hursthouse, white, hat trimmed with yellow; Miss Drake, pink blouse, dark skirt, pretty cream picture hat; Mrs Kyngdon, black and white; Miss C. Jacob, white; Miss E. Bayley, bluey-grey costume, cream silk front; Miss G. Avery, pink and cream blouse, cream lustre skirt, demi traine, hat en suite; Mrs Brewster, white and heliotrope; Miss Bedford, white; Mrs Home, white and heliotrope costume, trimmed with black velvet; Misses McKellar (2), white costumes; Mrs Freeth, black lustre, silk and chiffon cape, bonnet trimmed with heliotrope; Miss Freeth, cream silk, hat with cherries; Miss Brown (Masterton), green coat and skirt; Miss Lewis, biscuit-coloured costume braided with white; Miss E. Bamerton, white and blue; Misses Baker (2), white pique costumes; Mrs Kerr looked well in a black merveilleux costume, hat trimmed with pale blue; Misses Barnett (2), blue and green costumes respectively, brown hats trimmed with yellow; Mrs Paul, violet and white blouse with darker shade skirt, toque to correspond; Miss Paul, white, with terra-cotta satin waistband; Mrs Robinson, black; Miss Robinson, white; Miss Lawson, grey with cream picture hat; Miss B. Thomson looked pretty in white with blue, hat en suite; Miss Stanford, blue and white striped costume; Miss O. Stanford, pale blue; Miss B. Webster, holland costume; Miss L. Biss, black and white with blue satin empire belt; Mrs A. Fookes, white; Mrs Dempsey, black; Miss Dempsey, white; Miss Fookes, biscuit-coloured costume, hat to match; Mrs N. King, pretty costume of dove grey with scarlet silk yoke, veiled in cream lace; Mrs Horrocks; Misses Fookes (2) were studies in white, trimmed with blue and red respectively; Miss Mathews, white, with lettuce green, silk waist band; Mrs Percy Smith; Mrs Douglas; Miss Grant, white and rose pink blouse, black lustre skirt, cream hat; Mrs Bewley, blue costume, with cornflower blue front, and hat en suite; Miss C. Douglass, white, with pink hat; Mrs J. Wilson, fawn costume; Mrs Cornwall, black; Misses Drew (2), black and white costumes; Mrs Dockrill, mourning costume; Mrs MacDiarmid, green; Miss MacDiarmid, white and blue; Miss Smith, grey costume; Miss —. Smith, white and green; Miss Sadler, white and blue; Miss M. Sadler, violet and white costume; Mrs H. Gray, green and white muslin; Miss E. O'Brien, cream silk; Mrs Chong, grey; Mrs Woodhouse, black; Mrs Courtney, grey costume, hat to correspond; Mrs Fraser, black, figured with pink roses, bonnet to match; Miss J. Fraser, heliotrope blouse, with white muslin fichu, black lustre skirt; Mrs Roy, chocolate coloured costume, trimmed with pink; Miss Roy, white and pink; Miss B. Kirkby, green blouse, dark skirt, etc.

The breaking up of the

CHETWODE SCHOOL

took place last Wednesday afternoon in the large class rooms of the school, and there was a large attendance of parents and friends. The opening began by the reading of the year's report by the Lady Principal (Miss Stanford), after which the prizes were given away by the Ven. Archdeacon Govett.

The Philharmonic Society held a

CONCERT

in the Theatre Royal last Thursday evening, and was a great success. So good were the various items that encores were the rule, especially the song "The Promise of Life," rendered by Miss G. Holdsworth, which was worthy of a first rate artiste, and for an encore she sung with excellent taste "My Soul to Heaven, My Heart to Thee." Among the others who sang were Mrs Ambury, Misses B. Bayly, N. Skeet, Nixon and Messrs F. Webster, Miller, W. Black, White. Mr A. L. Cooke, whose skill as a violinist is well known, played a solo "Mazur," and for an imperative encore rendered an exquisite piece. The Society admirably interpreted the cantata "May Day," and "The Miller's Wooing." The orchestra under Mr Haigh played some very pleasing items, and Mr Fletcher, the conductor of the Society, is to be congratulated on the success attained under his tuition, and Mesdames J. Hempton and Pope are to be highly prised.

Mrs W. D. Webster, with the assistance of her daughter, Mrs Robert Lusk, gave a very pleasant

"AT HOME"

at her pretty residence in Fulford-st., before the latter's return to Auckland. It turned out a beautiful day, and the many guests either strolled about the garden or sat on the verandah, and listened to the music. During the afternoon tea was handed round, followed by trifles, jellies, sweets, etc.

Christmas passed off very pleasantly here. On Christmas Eve there was a great crowd of people in the town, and the two bands, Town and City, gave some lively music. Services were held in several of the churches on Christmas Day, St. Mary's being very prettily decorated, and in the evening at the latter selections from "The Messiah" were sung by united choirs, in a manner that afforded a rich musical treat to those present. Mr Fletcher (organist of St. Mary's) took the conductorship, and Mr White (organist of Whiteley Memorial Church) presided at the organ.

On Boxing Day the Taranaki Jockey Club held their

FIRST DAY'S RACING,

and were favoured with capital weather, although there was not much sunshine, the atmosphere was cool and balmy, there being no dust, as rain had fallen heavily the night previously.

Among those on the course and green I noticed: Miss Lloyd, handsome dress of biscuit coloured silk, with pretty rainbow hat to match; Mrs F. Russell, peacock blue costume, trimmed with white; Miss Stanford, dove-coloured costume, with cream silk trimmings, hat en suite; Miss O. Stanford, blue silk, trimmed with black velvet ribbon, white hat; Mrs Walter Bayly, blue coat and skirt; Misses Cottier (2), green flecked tweed costumes, white silk fronts; Miss G. Morey, white, hat en suite; Misses Avery (2), violet and white costumes, white hats; Mrs Paul, light green costume, figured with white on skirt and trimmed with olive green velvet, toque to correspond; Miss Paul, pretty green and pink flowered muslin, with lettuce green silk waist band, hat to match; Mrs F. Thomson, brown flowered muslin; Miss B. Thomson, new blue silk blouse, white skirt, hat en suite; Miss Bedford, pale green silk, with olive green satin zouave; Mrs J. Carthew, pretty pale biscuit-coloured costume, trimmed with pale blue; Miss E. Carthew, green and white costume, with yoke of violet; Mrs S. Teed, pale green tweed costume, with olive green velvet trimmings; Mrs Holmes, heliotrope and white silk blouse, black silk skirt; Mrs H. Goldwater, biscuit-coloured satin blouse, trimmed with cream lace, black silk skirt; Miss J. Lawson, grey and white; Mrs Penn, heliotrope muslin, cream hat; Miss Maule, yellow, veiled in white muslin; Miss Ramson, blue silk blouse, dark skirt; Miss Duglas, fawn coat and skirt, hat trimmed with rose pink; Miss B. Rennell, navy blue and cream silk trimmings; Miss E. Rennell, new blue costume, hat en suite; Mrs Wright, holland costume, with scarlet hat; Miss Walker, fawn coat and skirt; Miss Cameron, white and yellow; Miss Dalziel, fawn; Miss N. Skeet, grey and white costume, black picture hat; Miss D. Glynes, pink and black blouse, dark skirt; Miss Cornwall, white hat, trimmed with pink; Miss E. Cornwall, white muslin over yellow; Miss Hursthouse, cream hat, trimmed with blue; Miss Tuke, cream and heliotrope, hat to match; Mrs Nathan, black and yellow; Mrs Ab. Goldwater, black silk; Miss I. Goldwater, white; Miss C. Jacob, light green flecked tweed costume; Miss E. Hursthouse, white; Mrs Langsford (Auckland), pink silk and cream, lace blouse, black silk skirt, picture hat; Mrs Ellis, black and white costume; Miss Ellis, pretty blue silk and black velvet blouse, dark skirt, hat en suite; Miss E. Ellis, pink silk blouse trimmed with black velvet ribbon, dark skirt, hat trimmed with pink; Miss Cunningham, silver grey costume trimmed with white; Miss Biggs, white and blue, pretty blue hat; Mrs McIntosh, black coat and skirt, pink silk front veiled in white chiffon; Miss Stewart (Wellington), heliotrope flowered muslin; Mrs Peek, pink; Miss McKellar, green blouse, white skirt; Miss J. McKellar, white; Mrs Percy Webster was much admired in a slate grey costume trimmed with white silk and fichu of same edged with fringe, hat of grey fancy straw trimmed with feathers and pink chiffon, pink parasol; Mrs Hall, light green costume trimmed with white, toque to match; Mrs A. D. Gray, navy blue with white silk front, toque en suite; Mrs Hood, pink and white silk blouse, dark skirt; Mrs J. C. George, green tweed coat and skirt; Mrs Wrigley (Hawera), pink with cream lace trimmings; Miss McAlpine, white and blue; Misses O'Brien (2), cream silk; Mrs Stanford; Miss Standish, dove grey, and white chiffon fichu, white and pink hat; Mrs W. Leatham, white silk and black velvet; Mrs H. Leatham, fawn coat and skirt, pink hat; Mrs Watson, black satin; Miss Teed, yellow and white blouse, white skirt, hat with yellow; Mrs Brewer; Miss D. Brewer and Miss L. Brewer wore pretty white insertion muslins over blue and yellow respectively; Miss Kirkby, white, hat trimmed with blue; Miss B. Kirkby, green blouse, dark skirt, etc., etc.

The morning of the

SECOND DAY'S RACING

broke very showery, and continued so until late in the afternoon, so I was unable to see many of the dresses, as the ladies were either closely sheltered with an umbrella or enveloped in a mackintosh, but those I did notice were:—Miss Douglas, wearing a pretty magenta silk and cream lace blouse, dark skirt, toque en suite; Miss B. Kirkby, white; Miss I. Kirkby, green coat and skirt; Mrs Penn, pink and green blouse, dark skirt; Mrs Watson, black satin and white; Miss Teed, grey coat and skirt, hat with pink; Miss Cornwall; Miss E. Cornwall, white blouse, dark skirt, black and white hat; Miss Bedford, white muslin, heliotrope hat; Mrs Percy Webster, cornflour blue costume trimmed with cream satin, hat en suite; Mrs J. C. George, cream and green; Miss George, navy blue costume; Mrs H. Goldwater, black, with magenta trimmings, hat to match; Mrs A. D. Gray, grey costume; Miss Holdsworth, white blouse, dark skirt; Miss B. Bayly, green coat and skirt; Mrs Standish, black; Miss Standish, bluey-grey costume; Miss O. Stanford, green blouse, dark skirt; Miss C. Stanford, red and white silk blouse, dark skirt, hat to correspond; Mrs Hall, grey; Mrs Paul, blue and white silk blouse, black silk skirt; Miss Paul, flowered silk, blouse, navy blue skirt, rose pink in hat; Miss McAlpine, navy blue costume, with rose pink neckband; Mrs C. Wright, green and blue costume, hat with scarlet; Miss Walker, grey, and cream front; Mrs C. Rennell, black satin, grey feather boa; Mrs Nathan, black; Mrs Ab. Goldwater, violet and white costume, bouquet en suite; Miss I. Goldwater, white; Miss R. Hart (Auckland), pale pink silk, trimmed with cream lace, pretty cream hat; Mrs Ellis, Miss Ellis, navy blue and scarlet; Miss I. Ellis, blue and pink flowered muslin blouse, dark skirt; Mrs Walter Bayly, pink and white silk blouse, white lace fichu, dark skirt; Miss Cameron, black and yellow costume; Mrs Barford; Miss Biggs, pink grass lawn over rose pink, hat en suite; Miss Fleetwood, cream; pink blouse, dark skirt, hat en suite; Miss Lawson, grey; Miss D. Glynes, pink and black; Miss L. Webster, white; Miss Maule, black and white silk blouse, dark skirt; Misses Tuke (2); Miss Brown; Misses Hursthouse (2); Mrs Hursthouse; Miss C. Jacob; Miss E. Bayley; Miss Fookes, pale fawn; Miss E. Fookes, white and pale blue; Mrs Holmes, gold silk blouse, dark skirt; Miss E. Rennell; Miss B. Rennell, white blouse, dark skirt; Miss V. Rennell, blue; etc.

A FAREWELL SOCIAL

was held in St. Mary's Hall last Thursday evening, when the congregation farewelled Mr and Mrs G. F. Robinson, who are leaving shortly for Wellington. During the evening songs were sung by Miss M. Fookes and Mr Black, after which Mr W. Skinner took the opportunity to present Mr Robinson with a handsome silver cake tray from the Sunday school teachers and others, as the latter took such an interest in St. Mary's parish. Mr Clement Govett, on behalf of his father, the Venerable Archdeacon Govett, made some suitable remarks. Misses G. Holdsworth and D. Taylor also sweetly rendered songs. After refreshments were handed round the National Anthem was sung, and three hearty cheers were given for Mr and Mrs Robinson. This brought a most enjoyable evening to a close.

Last Friday afternoon Mr and Mrs Henry Gray gave a

GARDEN PARTY

at their pretty residence, Caterham Lodge, which was most enjoyable. Tea was served in the drawing-room and on verandah, followed by ices, which were very refreshing, as, although the day was showery, the atmosphere was very warm. During the afternoon games of croquet were played by some, while others sat chatting on seats under the trees surrounding the lawn. Mrs Gray received her guests in a black and white muslin gown, black lace fichu; Misses Gray (3) were studies in white; Mrs Turton, pale yellow costume; Mrs Home, white and mauve; Mrs Bedford; Miss Bedford, pale green, rose pink parasol; Miss Testa, biscuit-coloured costume; Mrs Fookes, black lace mantle; Miss Fookes, pale fawn and blue; Mrs Marshall, black, pink in bonnet; Miss Marshall, blue; Mrs Copelan, black;

Mrs Kelsey, white; Mrs Richmond, blue and white costume, black hat; Mrs F. Russell, sage green, trimmed with white; Mrs Woolhouse, black; Mrs H. Leatham, white and pink; Mrs W. Leatham (Auckland), white with black velvet trimmings; Miss Shuttleworth, black and white muslin, hat en suite; Miss Nicholson, white and pink; Miss Stanford, blue, black hat; Miss Ahier, pale fawn; Mrs W. Skinner, lettuce green muslin trimmed with black, hat to match; Mrs Baker, black and white costume; Miss Baker, white; Mrs Westmacott; Mrs Skeet; Miss Dalziel, fawn coat and skirt; Miss Smith, black and white silk blouse, dark skirt; Mrs Evans, black and white muslin, grey hat; Miss McKellar, grey coat and skirt; Miss Brown, yellow satin blouse, dark skirt; Mrs Burgess, fawn costume; Mrs Bewley, blue; Mrs Courtney, grey; Mrs H. Fookes, grey and white costume; Mrs Kyngdon, black and white; etc.

NANCY LEE.

CHRISTCHURCH.

Dear Bee,

One of the most brilliant gatherings ever seen in Christchurch assembled on Wednesday evening in the Concert Hall at the Exhibition, the occasion being

THE OFFICIAL BANQUET

given by the Mayor and Mrs Reece in honour of the jubilee of the province. About 700 invitations were issued, and some 600 were present, including His Excellency the Governor, the Minister of Education, several members of the Legislature, and most of the official and civic dignitaries of the province. The main entrance and corridors leading to the hall were tastefully decorated with palms and pot plants, the stage in the hall being arranged as a drawing-room and beautifully adorned with flowers and plants. Miss Scrivenor's band played during dinner, and most of the toasts were musically honoured. The tables were decorated each with a distinctive flower, the official table being yellow poppies and daisies, another of pink poppies and daisies, another of pink poppies, one of roses, Canterbury bells, sweet peas and a wild flower one, the whole making a charming picture. The Mayor presided, and on his right were His Excellency the Governor, Mrs W. C. Walker, Bishop Grimes, Colonel and Mrs Gordon, Mr and Mrs G. G. Stead, Major and Mrs U. V. Richards, Mr and Mrs C. Louisson, Mrs W. Wood, and Dr. Moorhouse. On the left were Mrs Reece, the Hon. W. C. Walker, Bishop and Mrs Julius, the Hon. C. H. Butler, the Hon. W. Rolleston and Mrs Rolleston, the Hon. C. C. Bowen and Mrs Bowen, the Rev. Dr. Morley, Mr and Mrs C. Lewis, Mr and Mrs A. E. G. Rhodes, the Rev. Dr. and Mrs Elmslie, Mr and Mrs E. G. Staveley, Captain and Mrs Marciel, the Very Rev. Le Menant des Chesnais, Mr and Mrs W. H. Triggs, Mr and Mrs J. Anderson, and Mr G. T. Booth. A number of returned troopers were present in their khaki uniforms, and with one or two red coats and other uniforms abounding in gold lace, and the pretty dresses of the ladies, some idea of the brilliance of the scene can be formed. After the toast of "The Queen," to which the Governor replied, the ladies retired to the stage and dress circle, coffee being served. The gentlemen smoked and finished the toast list, the proceedings ending about 11 o'clock. Mrs Reece wore a lovely gown of cream brocade shot with shell pink, the skirt was trimmed with fringe and sprays of pink roses on the bodice; Mrs G. G. Stead, a very handsome black evening gown with moonlight pearl trimming, jet and pearl spray in her hair, and diamond ornaments; Mrs Heaton Rhodes, a rich cream brocade, with scarlet velvet bands on bodice and flowers to match, beautiful diamond necklet and ornaments; Mrs A. E. G. Rhodes, all black evening gown and some lovely diamond ornaments; Miss Studholme (Waimate), white satin, handsome diamond necklet; Mrs Duncan Macfarlane, an exquisite heliotrope and white brocade in floral true lover's knot design, finished with white chiffon; Mrs J. Gould, deep cream satin and lace; Mrs C. Louisson, a handsome black evening gown and diamond ornaments; Mrs Morton Anderson, black sequin net over maize satin; Mrs R. D. Thomas, black silk, the bodice trimmed with maize satin and cream guipure; Mrs F. M. Wallace, cream silk, the bodice finished with terra cotta silk and Maltese lace; Mrs (Dr.) Jennings, turquoise blue velvet and point lace sleeves and revers; Mrs Wardrop, black and white striped silk finished with white lace and green silk waist belt; Mrs H. H. Cook, black silk and heliotrope chiffon; and many more very handsome gown. The invited list included:—Rev. and Mrs Averill, Mr and Mrs Appleby, Mr and Mrs R. Allan, Mr and Mrs H. D. Andrews, Mr and Mrs A. Anderson, Mr and Mrs Adley, Mr and Mrs Acton-Adams, Mr and Mrs J. Anderson, Mr and Mrs O. Archer, Mr and Mrs F. A. Archer, Dr. and Mrs C. M. Anderson, Mr and Mrs G. Andrews, Dr. and Mrs R. W. Anderson, Hon. and Mrs C. C. Bowen, Mr and Mrs A. W. Bennett, Mr and Mrs D. Budds, Mr and Mrs R. B. Bennett, Mr and Mrs Barkas, Mr W. Boag, Mr and Mrs G. Bennett, Mr and Mrs L. H. Barnett, Mr and Mrs R. A. Ballantyne, Mr and Mrs R. N. Bealey, Mr and Mrs W. G. Brittan, Mr and Mrs G. T. Booth, Mr and Mrs E. C. Brown, Mr and Mrs F. N. Barker, Mr and Mrs C. F. Bourne, Mr and Mrs A. Boyle, Mr and Mrs Bristed, Mr and Mrs G. A. M. Buckley, Mr and Mrs Bloxam, Mr and Mrs H. J. Beswick, Mr and Mrs Bonnington, Mr and Mrs S. D. Barker, Mr and Mrs Cholmondeley, Mr and Mrs Charlewood, Mr and Mrs Charles Clark, Mr and Mrs Cooper, Mr and Mrs Duncan Cameron, Dr. and Mrs Crook, Mr and Mrs Croxton, Mr and Mrs Cobham, Mr and Mrs Percy Cox, Mr and Mrs H. Cotterill, Cr. and Mrs Clarke, Mr and Mrs J. J. Collins, Mr and Mrs T. Clarkson, Mr and Mrs W. W. Collins, Mr and Mrs Cook, Mr and Mrs H. D. Carter, Mr and Mrs W. Chrystall, Mr and Mrs R. W. Chapman, Mr and Mrs J. Drummond, Dr. and Mrs Dendy, Mr and Mrs J. Deans, Mr and Mrs C. Dalgety, Mr and Mrs C. T. Dudley, Mr and Mrs E. Denham, Mr and Mrs H. G. Ell, Inspector and Mrs Ellison, Mr and Mrs R. W. England, Mr and Mrs G. H. Elliott, Mr and Mrs J. T. Ford, Dr. and Mrs Frengley, Rev. and Mrs C. A. Fraer, Mr and Mrs S. C. Farr, Mr and Mrs J. R. Fisher, Mr and Mrs J. T. Fisher, Mr and Mrs Finch, Mr and Mrs R. H. Fisher, Colonel and Mrs Gordon, Mr and Mrs T. Garrard, Mr and Mrs L. C. Gardiner, Mr and Mrs S. Garforth, Mr and Mrs G. Greenwood, Mr and Mrs J. C. N. Grigg, Mr and Mrs F. Graham, Mr and Mrs Green, The Right Rev. Bishop Grimes, Mr and Mrs J. Gould, Mr and Mrs C. M. Gray, Mr and Mrs J. D. Hall, Mr and Mrs H. S. E. Hobday, Mr and Mrs E. S. Harley, Mr and Mrs T. O. Hay, Mr and Mrs G. Humphreys, Mr and Mrs G. Harper, Mr and Mrs W. H. Hargreaves, Mr and Mrs Helmore, Mr and Mrs W. Harris, Mr and Mrs G. Harris, Mr and Miss J. M. Heywood, Mr and Mrs H. P. Hill, Mr and Mrs H. Hawkins, Mr and Mrs Jas. Hay, Mr and Mrs R. Holderness, Mr and Mrs Izard, Dr. and Mrs Jennings, Mr and Mrs G. Jameson, Mr and Mrs W. Jameson, Bishop and Mrs Julius, the Mayor and Mayoress of Kaiapoi, Mr and Mrs McKellar, Mr and Mrs A. Kaye, Mr and Mrs J. J. Kinsey, Mr and Mrs Kohn, Canon and Mrs Knowles, Mr and Mrs Meredith-Kaye, Mr and Mrs B. M. Litchfield, Mr and Mrs C. Lewis, Mr and Mrs Loughnan, Mayor and Mayoress of Lyttelton, Mr and Mrs W. Lake, Mr and Mrs J. Leithhead, Mr and Mrs G. Laurenson, Mr and Mrs Walter Martin, Dr. and Mrs Manning, Mr and Mrs A. Merton, Mr and Mrs S. Manning, Mr and Mrs W. J. Moore, Mr and Mrs G. Merton, Mr and Mrs T. Maude, Mr and Mrs Duncan Macfarlane, Mr and Mrs R. M. Molineaux, Mr and Mrs W. D. Meares, Mr and Mrs W. Minson, Mayor and Mrs Manhire, Dr. and Mrs Moorhouse, Mr and Mrs G. Moon, Mr and Mrs Murray, Mr and Mrs C. Morris, Mr and Mrs R. M. Macdonald, Mr and Mrs G. F. Martin, Mr and Mrs Leicester Matson, Mr and Mrs Marsh, Mr and Mrs Marciel, Mr and Mrs R. E. McDougall, Mayor and Mayoress of New Brighton, Mr and Mrs Neave, Mr and Mrs H. N. Nalder, Dr. Nedwill, Dr. Ovenden, Mr and Mrs H. O. Overton, Hon. J. T. and Mrs Peacock, Mr and Mrs W. Pratt, Mr and Mrs J. Palmer, Dr. and Mrs Palmer, Cr. and Mrs Prudhoe, Mr and Mrs Payling, Mr and Mrs Parsons, Mr and Mrs C. Palairet, Mr and Mrs F. Fyne, Rev. and Mrs Pollock, Mr and Mrs R. Pitcaithley, Mr and Mrs Pappril, Mr and Mrs H. Quane, Major C. V. and Mrs Richards, Mr and Mrs R. Heaton Rhodes, Hon. W. and Mrs Rolleston, Mr and Mrs G. H. Rhodes, Mr and Mrs F. C. Raphael, Mr and Mrs G. W. Russell, Mr and Mrs H. H. Rayward, Mr and Mrs A. C. Rolleston, Mayor and Mayoress of Rangiora, Mr and Mrs E. W. Roper, Mr and Mrs A. E. G. Rhodes, Mrs — Rhodes, Mr and Mrs H. Slater, Mr and Mrs R. Steele, Mr and Mrs Samuels, Mr and Mrs G. G. Stead, Mr and Mrs H. Sorensen, Mr and Mrs Snow, Dr. and Mrs Symes, Mr and Mrs E. Skog, Mr and Mrs H. G. Simms, Mr and Mrs T. W. Stringer, Mr and Mrs J. Studholme, Mr and Mrs E. W. Seager, Mr and Mrs J. T. Smith, Mr and Mrs E. G. Staveley, Mr and Mrs F. J. Smith, Mr and Mrs J. Scott, Mayor and Mayoress of Sumner, Mr and Mrs Hurst-Seager, Mr and Mrs R. Struthers, Mr and Mrs H. Secretan, Mr and Mrs Tendall, Mr and Mrs Triggs, Mr and Mrs R. D. Thomas, Mr and Mrs F. W. Thompson, Mr and Mrs C. Turner, Mr and Mrs A. Tyree, Mr and Mrs A. H. Turnbull, Dr and Mrs Thomas, Mr and Mrs F. Trent, Hon. J. M. and Mrs Twomey, Mr and Mrs Tabart, Mr and Mrs Tonks, Mr and Mrs G. De Vries, the Vicar-General, Rev. H. C. M. and Mrs Watson, Mr and Mrs T. S. Weston, Mr and Mrs A. C. Wilson, Mr and Mrs F. E. Wright, Mr and Mrs Wilding, Bishop and Mrs Wilson, Mr and Mrs Wilkins, Mayor and Mayoress of Woolston, Mr and Mrs H. Wood, Mr and Mrs W. Wilson, Mr and Mrs H. R. Webb, Mr and Mrs Wallace, Mr and Mrs F. Waymouth, Mr and Mrs G. Way, Mr and Mrs W. D. Wood, Mr and Mrs H. Wells, Mr and Mrs Wigram, Hon. and Mrs W. C. Walker, Mr and Mrs Wardrop, Mr and Mrs F. M. Wallace, Messrs Arenas, H. J. Ainger, R. Allen, A. H. Anderson, O. T. J. Alpers, Murray-Aynsley, E. C. Ashby, Mrs Bishop, Mrs Buchanan, Messrs F. H. Barns, Board, W. A. Bowring, Mrs C. Bowen, Mrs Cunningham, Messrs W. Cuddon, A. Carrick, T. Chapman, W. A. Clarkson, W. Day, T. S. Foster, Isaac Gibbs, Canon Harper, Mr J. Haydon, Mrs J. T. Matson, Hon. Montgomery, Mr Murphy, Dr. Morley, Mrs A. M. Ollivier, Mr W. J. Polson, Messrs H. F. Reece, H. Reeves, Mrs M. Studholme, Mrs Thacker, Dr. and Mrs Thacker, Captain Turner, Trooper, A. R. Tayler, Mrs A. J. White, Hon. Lancelot Walker, Messrs W. Wood and T. H. York.

On Thursday afternoon

A PLEASING FUNCTION

as part of the Jubilee celebrations was that of laying another stone on the uncompleted part of the Cathedral in the presence of Bishop Julius, Bishop Wilson (Melanesia), a large number of the clergy and laity, several pioneers, notably Judge Gresson and R. J. S. Harman (who laid the stone), and a goodly crowd of people. Over £9000 has now been promised, and we hope soon to see the walls rising day by day. In the evening a dinner was given in the Provincial Council Chamber to further celebrate Christ's College Jubilee. The Warden (Bishop Julius) presided, and on his right were Professor Sale, Hon. W. Rolleston, Dr. Moorhouse and Mr C. Lewis, M.H.R. On the left were seated Mr G. F. Bourne (head master), Archdeacon Harper, Hon. C. C. Bowen and Professor Cook. Among others present were Canon Harper, Bishop Wilson, Rev. F. Hare, Messrs R. H. Rhodes, A. E. G. Rhodes, G. E. Rhodes, J. Gould, G. Harris, T. Maude, R. C. Bishop and the Rev. W. S. Bean. Mr W. A. Day, Dr. Manning and others sang during the evening, and Mr E. R. Webb recited, a pleasant time being spent.

The North Island Maoris gave an entertainment of dancing and music in the Exhibition Hall on Thursday night, when over 2500 people must have been present, a number of extra seats being used, yet many had to stand.

On Friday a number of old colonists were driven to Kaiapoi in drags to visit the Kaiapoi Woollen Mills by the kind invitation of the directors, and in the evening they were present in large force at a conversazione in the Exhibition, where many things of interest were arranged for their edification. His Worship the Mayor delivered a short speech into a microphone, to be kept in the Museum and reproduced at the Centennial Jubilee. Bishop Julius also made a short record for the same purpose. A short musical programme was provided by Mrs H. H. Rayward, Misses Violet Mount and M. Graham, Messrs Millar and Collier. The Rontgen Rays were exhibited, and some gramophones caused some wonder among the visitors. Altogether it has been a memorable week and the weather most propitious.

DOLLY VALE.

HASTINGS.

Dear Bee, December 21.

The prizes were distributed on Monday at the enjoyable afternoon party which Miss Hodge gave at Woodford House. Miss Hodge's pupils, who are adepts at physical exercise, showed an agility which was by no means incompatible with grace, and several children in the Kindergarten class also gave a performance. The large playground behind Miss Hodge's school afforded ample space, both to performers and lookers on. Amongst the latter were included Mrs Fitzroy, who

gave away the prizes for the year's work. She wore a black silk dress, with chemisette of white tucked silk, and bonnet trimmed with pink; Mrs Lowry also wore black relieved with white chiffon, and a bonnet to match; Mrs T. Crosse was in navy blue, braided with white, and she had a pretty toque composed of cornflowers; Mrs Nation wore black and pale pink flowered muslin; Mrs North was in electric blue; Mrs Davis Canning looked well in black and white, and her large black hat was trimmed with feathers; Mrs Waterhouse had a fawn coat and skirt, and red roses in her black bonnet; Mrs Morrison was entirely in black, as was Mrs W. Nelson; Mrs Lanauze wore a black silk costume; Miss Page was also in black silk relieved with white lace, and a white chip hat with pink roses; Mrs Nantes, dainty bodice of pink glace silk, black brocade skirt, and large black hat adorned with plumes; Miss Dale, black, with heliotrope flowers in her bonnet; Mrs Frazer, pretty pale grey dress, and large hat to match; Miss Hodge had a China silk dress trimmed with pale blue; Miss Enright, white pique, sailor hat; Miss Lowry was in fawn with velvet revers, and hat trimmed with feathers; Miss Seale wore pink muslin; the Misses Maud and Cecil Williams had dainty costumes of pale grey, made with Eton jackets and soft white silk vests, large white hats with white ostrich feathers; Miss Kitty Williams, white pique; Miss Fitzroy, black and white striped coat and skirt, white chip hat; Miss Louie Fitzroy had a similar costume; Miss Giblin, grass lawn dress trimmed with guipure lace over pale blue, hat to match trimmed with blue flowers; Miss Marjorie Giblin also wore a grass lawn costume with a pale green silk yoke, and a green and fawn hat; Miss Muriel Locking, holland coat and skirt, sailor hat; Miss Large, heliotrope and white flowered muslin; Miss Flora McLean had a dainty white muslin and insertion dress over a pale green slip; Miss Millar, pink zephyr; Miss Quartley, heliotrope and white. All the school girls wore white muslin dresses, and red and white bands (the school colours) on their sailor hats. Tea and cakes were liberally dispensed, and before and after the distribution of prizes, the drill, with Indian clubs, dumb bells, balls, etc., was given by the girls.

At an interesting entertainment on the following evening, also by Miss Hodge's pupils, at St. Matthew's Schoolroom, the performance was given of an operetta. The dialogue was brightly written, and created much amusement, and the music was of a pleasing nature. The characters were well played throughout. The operetta was preceded by a Waxwork Carnival, which was very amusing. The pleasant evening's entertainment concluded with a dance.

DOROTHY.

NAPIER.

Dear Bee, December 21.

Mr G. W. Williamson's pupils gave a successful concert at St. John's Schoolroom on the 17th inst. The musical programme contained several interesting numbers. Miss Roulston and Miss Knowles sang some pretty songs—"For All Eternity," by Mascagni, and Macfarren's "By the Lime Trees." Miss Ellingworth, another promising pupil of Mr Williamson's, displayed a fine soprano voice and good singing method, in "Thou Art So Near," and Mr George Cotterill's rendering of a scena and aria from "Lucrezia Borgia" was greatly admired. Miss Mary McLean gave a pianoforte solo, "Grand Scotch Fantasia" (Jules de Sivrai), with great feeling and taste. Others who contributed to the success of the evening were the Misses Truda Goldsmith, Maud Sweetapple, Dulcie Kennedy, May Williams, Cora Fannin, Irene Clare, Marjory Amyes, Dolly Robjohns, Vera Humphries, and Master Bryan Craig. Amongst the audience were Mesdames Turnbull, Hovell, Goldsmith, Hall, Rutherford, James McLean, etc.

Miss May C. W. Loudon gave a matinee musicale on the 15th inst at the Athenaeum Hall. Miss London has a refined execution, which was shown to advantage by pianoforte solos, "Storm Rondo" (Steibelt), "Torch Dance" (Ed. German), "Andante and Rondo Capriccioso" (Mendelssohn), "March Funebre" (Chopin). The vocalist was Mr E. H. Cane, who sang "Life" (Blumenthal), and "Nazareth" (Gounod), accompanied by Mr R. N. Renaud. These items were both highly applauded.

Some of those who have been present at the various breakings up of the different schools during the week are:—Mrs Turnbull, wearing a handsome black and green dress, and black bonnet with pink roses; Mrs Goldsmith, in a fawn dress trimmed with silk to match; Mrs Hill, grey; Mrs F. W. Williams, pretty black and white costume; Miss Loudon, pretty grass lawn dress relieved with pale blue, and a pale blue hat; Mrs Kight, handsome black silk; Miss Spencer, chocolate colour; Mrs Cornford, black, red roses in her bonnet; Mrs Locking, dark green; Mrs Coleman, black silk, white yoke, bonnet to match; Miss Coleman, white muslin, white chip hat; Mrs De Lisle, pretty grey costume, black hat with plumes; Mrs Bowen, soft blue silk; Mrs C. McLean, brown.

MARJORIE.

BLENHEIM.

Dear Bee, December 24.

There seems to be little to tell you of except the concerts that formed the conclusion to the instruction given to their pupils by Mrs Lucas and Mr Cheek before their dispersal for the holidays. Mr Cheek's took place on Monday evening in the Presbyterian schoolroom, and the crowded state of the hall indicated the interest taken in the performers, and the pleasure anticipated. The instruments used were organ, violin, piano, flute and clarionet, which shows Mr Cheek's versatility as a teacher, for all the pupils acquitted themselves remarkably well. To the regret of those who prefer vocal to instrumental music, there was only one song, "The Raft," which was sung by Mr C. Powell very creditably. Mrs Lucas' breaking up entertainment took place in the same hall on Wednesday evening, and as programmes were provided the items and the performers were more readily distinguished. Miss Hammond, who has a powerful voice, which further instruction will develop and improve, sang "Beauty Sleep" and afterwards joined in the duet "Slowly and Softly Music Should Flow" with Miss Bessie Smith, the latter also, in spite of nervousness, singing "An Evening Lullaby" pleasingly. The beautiful trio "Ti Prego" was sung by the Misses Jessica Horne and Brewer and Mr L. Griffith. Mrs Lucas sang "The Love Tide," and with Miss Brewer a duet. The Misses Violet and Mabel McIntosh, Belle Griffiths, Pritchard and Mary Lucas played piano solos and duets with precision and facility. A quartette, sung by the Misses Hammond and Brewer and Messrs Griffiths and L. Bartlett, and a solo and chorus, "Poor Wandering One," in which Miss Jessica Horne took the solo, were also on the programme.

Miss McLaurin's school broke up on Tuesday afternoon at her house in Maxwell Road, and matting and seats were placed under the trees for the parents and friends invited to witness the prize giving. The children were grouped on the verandah, which was draped with flags and decorated with foliage and flowers, and the smaller girls, crowned with wreaths of flowers and accompanied by Miss McLaurin on the piano, sang some pretty action songs. The elder girls and boys gave an exhibition of Indian club swinging, directed by Miss Mabin. Immediately afterwards the prizes were distributed by Archdeacon Grace to the pupils, but there were still left two mysterious parcels, which were found to be an exceedingly pretty vase given by the children to Miss McLaurin, and a pretty workbasket lined with green satin and furnished with silver thimble, a pair of scissors in a case, for Miss Mabin, who, to the regret of all, has resigned her position in the school in view of her approaching marriage. Afternoon tea and a delicious variety of cakes were handed round, the children waiting on their elders most attentively.

The Garrison Band concert held in Ewart's Hall last night was successful in every way. The selections by the band were most tastefully played, Mr Curry conducting, and the solo and quartette "When I Can Read My Title Clear," Miss E. Rose taking the solo, and solo and chorus "Nearer, My God, to Thee," Mr J. Rose taking the leading part, were particularly enjoyed. Mrs Balch, of Cheviot, who is spending Christmas with her mother, Mrs Simson, sang "The Holy City" charmingly, Mr J. Rose "St. Agnes' Eve" with expression and taste, and Mr R. A. Moore "Consider the Lilies."

Mrs Grace has gone to spend Christmas in Nelson with her mother, Mrs Colt.

Miss Beatrice Horton, who has been in the North Island for a considerable time, is visiting her home here once more, and her old friends are pleased to have an opportunity of seeing her again.

Miss Mabin left for Nelson last Friday.

I must close this now, wishing you a pleasant Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

FRIDA.

NELSON.

Dear Bee, December 24.

Every one is busy preparing for Christmas, in fact, very little else has been done this week. The weather so far is glorious, and promises to continue so all the holidays. Numbers of visitors are arriving in town, the steamers from Wellington and elsewhere are crowded each day with excursionists, who are delighted to have the opportunity of spending their holiday in picturesque Nelson.

STREET DRESSES.

Mrs Burns, smart black (mourning) costume; Mrs Adams, blue foulard, lace yoke, small hat en suite; Miss Heaps, bright pink, sailor hat; Miss K. Fell, blue foulard, transparent yoke of lace, large burnt straw hat with black bows; Miss M. Fell (England), light flowered muslin, large hat to match; Miss Maud Harris, pretty white muslin; Miss Watkiss, black canvas over green silk, large black hat; Miss Lindsay, white; Miss Levien, white pique, sailor hat; Miss Richmond, heliotrope print, sailor hat with black band; Mrs Mirams, black and white check, black bonnet with pink; Miss Stevens, yellow silk blouse, black skirt; Miss Webb-Bowen, white pique skirt, pink blouse, sailor hat; Miss F. Webb-Bowen, dark blue foulard; Miss Clapcott, holland costume; Miss Mabel Atkinson, powder blue print; Miss Blackett, pink and white striped cambric, large sailor hat; Mrs Stephens, grey voile costume; Mrs Coote (Feilding), pink muslin, pink hat to match; Miss Houlker, white pique.

PHYLLIS.

Miss Colonia in London.

CONFIDENCES TO HER COUSINS ACROSS THE SEAS.

LONDON, November 16.

My Dear Cousins,

We have welcomed the C.I.V.'s, given General Buller a rousing reception, and now we are enjoying a little rest from patriotic ecstacy until the arrival of Lord Roberts and our gallant colonials.

ERIN'S GIFT TO "BOBS."

The women of Ireland have decided to greet their victorious fellow-countryman on his return with something more substantial than the waving of handkerchiefs. At the suggestion of Lady Abercorn the gift of the Irish women to Lord Roberts will be a star of St. Patrick in diamonds. In heraldic language "the star consists of the cross of St. Patrick gules on a field argent, charged with a trefoil, surrounded by a blue enamelled circle, containing the motto and date, and encircled by four greater and lesser rays of silver." The collar is beautiful in design. It is of gold, and composed of roses and harps alternately tied together with a knot of gold, and the roses are enamelled alternately, white leaves within red and red within white, and in the centre of the collar is an Imperial crown surmounting a harp of gold, from which hangs the badge of the Order, also of gold, surmounted with a wreath of shamrock or trefoil, within which is a circle of blue enamel containing in gold letters the motto of the order, Quis Separabit, and the date of the foundation of the Order, MDCCLXXXIII, and encircling the cross of St. Patrick gules, surmounted with a trefoil vert, each of its leaves charged with an Imperial crown or, upon a field argent. Lord Roberts, who was installed as a Knight of the Order in 1897, has already such a number of decorations that he will with difficulty find room for Erin's star. I wonder in what way you colonial girls are going to honour your commanders on their return?

"CITY GIRLS" AND THE ENTERPRISE CLUB.

I hope, my dears, that you will not object to being called girls, as the "young ladies" of the city did. The Enterprise Club was not long since founded for their benefit with fine quarters in King William-street. It is managed by a strong finance guarantee committee of gentlemen, which includes the directors of the chief typewriter companies, who know how their clerks are apt to endeavour to satisfy the inner woman with only a cup of tea or a glass of milk and a bun. The actual control of the club is in the hands of a duly elected committee of the members. The club undertakes its own catering and provides a dainty and satisfying lunch in lieu of the somewhat meagre fare of the A.B.C.'s so frequented by lady clerks and type-writers. An article described the members of the new club as "city girls," whereupon one of them wrote to the unoffending journal an indignant protest, explaining that the club was not for "city girls" but for "ladies engaged in city offices." Verily this is a genteel age, as one of the haughty Primrose dames discovered the other day, when calling at a cottage to solicit the occupants vote she was told that "the gentleman you want is the sweep next door."

CONGRESS OF WOMEN WORKERS.

Since I last wrote the National Union of Women Workers has held its conference at Brighton under its president the Hon. Mrs A. T. Lyttelton, wife of the Bishop of Southampton. A number of well-known leaders among women workers attended, and the gathering was a smart, well-dressed one, proving to the other sex that to be a reformer in women's cause it is not necessary to be dowdy. Some very interesting papers were read and speeches made, but on the whole very little fresh ground was broken.

Mrs Humphry Ward gave a fascinating account of the scheme of instruction at the settlement in Tavistock Square for crippled and afflicted chil-

drum, of which I gave you some particulars not so very long ago. Mrs Ward in the course of her narrative told a pathetic story of a lame little lad whose mother, with infinite devotion, had carried him daily for months to a school at a distance where other children with like infirmities were taught. The London School Board opened one of its branches for feeble-minded children, and the poor mother, on whose the weary trudge was a sore burden, listened to advice to let her boy there. The little fellow became very unhappy, and after a week or two his parents asked the cause. "Oh mother," he said, "God has taken away my legs, but I have got my head," an answer which led the brave woman to renew her trying labour.

Hospital problems came in for a good deal of discussion, and the members of the Conference seemed very generally agreed that women ought to be represented on the courts of management of London hospitals.

The Drink question received a great deal of attention. Dr. Branthwaite, of the Home Office, dealt with the question of homes for inebriates, and declared that the number of licensed establishments and the number of patients admitted increased year by year, and large numbers had to be turned away for want of room. Lady Batterseа, who is a visitor to female convicts for the Home Office, commended the recent establishment by the London County Council of a retreat for women drunkards, and said that the crime of at least 60 per cent. of the women in Aylesbury prison was due to drink. This liquor question, the solution of which will be the problem of the next century, is one that especially affects women, not only because drink among men brings ruin into so many homes, but because inebriety among women themselves is on the increase, and there is an increase of insanity among them due to that cause. The council of the Charity Organisation Society in fact, held a special meeting the other day to discuss the subject.

Mrs Flora Annie Steele, who is, of course, a leading authority upon India, threw a bombshell into the camp when she complained of the Englishwoman's want of sympathy with the Indian natives, and hazarded the opinion that Englishwomen "have undoubtedly been responsible for almost every serious trouble that we have had in India."

THE DOMESTIC'S STATUS.

The eternal "domestic question" evoked a great divergence of opinion, some speakers attacking the mistresses for their lack of consideration, others declaring that in many cases mistresses showed their employees almost too much consideration. Mrs Bunting, who read a paper on "Training for the Profession of Domestic Service," claimed that mistresses should give their servants more freedom, and complained that the increasing habit of having dinner parties on Sunday, which kept the servants in, was an infringement of their rights. Servants, too, should have an improved status. An interesting contribution to the debate was made by Mrs Lucas, who herself had been in domestic service, and had a happy time. She found the objection of so many girls to domestic service in the way so many mistresses treated servants as if they were mere machines. We have ourselves discussed this thorny question ad nauseam, and come to the conclusion that while on the one hand the mistress by a very little self-sacrifice could often extend the hours of her servants' leisure, on the other, the servants only too often have too little regard for their part of the bargain, and either from want of training or from carelessness or idleness do their work in a slovenly fashion and dawdle over it. How many girls, for instance, in London can lay a fire? The domestic servant should be an expert, who can do her work expeditiously and thoroughly, not a mere dilatory drudge. If she were really an expert, she would then have the status of an expert, and her duties and leisure time would be fixed by contract.

THE CO-OPERATIVE KITCHEN.

The difficulty of getting a decent plain cook for a small family—a cook who will work without a kitchen maid—has led to a scheme for co-operative kitchens. The scheme is at present a counsel of perfection, rather in the air, as the suggestions that have been made generally put the financial and business footing rather in the background. You can easily understand the tremendous waste of labour there is in the cooking in a block of small flats, each of which for a family of two to four has its own cook and its own kitchen fire, and its own tiny supply of provisions bought at retail prices. If all the occupants of the flats combined to "run" one kitchen for their mansions, they would need only one kitchen fire, a very small number of cooks, compared with the number employed on the individualistic system, and thoroughly good cooks could be obtained instead of the at present incapables and undesirables with which the small family of limited means has to put up, to the detriment of digestion and the destruction of domestic bliss. Another advantage is offered to women by the scheme. Ladies who have made cookery their profession have a natural aversion to going into service as cooks under the present regime, and living in the not too refined atmosphere of the kitchen, subjected, as some friends of mine once were, who for a freak went out to service as cook and housemaid, to the amorous attentions of the butcher and baker. In the co-operative kitchen the lady cook would find her proper sphere of action as manager and mistress, not as menial.

The following picture of the ideal cuisine has been presented in the "Humanitarian." (At present, says Tom, too many cooks, like Kruger, "stagger humanity.") Imagine the bliss if every morning, instead of the butcher-boy, a smart boy in buttons handed you in the menu for the day, consisting of the usual dishes in favour. You select your dishes, and name the hour, early or late. At the appointed time a cart, fitted with hot-water vessels, will deliver you your dinner, hot, well cooked, and daintily garnished, and next day the dishes will be called for in the morning. That the dinner sent in would cost more than if the materials were bought and cooked at home goes without saying, but when one remembers the saving of the cook's wages and her keep, and the large saving in kitchen coal, the additional cost would be reduced to a minimum. A district should be chosen of well-tenanted houses of the upper middle-class families, and the co-operation of not less than twelve should be secured before starting; a house should be rented in the centre of the district, and suitably fitted for extensive culinary operations. A good start, with a smart boy in livery, properly fitted carts to carry the goods, a liberal but not extravagant menu, say of one soup, or fish, a choice of two entrees, a joint, a sweet, a savoury, and enough capital in hand to bear the first year's expenses, and the scheme would not only be self-supporting, but very remunerative. The profits would necessarily have to be just sufficient to pay, not to expect to make a fortune all at once. There would have to be more or less fixed hours—a margin of from 1 to 2 mid-day, and 6.30 to 8 p.m.—most households could fall in with. The dishes would be sent so hot they could very well be kept hot for a short time if the family were accidentally late. What anxiety guests cause us now! But

with this scheme the hostess, instead of racking her brain and worrying all day as to what extra cooking she dare attempt or set her unreliable servant to prepare, would simply select one or two more dishes from the menu than usual. If any particular delicacy were ordered, such as oysters or game, then there would be an understanding they must be paid extra for, for the "kitchen" could not provide them without extra proportionate expense.

Another writer suggests that there might be a daily a "house dinner" at a fixed sum, and another menu submitted with dishes for choice.

There is a great future before the co-operative kitchen in the twentieth century, and it will help to a solution of the domestic question.

By and bye, in fact, we shall get our cooking done at the co-operative kitchen, and our house cleaned by the co-operative charwoman, and our hair dressed at home by the co-operative lady hairdressers.

"THERE'S 'AIR."

Hairdressing at home seems to afford an opening for those ladies who are clever at coiffures. Latterly several girls who have been employed in hairdressers' shops have gone into private practice, they have gradually worked up a connection, and attend every day at West End houses to dress hair. The charge for dressing at the customers' own house is usually half-a-crown, but no doubt if the customers increase and do not require too elaborate coiffures the charge could be profitably reduced by half.

The Amalgamated Hairdressers' Schools of London, by the way, in their exhibition of hairdressing in St. James' Hall the other evening, confined the efforts of the thirty experts engaged to the pompadour style, which has been decided on for 1901. The hair is softly waved from the forehead with just a suspicion of a parting. One or two tiny curls rest on the face, and the hair is gathered into coils or curls at the nape of the neck, leaving it full at the sides, where it is kept in place with combs. This fashion will abolish the enormously high head-dress favoured of late, and introduce once more the pretty jewelled combs once so popular, but for its proper execution the dresser demands hair 25 inches long.

Talking of hair, I wonder if you have heard anything of the wonderful plait of golden hair, 8 feet long, which attracted so much attention in the coiffeur section of the Paris Exhibition. The glorious tresses, it is said, were once the pride of a young peasant girl in Normandy who, quite in the story book style, sold her sunny locks for 100 francs to save her father from bankruptcy. The local hairdresser sold it to a celebrated coiffeur for 1000 francs, and the latter, after securing a splendid advertisement for himself by the exhibit, sold it to a mysterious lady of fashion for 5000 francs, who, Tom says, "must have gone for the pigtail baldheaded." I take his meaning to be that the purchaser wanted it for a wig.

DRESSES AT THE DRAMA.

I have not as yet seen any very striking costumes in the street to describe to you. Some of the smartest modern gowns, em[illegible] from Machinka, are worn [illegible] Patrick Campbell at the Royalty in "Mr and Mrs Daventry," which has been described as the most immoral play produced in modern times on the English stage, and to which, in consequence, all "smart" society is flocking. I, as a "young person," which term has been defined by Mr Gill, Q.C., as one who should not be permitted to witness a play with a doubtful plot or with a lady with a past, have not been permitted to witness the amours of the Daventrys, so that I can only give you a second-hand description of the dresses. Here it is, and I think you will find it both trustworthy and enticing. The first dress is of Mrs Campbell's favourite colour, a golden-yellow taffetas, flowing in charming lines at her feet. The bodice has a bolero effect made by a wide black velvet band that encircles her somehow, and ends in a queer gold buckle in front. The inner vest is of string-coloured lace, embroidered with gold, and there are choux on the ends of long streamers with a glint of gold in them. In the second act her evening gown is also glinting with gold, and steel embroideries are deftly worked into the gold tissue; the form is princesse, very long and graceful, with a beautiful gold belt, fastened by a jewelled clasp. The third act dress is an afternoon visiting one, and the colour is that soft yellowless green that one sees in the old picture—a grey green full of depth. The skirt opens at each seam at the foot, showing fans of ecru coloured lace, flecked with gold. The bodice is a swathy fulness of soft ivory chiffon, and a bolero of the green cloth has a pretty fichu of old lace, also just touched with gold. Over her shoulders she wears a wonderful new kind of boa, made of a wide, thick ruching of lace, edged with very narrow lines of chinchilla, and her large sombrero hat of glossy beaver has two great black plumes starting over her forehead from a gleaming diamond buckle. Then there is an ideal tea-gown in the last act, the substance of which seems like de chine stamped with raised velvet roses and leaves in palest hues of pink and green. Over it hangs a little loose coat of lace, festooned with frills of pink chiffon and caught up at intervals with roses, the whole thing falling in unbroken lovely lines to the feet and opening over an inner softness of white chiffon and delicate lace.

HEROD HARMONIES.

A great contrast to these frocks are the gorgeous and harmonious dresses worn in "Herod," at Her Majesty's.

The Queen, Mariamne (Miss Maud Jeffries), who has long almost blood red hair, wears under robes of gold-glittering tissue, into which rich colours are woven in rainbow-like gradations. No embroidery is used, and the folds float freely, save that a wide band of golden gauze is passed loosely round the waist, with a gold cord above it, and that at one side the robe is finished with a line of jewelling. A gold cap-shaped crown is worn, with jewelled band above the forehead. From this depends at the back a veil of deepest ivory tint, studded thickly with gold. This falls on a long trailing regal looking mantle of crushed dead gold tissue, finished with deep bright green silk, into which is introduced purple blue silk, with zig-zag lines of gold between the two, three deep. A touch of azure is supplied by large turquoise ear ornaments.

The Eastern Princess (Miss Calhoun) has robes of a rich red. Her train is striped with gold, the dress wrought with it in star-like design. Over the entire front of it fall chains of uncut jewels in barbaric splendour. Long sweeping sleeves of red, gold-wrought, thin fabric, are worn over equally long black sleeves of semi transparent material, embroidered with beetles' wings and bullion. The band across the forehead, finishing at either side with large drooping circles over the ears, was in this case of turquoise, with emerald points above. The ear ornaments are diamonds and emeralds. Over the cap-shaped central part of this gorgeous hair ornament was worn a veil of black gauze, closely gold flecked.

Indeed the glory and harmony of colours in the costumes of "Herod" has seldom been surpassed on the stage.

Just a brief mention of a new game to conclude.

THE SMELL TEA.

I wonder, my dears, if you have yet had the Smell Tea introduced into your social circles. It is a more fragrant performance than appears at the first blush, and is a summer rather than a winter game. You blindfold the candidates who compete for the prize, and then bring before them sprays of plants and flowers, each possessing a distinctive odour of its own, such as rosemary, heliotrope, lavender, violets, pinks, roses. To each candidate in turn the sprays are offered in confusing succession, and he, or she, has without hesitation to name the flower or plant from its smell. Whoever makes the fewest mistakes wins the prize. The task seems a simple one, but the smeller soon gets confused and causes roars of laughter when she declares that a bunch of violets is mignonette.

AS SEEN THROUGH WOMAN'S EYES.

Which is Braver in Face of Death.

HOW SOME WOMEN CAN DIE.

Heroism, courage and fortitude are human qualities belonging to the entire human race at large, and are not confined to any age, sex or condition.

Nature is kind, and when the time comes almost every one is ready to die. Yet the period of life at which death arrives, the form it takes, the time for preparation, the circumstances, the temperament of the person about to die, all have an influence and increase or decrease natural bravery.

"Execute this man first," said the great Mme. Roland, pointing to a friend, "for he has not courage sufficient to see me die." Her wish was gratified, and when her own head fell into the basket the executioner relates that streams of blood gushed up like fountains from the large arteries in the neck, something that seldom happens, for terror slows the circulation and numbs the heart.

Mme. Roland died as she had lived—bravely. Hers was sublime fortitude, a radiant courage in face of disaster. The time, the circumstance, the act of saving another pain and anguish, together with the strength of her mind and body, her temperament, made it posible for her to meet death as calmly as if it were a sleep of hours instead of ages.

Women generally have a firmer faith in orthodox religion than men, and its teachings in regard to a future life naturally for them mitigate the sting of death to a greater degree. The rewards that the upright expect to receive in heaven make the transition as easy as stepping through an open door into another house.

One such woman showed quiet fortitude to a remarkable degree. Suffering severe pain intermittently for years—pain due to an aggravated heart trouble—the time came when all forces tended to extinction, when "death came a-knocking at the door." In turn each member of the family was called to listen to a brief farewell—the little children, husband, father, brothers and sisters—and to receive a loving message for the absent. Then, turning to a nurse she said quietly: "There is nothing more that can be said now, so I shall not speak again." And turning her face to the wall, she rested with closed eyelids for nearly an hour, when "sweet, amiable death," as Shakespeare calls it, stilled for ever the tired heart.

For many women it does not require much courage to die—just to stop breathing and be at rest—so hard for them is the strife and turmoil, the strain and struggle of daily living. "Why bother about dying?" said one such humble philosopher. "Either you've reached home or you're nowhere. And both ways are better than this."

The plight of being alive presses heavily upon women who have survived their loved ones and who have outlived their social position.

Off the West Coast of Africa a ship suddenly struck a rock and began filling with water. An officer walked through the bright moonlight telling each passenger that the vessel was going down, that rescue would be impossible.

Some of the men fainted at the thought of those dependent upon them, their business liabilities and matters of personal honour. A rich woman suddenly bethought her that now she would never be obliged to give all her money to a poor little woman whose husband was dying of African fever—a kind deed she had originally planned—and was greatly consoled with the idea that her purse need not now be emptied. Another woman, who had travelled all over the world, lamented in anger that her life must end off the wretched West Coast of Africa, the last place in the world to die in. An opera singer began a little serenade.

A mother sat in a state room with two sleeping children.

"Will it be long before we go down?" she asked quietly.

"No; only a short time," the officer answered.

"Then I'll not wake the children," she said, and with a calm smile she awaited what seemed to be the inevitable.

Happily all were rescued.

"Listen! I want to speak to you." It is recorded that a woman spoke thus as she stood at the port hole of the Saale, one of the big ships that was burned in the terrible fire in New York harbour not long ago. She was penned in amid the flames that roared all about her. The face was so swollen in its horror of agony that rough men turned away from the lurid spectacle. "Listen! I have a message. Remember it. It is too late to save me. I am dying, it will soon be over. Send a message to my mother!" She gave the name and residence.

"Tell her that my last thought was of her. Tell her to take all my money from the bank; it is hers. God save us all!" She screamed out the words. A burst of flame, and the face disappeared. So died this steadfast daughter.

In the same terrible disaster, there were many acts of heroism. It is also upon record that a stevedore was equally brave, penned in the hold, gaining a porthole for air. He was quite calm, but aware that he was to die. His resignation, as he discussed his terrible surroundings, was an extraordinary exhibition of fortitude, and the men who heard him wept at the horror.

Which are braver in face of death—men or women? Who can tell? Humanity is brave.

I have never known but two persons absolutely unwilling to die when the summons came. One was a young girl, who lamented bitterly as long as breath lasted the injustice of her departure from the world before tasting all its joys and pleasures.

The other was a beautiful young woman, the mother of four sweet little children, the youngest but a few days old.

It required all the fortitude of a faithful heart, all the discipline of a well-trained mind, to enable this lovely creature to retain her composure with a steadfast front. She kept repeating reassuring verses from the Bible and from the poets.

"Death once dead, there's no more dying then," was quirkly followed by this: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

The question of bravery depends upon the age of the person and the manner of dying. Those who are for a time ill in bed, with lowered vitality and all the processes of life tending toward extinction, gradually become willing to go and die bravely.

When well, strong, and walking about it is not so easy.

As to which sex is braver when facing sudden and unwelcome death, our decision must always remain in doubt. There is no sex in courage.

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Suggestions for the Sick Room.

Nothing is so exasperating to an invalid as to have attendants or members of the family whispering about something or other. The sick person is generally in more or less nervous excitement, and, even if it were otherwise, nervous excitement would be produced by the whispering.

The mystery of it is irritating. No matter how weak or apparently unconscious the patient may be, in nine cases out of ten he is trying to hear what is being said.

A loud whisper, "Do you think he is going to live?" or even, "Hush; you mustn't come in here!" is alarming, and lessens the chance of recovery. Whatever must be said should be in an ordinary tone of voice. There should be no mystery about the sick room.

Gas logs, or gas stoves, are now, for two reasons, used much in the sick room. Their use involves less noise, and they are always ready to light. Care must be taken, however, that there is no leak in the connections, for hardly anything is more insidious in its effect on a sick person than escaping gas. A vessel of water with a large surface should always be placed near the stove or hearth where the log is burning, to moisten the atmosphere of the apartment. A boiling kettle on a gas stove, when the stove is used, is even better.

In sudden illness those who attend the sick are too much inclined to fly to stimulants, especially brandy. It is a principle of first aid to the injured that when there is bleeding, even when fainting has ensued, alcohol should never be given, for it causes increased heart action, with a consequent increased loss of blood. This is particularly important to remember in cases of bleeding from the lungs.

When a person faints he should be laid flat on his back, and all articles of clothing that appear tight should be loosened. Fresh air should be admitted to the room, smelling salts or hartshorn should be applied to the nostrils, and the face and head bathed with cold water. If neither salts nor hartshorn can be found, a smouldering rag will often revive the patient. When the person has regained consciousness, if the fainting was not accompanied by bleeding or the result of bleeding, then a small quantity of brandy or other alcoholic stimulant may be safely administered.

Many doctors still encourage the use of the old-fashioned mustard plasters or the flax-seed and bread and milk poultices of our grandmother's time. When a mustard plaster or a hot poultice is removed, it is important to dry the parts quickly and cover with flannel of cotton wool. This is to prevent cold from exposure.

The sick room should be a large and cheery apartment. The windows must be arranged so that the room can be

darkened when necessary. Often the glare of too much light in a large room is as depressing to a patient as the stuffiness of a small one. Once a day the patient should be well wrapped up, and the room aired, no matter what the weather may be. Rugs are better than carpets, and a good matting better than either. Bentwood or wicker furniture is preferable to that which is upholstered.

Every day, if possible, there should be a change in the general effect produced by rearranging chairs or by changing the place of pictures or by hanging new ones. But the value of this will be lost unless the changes are made when the patient is unconscious of them. Do not always have the bed dressed exactly the same. Change the white counterpane for one that has some colour.

If the health of the sick person permits it, shift the bed occasionally from one side of the room to another, or change the head for the foot. All these things break the monotony of the sick room, and assist as much as medicine in bringing back the normal condition of health and spirits.

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Woman's Pocket Guard.

The first device by which a woman's pocket may be found when wanted, and kept shut when pick-pockets are around, is the invention of a man, Mr Percy C. D. Blake, of Brooklands, Cheshire. It consists of a scissors-shaped spring, which is sewn inside the opening of the pocket. The upper portion of the spring, which corresponds to the handles of the scissors, remains open when the lower or blade portion is shut. The contrivance is so arranged that when the dress is in use it can only be opened by the wearer. But when the dress is hanging in the clothes closet, even a man can find the pocket, and what is more-open it.

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More Courtesy Wanted.

Among the peculiarities of a busy age, a tendency to discourage the practice of the little courtesies which tend to make life sweeter and finer is noted. In business circles someone has actually gone on record as favouring the abolishment of the time-honoured "Dear Sir" and "Yours very truly" from business letters, and has misapplied much valuable time and effort in an estimate of the time consumed in these little matters of courteous usage.

Not only in business, however, but in home and social life, there seems an inclination to omit many small attentions to others which were once considered essential to good breeding. It is not a lack of kindly feeling which causes this condition, but it is rather the result of the high pressure under which most of us are living. Innumerable interests and duties fill the days, and it is inevitable that sooner or later something must be crowded out. So absorbed do we become in the pursuit of various objects—something of supreme importance, it seems to us —that insensibly we drift into a state of carelessness and indifference as to those with whom we come in contact, and eventually we miss much of the beauty and charm of living, without realizing just what has brought about the change.

Was it not Emerson who said, "Life is never so short but there is time enough for courtesy?" And another said, "Is not the life more than meat?" Of what advantage are possessions, whether material or intellectual, if one has forfeited the love of those nearest or has failed to find in the great sea of human faces some which brighten with pleasure at his approach?

Most of us are willing factors in the busy world, and desire to contribute in some degree to the sum total of human progress, but is it necessary to sacrifice all that is best in life to that end? Better that some things should wait, to be performed perhaps by other hands, than that such should occur.

There is not too much of genuine courtesy, but too little. Its absence may be noted everywhere, in homes and schools, in the shops, on the cars, at the summer resorts, even in the churches, where of all places care and hurry should be left outside. We would resent the implication that we were remiss in any respect toward those bound to us by the ties of love and companionship, yet it is oftener the sin of omission than that of commission which is recorded against us by our dear ones.

Example is contagious, especially among children. It is useless to attempt to teach a child "politeness," as it is often called, unless the mother or teacher is herself an object lesson of the same. Unless one is himself courteous he cannot and will not inspire that quality in others. Yet there is nothing in life which so successfully smooths the sharp angles which so often confront us as genuine courtesy. We respect the man or woman who is civil to us, and their influence over us for good is incalculable. Very different emotions are roused by those who pursue the opposite course. Is it not worth while to cultivate more courtesy rather than allow it to relapse into oblivion?

The Servant Scored.

A servant girl happened to be engaged at a farmhouse where the mistress was known to have a rather hasty temper. On the first Saturday night the girl was told to clean the boots and shoes for Sunday. Coming into the kitchen a short time afterwards, the mistress, seeing that the maid had cleaned her own boots first, was so enraged that she lifted them and threw them into a tub of water which stood near. The servant made no sign; but when all the boots were cleaned she also lifted them and threw them into the tub of water. "Why, whatever possessed you to do that?" gasped the mistress, in a fury. "Oh, I jist thocht it was the fashion o' the hoose," calmly replied the girl.

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Is Woman Over-Acting?

That kaleidoscopic and incomparable creature, the modern woman, in her ambition to annex the cherished rights of man—his professions, his neckties, and everything that is his—is going a step too far. Her admirers, in the opinion of one of 'em, find occasion for shedding tears of regret over her latest excursion into a radical domain, dominated hitherto exclusively by men.

The upsetting announcement comes to us from a prominent woman's college that a female 'varsity crew awaits us in the too near future, the modern woman as stroke, and her sisters at the oars to appear in the athletic outfit of jersey and knickerbockers.

The century has done nothing better than its advancement of the independence and equality of women. Public prejudice has capitulated to the radiant charms of the athletic girl in tailor-made clothes, and the woman of to-day has proved that she can do pretty much as she pleases, and that no one has either the right or the disposition to protest.

But the modern woman, "drunk with the dream of easy conquest," courts her own downfall when she refuses to recognise a limit to her Alexander-like yearning for more worlds to conquer.

In the revolt against excessive feminity, the breaking away from the dull confines of domesticity, women are over-acting the part.

The extremists among them who advocate football coiffures and exaggerated biceps are in a fair way to bring about a reaction in favour of the girl whose dignity and womanliness are not imperilled by a participation in double-scull races or an appearance in the tenacious jersey and the unanimous knickerbockers.

The twentieth century woman, provided with all the modern improvements, is drifting too far from her original moorings not to alarm the cold outsider who cherishes the tradition that women are feminine creatures in fascinating petticoats, and to whom her induction into masculine identity is the shock of finding things not what they seem.

The wail of the Philistine is heard in the land that our too modern sisters, and our cousins, and our aunts are missing the point of their individual existences in rushing into the arena in regatta clothes, and surrendering the sweet charm with which one's fancy clothes them for the struggles of the boat training squad.

The modern woman, I confess it

softly for my sins, is avowedly entitled to hold the ballot in her fair and dimpled hand.

What mere man could claim that his soul was not hers, but his own, in the fact of the handicap she has set upon masculine prowess in art and in business?

If she will but lend her intelligence and her sanity to the question of the things women may do and not strike us unpleasantly with the conviction that they have ceased to be women Olympus will be stripped of laurel wreaths for the new woman's adornment.

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Cooking Vegetables.

Do not let your cook take too thick a rind off in paring potatoes. The best part of the potato is near the skin.

On the other hand, turnips should have a thick rind pared off. The turnip has an outer part that destroys the flavour of the whole if not thoroughly removed.

Onions should not be added to a stew or put in to cook with anything else until they have first been boiled for about ten minutes and the water thrown away.

City cooks too frequently fail to properly "string" beans before cooking them. This is annoying at the table. Beans are vastly improved by a cream or milk and butter dressing.

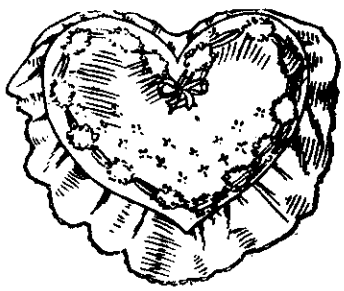
Cabbages are better if boiled with meat. Potatoes should always be boiled separately. Otherwise they are sodden and unpalatable.

See that cucumbers are sliced as thin as possible and put cracked ice over them half an hour before they come to the table.

To clean celery of the insects often found on it take a wineglassful of hot water in which a little bicarbonate of soda has been dissolved. Plunge the celery into this after it has been washed. Then cool in ice water before serving.

WORK COLUMN.

Persuaded somewhat against my will at a recent large patriotic bazaar to join in a raffle, to my delight and surprise I became the proud possessor of this charming cushion, which on my return home I immediately sketched for the benefit of my readers. The whole idea struck me as so unique and pretty that I really could not resist giving you this description



HEART-SHAPED CUSHION.

of it. On a ground work of fine white muslin, cut in the form of a heart, is embroidered a design of wreaths of pink rosebuds linked together by pale blue ribbon, also embroidered. Round the cushion is a frill of the muslin buttonholed round the edge with a pale shade of pink silk. Under this upper frill is an under one of plain pink silk matching that of which the casing of the cushion is made. I learnt on inquiry from the clever lady who had contributed this dainty article that she had found it necessary to fix the muslin in a frame before embroidering it, as otherwise it was very apt to pull. These frames, which are useful in many kinds of work, can be bought very cheaply at any fancy-work shop.

The pretty and novel-shaped cushion called the "Balloon" is very easy to make. The actual cushion itself is made by cutting the casing into quarters after the manner of making a ball or melon cushion, and then joining these pieces together and stuffing

A COUPLE OF DAINTY CUSHIONS.

the case full, but not over full lest it be hard and solid. The cover is simply a straight piece of muslin or silk sufficiently large to completely cover the cushion. The silk is then ornamented with strips of insertion or ribbon, and joined up the side, leaving the top and bottom ends open so that it forms a kind of petticoat frill at the bottom. Run a draw-string in the silk close to the top, and another one eight inches from the bottom. Place the cushion in its cover and draw up the strings, which may be hidden, if you wish your cushion to be elaborate, by a soft silk ribbon tied round the frill at the bottom, and a large bow of the same sewn on at the top end. This style of cushion is a most comfortable one for using in a carriage or in any chair or seat the depths of which you wish to fill up, and can either be used direct or will lend its aid to the support of other cushions. It has also other and very practical advantages in the ease with which it can be washed and ironed, for when untied it of course folds out quite straight again. The long-shaped cushion of which also I give a sketch here, is carried out much in the same manner over a bolster-shaped foundation. The cylindrical-shaped covering opens at each end to form a frill. This cushion is also a very practicable one for use when travelling in railway carriages and all places where things are likely to get quickly soiled and creased, for it, too, is easily renovated. For use on the beach or on a seat in a garden it would be an invaluable comfort. The trimming of lace insertion can be either put on round the silk or muslin cover, or lengthways, or in a spiral fashion, as in the illustration. This latter method is, however, more complicated than the others, and requires great care to keep the insertions at regular distances from each other. Instead of the lace, ribbon or strips of velvet could be used for the ornamentation.

THE WORLD OF FASHION.

By MARGUERITE

Our first greeting to yet young 1901, and a very friendly one it is full, moreover, of hope. No one, of course, knows what a day may bring forth, let alone a whole year, but yet we hope for all things good, and my wishes for you, my readers, are full of kindly thought and care. As regards our intercourse together, may these months make this useful and helpful to each one of us. May they, too, cement our column friendship closer and closer, and as a true friendship is one where there is real sympathy and help, so I trust through the medium of this weekly letter we may come to know each other very well, and to be of mutual assistance to each other. I need not say I am glad at any time to hear from my readers, and ready, too, to give them any information I possess which they may from time to time require. Yes, 1901, what are we going to make of you?

When we look back and read what changes have come in the last century, which at first it will seem so hard to believe is at an end, we hardly dare try to think what may come to the world in its successor. Every imaginable thing connected with our country, our ways of living and thinking are so altered since the nineteenth century began, that if we tried to imagine what girls would be doing at the end of the twentieth century we would be justified in having very wild dreams indeed.

Young women who daily go to their well paid work can hardly realise that since 1800 came in, thousands of doors have opened for them which in all the centuries before had been tightly closed. Women who worked, either toiled with their needles, laboured in factories, or performed some domestic duty.

In health, physique, and learning women have advanced very much during the century. A hundred years ago, robust health was considered "indelicate," and to possess rosy cheeks and to take exercise was unladylike, while it was considered "good form" to faint often. The girl we are used to at the end of the century, one who can walk, ride, row, and bicycle with the best of the other sex, would have horrified the good ladies of the beginning of the century. With respect to learning, again, women's position has vastly improved. A hundred years ago the sex was looked on as inferior, and women were not to have anything more than the most rudimentary education, though here and there were notable exceptions.

The women of to-day are fast winning fame and fortunes for themselves in the fields of law, medicine, literature, education and the fine arts, and in the century to come what may they not accomplish with the aid of all the wonderful appliances of science and the great institutions of education

Muslin Toilettes.

that are springing into active life on every hand. Of course, I am dealing with the question from the standpoint of the "work-a-day" people.

In the matter of fashions, my readers, I think, join me in the modestic hope that the chiffons of 1901 may prove as attractive and becoming as those of the past 1900. Muslin is undoubtedly the craze this season, though the hope has been long deferred for wearing it. The flowered muslins recall the days of our grandmothers, when simplicity was affected in muslin and a sash. The modish muslin gown of the moment is a dangerous pitfall to the uninitiated. It looks so guileless and simple that he or she (mainly "he," as unversed in the fearsome wiles of dressmakers), thinks how pretty and inexpensive; yet, four or five guineas is an average price for these "simple" and perishable gowns. I shall, however, deal more exhaustively with this matter in a future issue.

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This very charming linen gown is expressed in a pretty shade of pale blue, the corselet and trimmings being

A CHARMING LINEN GOWN.

carried out in twine-coloured lace, tiny little steel buttons further embellishing the whole. A novel and really very charming trimming which figures on many of the most effective linen, and indeed some of the tweed and woollen gowns, is embroidered crash, sometimes carried out exclusively in one tone, or again two or three shades of colour are employed intermingled with artistic little touches of black. In every case the effect is delightful.

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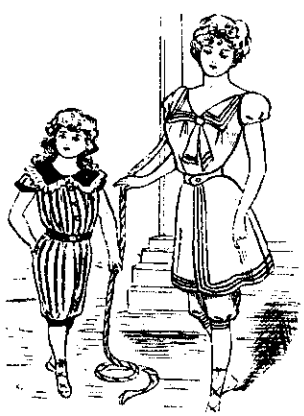
The sketch shows a couple of bathing suits, one for a child and the other for its mother. The little girl's dress



AQUATIC EQUIPMENTS.

is of blue and white stockingette, with a blue collar and band, while the other costume is of bright red serge, trimmed with white braid. In both instances the feet are protected by sandals, which are now the most approved footgear for bathing in.

I am giving you a design for a new, smart afternoon gown. It would look well in a bright shade of navy-blue cashmere. You will see it is made with an under-flounce, and this, as well as the over-skirt, is piped or stitched at the hem. The bodice is

AFTERNOON GOWN.

tucked at the waist, and the sleeves are somewhat of the Elizabethan order, that is, tucked to form three small puffs. The fluted, piped, or stitched revers disclose a vest of drawn white crepe de chine, finished at the neck with a smart little bow. If it would not be too expensive, blue crepe de chine would look lovely instead of cashmere, though the latter is now a very fashionable material.

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In the world of millinery the most conspicuous novelty is the hat whose brim turns abruptly back from the face with a large bow of silk or bunch of flowers. Other hats, again, resemble nothing so much as a large flat plate, and are supported on the hair, which is much puffed out by a broad bandeau. These are made out of crinoline straw cunningly woven to imitate lace. Such are trimmed with

A PICTURE HAT.

swathings of chiffon or tulle, or perchance satin ribbon and flowers. They recall to one's mind the portraits of Marie Antoinette. The picturesque hat illustrated is of fine Leghorn straw abundantly trimmed with pink roses and foliage. Soft tulle strings coming from behind are tied at one side, the inside of the drooping brim having ruchings of white tulle as a lining. We are allowed to tilt our hats at whatever angle best becomes us, much latitude being permitted in this respect. The most fashionable veils at present are those of fine silken Russian net, plain or with a couple of chenille spots, but the latter are rather difficult to adjust, and cannot be put on in a hurry, as the effect of the spots appearing at the wrong part of the face is decidedly ludicrous. Another becoming net is of the finest tulle covered with very fine spots. It is whispered abroad that no longer are our veils to be fastened below our chins, but are to come only as far as the upper lip, but the time is not yet here when the mode will become generally adopted.

❀ ❀ ❀

White voile is the fabric chosen for this ideal summer gown, but the belt and bow are to be of old-gold silk, while the vest is a white one run through with gold ribbon. Stitched blue and white linen with a front of

A COOL DRESS FOR THE SUMMER

tucked muslin and little inner sleeves also of muslin, make a charming summer toilette. The hat and the waist band of this toilette are both to be black, and very cool and pretty the effect would certainly be.

❀ ❀ ❀

ELABORATE TOILETTES SUITABLE FOR A GARDEN PARTY.

The gown on the left hand is made of beige batiste, with touches of gold over white mousseline de soie, and the other is a turquoise-blue mousseline and linen gown very elaborately gauged, and threaded through with black ribbon velvet. Picture hats go with both costumes.

❀ ❀ ❀

WHITE EMBROIDERED MUSLIN OVER SILK.

This should be made of the new and beautiful white embroidered muslin, a material that seems to bring back a whiff of lavender-scented gowns; for in the days when white embroidered muslin was fashionable before, every woman had sachets of lavender laid in her wardrobes. The gown would look well mounted upon heliotrope taffetas, and should have a transparent lace yoke and sleeves, a heliotrope chiffon bow upon the bodice, and a belt to match.

ELABORATE TOILETTES SUITABLE FOR A GARDEN PARTY.

CHILDREN'S CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN.

Any boy or girl who likes to become a cousin can do so, and write letters to 'Cousin Kate, care of the Lady Editor, 'Graphic' Office, Auckland.

Write on one side of the paper only.

All purely correspondence letters with envelope ends turned in are carried through the Post Office as follows:—Not exceeding 2oz, 1d; not exceeding 4oz, 1d; for every additional 2oz or fractional part thereof, 1d. It is well for correspondence to be marked 'Press Manuscript only.'

Please note, dear cousins, that all letters addressed to Cousin Kate must now bear the words 'Press Manuscript only.' If so marked, and the flap turned in, and not overweight, they will come for a ½d stamp in Auckland, but a 1d from every other place.

COUSINS' CORRESPONDENCE.

Dear Cousin Kate,—Saturday week was the Mercer Regatta, and we all went to it. I enjoyed myself very much. It was great fun watching the canoe hurdle races, especially when the people kept falling out of the canoes when they were going over the hurdles. But I think the best of all was watching the greasy boom. There was one poor Maori that got about half way across, but then just as he was giving another jerk to get on further, his barrel slipped round and he fell into the water. The man that won the prize won it at Mercer the year before last, and also at Ngaruawahia regatta last year. I wonder whether you were at the regatta, Cousin Kate. We have got twelve miles to go to Mercer, so that is a long way to go in the trap, is it not? I have not yet received my badge that you promised me, dear Cousin Kate, but I am very anxious to get it. We have three dogs, and their names are Rover, Sailor and Don.—From Cousin Ethel.

[Dear Cousin Ethel,—I was not at the regatta, but a great friend of mine, who take photographs for the paper, was there. He said it was grand fun. I have posted your badge to-day, and am sorry I forgot it before. I expect you saw the pictures of the regatta in last week's paper. Cousin Kate.]

✦ ✦ ✦

Dear Cousin Kate,—I have not written to you for a long time, so to-day as I have nothing to do, I thought I would write to you. Last night it rained very hard, and therefore there is a large flood on to-day. Our bridge is washed away, and now we will have to go around to the swing bridge, a quarter of a mile further away. But this afternoon it is very fair weather. We are going to break up school on Wednesday for the six weeks' holidays. I do not know whether I will be going away this year for my holidays, but I had an invitation to go to Tuakau with a friend. I would like to go very much, and I hope I can get away. I am sure you will be very glad when you hear that I have passed at our examination. I am now in the sixth standard. There was not a failure in our school. Mr Ellis, our school teacher, was very pleased, and he said that we all did very well indeed. We have nineteen cows milking now, and twelve little calves feeding. Our youngest calf, while it was in the stable, got kicked in the eye by Grace, our horse. Its eye all swelled up, and it is a little swollen yet. This is the second calf she has kicked now.—From Cousin Bertha.

[Dear Cousin Bertha.—How pleased I am to hear you passed your examination so well. I do so much hope you will very much enjoy your holiday, whether you go to Tuakau or not. I expect, as you have so many cows milking, you are sure to have a separator, or perhaps you send your milk to a creamery. Tell me about it next time you write.—Cousin Kate.]

✦ ✦ ✦

Dear Cousin Kate,—As three of my sisters have become "Graphic" Cousins, I would like to become one also, Cousin Kate, if you will accept me as one. I am ten years old, and am in the fourth standard. Mr Ellis, our school teacher, is going to leave at Christmas, and we will have to begin the New Year with a new teacher, but I do not know who it will be. We are going to have our school picnic on the 26th of December. It is going to be held at Pokeno this year. After I have been to the picnic I will be able to tell you all about it. On the day of the picnic the flag at Pokeno school is going to be unfurled, and the people are going to try to get the Maori band, and I think it will be very nice. I have two pet cats. Their names are Tabby and Chappie. Tabby is a white and grey cat, and about four years old; Chappie is a dark grey cat, and about half a year old. If you will accept me as a Cousin, will you please send me a badge.—From Cousin Maud.

[Dear Cousin Maud,—I am sorry I have not been able to welcome you as a cousin before, but Christmas has put us all out. I hope you are enjoying your holidays, and that the picnic on Boxing Day was a great success. I am going to send you a badge, and hope you will get it all right.—Cousin Kate.]

✦ ✦ ✦

Dear Cousin Kate,—Please pardon me for not writing before, but really there has been nothing stirring. Last Saturday I invited Cousin Ila to spend the afternoon with me. She arrived at 3 p.m., and after having a little chat we paid a visit to a picturesque little valley about fifty yards from the side of our house. It was just delightful, and, oh, so cool! The birds and the locusts seemed to us to be singing their best, and the different coloured berries and lovely clematis hanging in clusters from the trees added more and more to the beauty of the place. We commenced at the foot of the valley and wandered on, gathering ferns and mosses, every now and again passing a little pool of water, where lay a lazy trout dreamily gazing into space. Sometimes a gentle breeze, laden with sweet scent from the flowers, would pass us, but when we came to look for the flowers from which had come the scent they were far out of our reach. At length we came to a place where the lightning had torn up a puriri tree by the roots, causing it to fall across the creek, and upon it we decided to rest awhile. Here we sat arranging and comparing our ferns and mosses, admiring the beautiful scenery that lay around us and listening to the quiet murmur of the stream below till we could not help but think that surely we must have accidently wandered into fairyland. Having rested we thought it time for us to return, so passing through the valley again we reached home laden with ferns, moss and clematis. After putting our flowers into water we went off for a game of tennis, which ended a most enjoyable afternoon. I have not yet received the collecting card and badge I asked you for some time ago.—From Cousin Irene.

[Dear Cousin Irene,—I much enjoyed your letter, with its vivid description of the gully near your home. How lovely it must be, and how lucky you are to have so charming a resort near at hand. Are you very fond of tennis? Which is the better player, Cousin Ila or yourself? Remember me to Ila when you see her, and ask her to write to me soon. Hoping to hear from you also.—Cousin Kate.]

✦ ✦ ✦

Dear Cousin Kate,—I have not yet received a badge or a card. I suppose the other Cousin Gertrude got them. I am Gertrude Cahill. I have left the Nemarket school and am going to Carlyle College, in Remuera. I like it very much, and am learning French, Latin, German and literature. I was glad to hear that you received my puzzle and drawing. Cousin Gladys got her badge and she is delighted with it. Poor Mr Bruford, our late head master, was buried to-day. I will be very pleased to hear the results of the missing word competition. I hope I will be able to come to the cousins' Christmas tree. Dear Cousin Kate, I am going to send in a story, which I will compose myself.—Your loving cousin, Gertrude Cahill.

[Dear Cousin Gertrude,—I have just posted another card and badge. I expect, as you say, the others went to the wrong cousin, as I have several of the same name on my books. I was sorry to have to keep your letter back so long, but the holidays have rather upset our usual arrangements. I wonder if you were at the Christmas tree: there were several cousins there who never came up and spoke to me. I was so sorry.—Cousin Kate.]

✦ ✦ ✦

Dear Cousin Kate,—I saw my photo. in the "Graphic," and thank you so much for having it put in. I have begun my Christmas holidays from to-day and am greatly looking forward to them. As soon as the weather is settled I am going to continue my swimming lessons at the salt water baths. Did you hear the Waihi Band playing in Albert Park on Sunday? It played beautifully. I am very fond of music and learn both violin and piano, which I like very much indeed. My brother's dog has a sweet little puppy about six weeks old, but my brother is now at Home in England at school, and his dog misses him very much. I must now say good night. Wishing you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year, with love I remain, Cousin Roie.

[Dear Cousin Roie,—I was sorry you could not come up to the tree at the hospital. The children enjoyed it so much, and the stockings you sent were simply lovely. I believe the children liked them better than anything. You are very fortunate in learning two instruments. I hope you will get on well with the violin. Perhaps next Christmas you will play us a piece at the hospital, if we have another Christmas tree. A little bird told me you were learning photography. As soon as you get a nice, very clear one, please send it to me for our cousins' page. The gentleman who is showing you the way would know what would be nicest.—Cousin Kate.]

✦ ✦ ✦

My Dear Cousin Kate,—I am sure I don't know what you must be thinking of me for not writing to you for so long, but until this last week or so I have had toothache a great deal, and so have felt rather cross and in no mood for letter-writing. I have a scrap-book to send you. I really do not know if it will be too late or not, for when I read the notice I did not take much heed of the date of closing, fully expecting to see it again; and then the "Graphic" was sent away, so I just had to trust to my memory. I do not at all expect to gain a prize (because my book is not nearly good enough), but I shall be glad to think that the bright pictures might amuse some poor child. I am also returning my card, which I have kept for so long. I am sorry I could not collect more, but I hope you will not mind. This will make a total of fifteen shillings altogether. How is the poor child in the cot progressing, dear cousin? We have not heard much about it lately. I hope you have quite recovered from your illness long ere this. I have had a very severe cold all this week, making me feel very miserable. I think our cousins are very kind to send in their photographs. I have been reading several books lately, but those I liked best were "St. Elmo," "Robinson Crusoe," "Strawberry Hill," "From Log Cabin to White House," "Elsie's Children," and "Elsie's Widowhood." These last two were birthday presents, making seven of the "Elsie" series that I have now. Have you read all of the others? I think they are delightful. I must now conclude this babyish scribble, with fond love and with best wishes for a happy Christmas and a bright and prosperous New Year.—Ethel Ada.

[Dear Cousin Ethel Ada,—I wonder if you came to the tree after all. I gave your little brother some tickets, but as you did not come and speak to me I do not know if you were there or not. There was quite a crowd of grown-up patients, and so many people, that I really scarcely saw which of the cousins were present. I know none of you by sight, you see, so was not to blame, and I did not recognise you. The scrap-book was lovely, and I am sure gave great pleasure to some poor little thing. Please don't forget me in the New Year, but write regularly.—Cousin Kate.]

✦ ✦ ✦

The Christmas Tree at the Children's Hospital, Auckland.

No doubt there were many happy folks on Christmas Eve, but between the hours of three and five none, I am sure, were happier than the children and convalescent patients at the Auckland Hospital. The Christmas tree and entertainment arranged by the "Graphic," and to which several cousins contributed by sending dolls, etc., was a most splendid success.

The tree was a grand one, very kindly supplied by Mr Goldie, of the Domain. It was so high we had to have a huge ladder to reach the top in decorating and in taking off the presents. Each child had two presents, also a fancy stocking of toys and lollies and a cracker. The girls all had dolls, and a great number of the smaller boys too. They simply loved them, because they dressed and undressed so nicely, and all the clothes were so pretty and so beautifully made. One little girl had just had an operation that morning, and was very pale, poor little mite, but was operation, poor little mite, but was allowed to be wheeled in in her bed. A number of the children had to come in their beds, while others had crutches and chairs to support their poor injured legs. Three little fellows were in the fever ward, and could not come, but be sure we sent them some lovely presents. It was a merry time indeed, when we began to strip the tree. A large number of grown-up patients who were well enough came down from the other wards, and every inch of room was occupied. Every child seemed convinced he or she had got the very nicest present in the world, and there was much laughter as the crackers were pulled, and the caps and masks they contained were fitted on to the little heads. It was sad, too, in a way, to see such pale faces in some cots, but even these were brightened with the joy of the treat. Then began the Punch and Judy show. It was a really splendid one by Professor Beckford, and how we all did laugh at Mr Punch and his dreadful actions. Then came Mr James Bain, the very clever English variety artist and comic singer, who has been all over the colony. Mr Bain is at the head of his profession, and his kindness in coming up and singing for no fee except the gratitude of the children was much appreciated. He sang three songs, and we were all quite weak with laughing when he finished. The faces he made were simply excruciating. Then Miss Brightie Berry and Miss Freda Hunter gave us a coon song and dance, and as an encore an Irish jig by Miss Brightie Berry. I never imagined

children could dance so well. It was simply splendid, and both were most rapturously applauded; indeed, we could not have enough of them. Mr Montague told two very funny stories, and then we had another little play by Punch and Judy to wind up with. It was really a lovely afternoon, and all enjoyed it very much. Those who gave presents, and those who assisted, have the warm thanks of not only the hospital authorities, but also of Cousin Kate and the "Graphic" staff.

Ordered to Smoke.

The heroic perversity which induces so many boys to defy the command of parents, the rules of schools, and the protests of their own stomachs for the sake of learning to smoke, remains still the despair of fathers and the marvel of mothers. There would be lively remonstrances and pathetic pleas, indeed, if the lad who cheerfully proceeds to turn himself ghastly, green and limp with his first cigar were obliged to take a dose of medicine that would make him half as uncomfortable.

One element in the attraction is, no doubt the very flavour of forbidden fruit. The one case on record in which a large body of boys were prescribed tobacco, tends to prove this. The prescription was far from being popularly welcomed.

In England, in 1665, when the Great Plague was raging, tobacco was regarded as an excellent prevention against infection; and the boys at Eton were officially ordered to smoke! Nor was the prescription confined to their hours out-of-doors.

If it would have looked odd to see some hundreds of boys, ranging in age from six and seven to eighteen and nineteen, playing at all the school games from peg-top and hopscotch up to the earlier forms of football and cricket, each with cigar or pipe between his lips, it must have been stranger still to see the class-room work progressing in a dense blue cloud—master and pupils puffing away together. The prize scholar removed his "weed" to construe a passage from Homer; the master laid his pipe carefully aside to thrash the dunce, who dropped his cigar to howl!

But Mr Lionel Cust, who, in a recent history of Eton recalls this curious period, adds that there were rebels against the tobacco rule. Neither shirking nor disobedience, however, was tolerated. The boy who wouldn't smoke, the boy who couldn't smoke, the boy who would very much rather not try to smoke—all alike had to smoke. Those who did not were promptly and thoroughly flogged—and doubtless given a cigar afterward.

The choice for a qualmy little fellow in the lower class between immediate nausea or the immediate birch must certainly have been a trying one. There is no doubt that the repeal of the tobacco rule, when it came, was joyfully welcomed. The plague did not reach the school, but whether it was smoked out or otherwise warded off would be a difficult matter to prove, after more than two centuries.

Beds for Russian School Children.

The school children of Russia have recently been made very happy by having beds put in their bedrooms and large dormitories. In Russia, nearly all boys, at least, and very many girls, are sent to boarding schools and colleges. And so many years of their lives are passed in studying, eating and sleeping, away from home.

Until recently, beds were quite unknown in Russia; save as a luxury for the higher classes. The peasants slept on top of their big bake ovens for warmth. The soldiers slept upon hard cots without bedding, while the middle classes of people and the students rolled themselves in blankets and lay down near stoves. Recently, however, all the children in the boarding schools and all the scholars in the colleges have been awarded beds by special and general agreement.

Russian children have never had cradles, cribs, cots or beds.

Adventure of a Rabbit

(By Mary Ellis.)

I am a snow white rabbit with soft, nice fur and pink eyes and ears that hear everything. I sleep now in a little house made by a carpenter, but—one night—well, you shall hear all about it.

I used to live in a bird store, where there were dozens of singing canary birds in cages; and big poll parrots with harsh and ugly voices; little pug dogs, guinea pigs and many rabbits.

One day a little girl came into the store and stood in front of my cage for a long time, admiring my snow-white fur and my pink eyes. She would go away and look at the other animals and the birds, but then she would come back again. I was glad, for I had seen other little girls take other rabbits away, and I was waiting for my turn to come. This was such a sweet-faced little girl that I loved her at once.

Pretty soon an old man, whose hair was white—almost as white as my own fur, but not so fine—entered the store, and the little girl ran and placed her hand in his and called him "grandpa," and told him about me.

I was proud enough to hear her talk, for she said that I was the prettiest rabbit in all the world, and the sweetest and the dearest and the nicest. Then she coaxed him to buy me. He smiled and patted her on one cheek and said "Yes." Then I knew that I was surely going with her and was very glad.

She bought a basket and put me in it, taking care to have some nice, soft hay in the bottom of the basket, so that I would be comfortable on the journey I was about to make. Soon we were on the way. First we rode in a street car and then came to where a big locomotive was, and the loud whistle and the ringing of the bell scared me so that I then wished myself back in the bird store with all the other animals and the birds.

We got on board of the car and I soon was rocked to sleep and didn't know anything else until I was in a light room, with gas burning, and there was the sweetest-faced little old lady that I have ever seen; and there, also, was a little boy, who was ill. His back was deformed and he was obliged to lie in bed nearly all day.

The little girl said that she had spent all her Christmas money to buy me, and that I was to amuse the little boy, whose name was Alfred, and that I was to be his—as long as he lived.

He smiled and kissed the little girl, who was his sister Evangeline. I liked him so well that I did not struggle to get away when I was placed in his arms. Such a pleased look came into his face that the little, white-haired lady turned away, and I saw tears in her eyes, but I didn't know why.

The next day the parrot—they had a parrot—got out of his cage and hopped along to my cage and tried to peck me with his ugly, crooked bill, but I kept out of his way, which I was able to do very well, because the cage was large.

Seeing this, the parrot went to the grate fire and picked out a piece of burning wood and dropped it on the carpet. The carpet took fire and the parrot laughed at that. The doors of the room were closed and we were soon both nearly choked with the smoke. So was poor little Alfred.

But my brave little master crawled out of his bed and hunted up my cage and let me out and opened the door, so that I ran out into the garden. Alfred cried "Fire, fire!" and the people came.

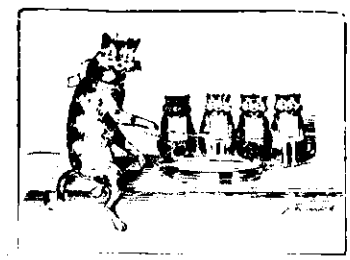
I knew that Alfred had saved my life. When the smoke was gone I ran back into the room and took a flower to Alfred, holding it in my mouth. Now every day I go into the garden and come back with a flower, and dear Alfred has them all.

"Enjoyed your party, Bobby?"

"Yes, ma."

"Well, what little girls did you dance with?"

"Oh, I didn't dance; I had three fights down stairs with Willie Richardson, and I licked him every time."

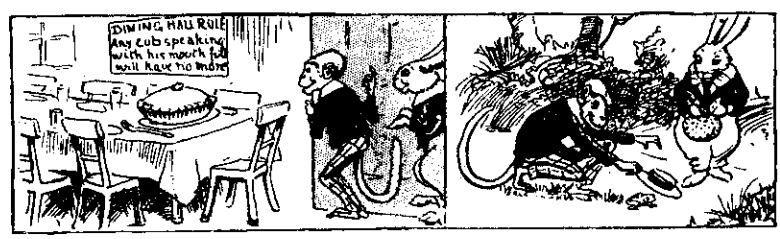


THEIR CHRISTMAS DINNER.

"Don't talk to me of plum pudding for children; mine have nothing but rich cream; just look at them."

JUNGLE JINKS.

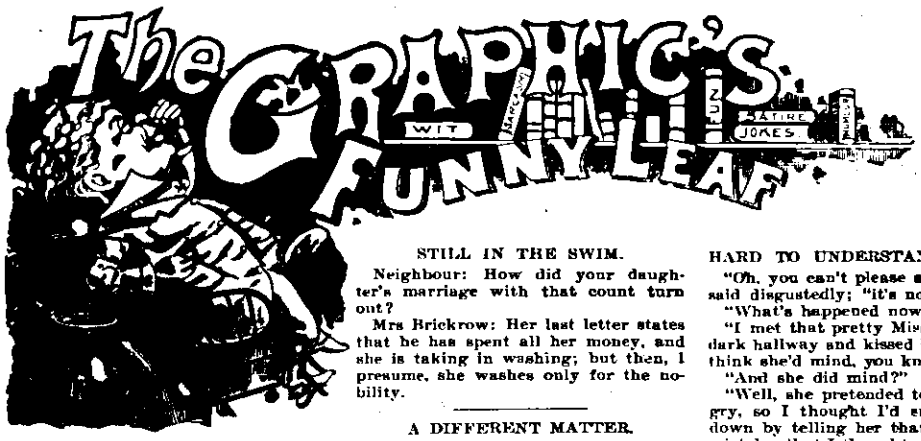
Jacko's New Dish—Frog Pie. Dr. Lion Doesn't Like It.



1. "What a lovely great pie!" exclaimed greedy Jacko, the mischievous monkey, as he peeped into the dining-hall at the Jungle School, and saw the table spread ready for dinner. "Come and look. Hare, old boy! Here's a pie for a king! What do you say to having a bit?" "Oh, no," whispered young Hare; "Doctor Lion will find us out." "No, he won't," urged Jacko—"not if you eat it my way. First of all we must go into the garden and catch some frogs." So out into the garden they went, and it was not long before Jacko had caught a lot, and Hare tied them up in a handkerchief.

2. Then the young rascals hastened back to the dining-hall, and Jacko, with a knife, carefully removed the crust of the pie without breaking it. To empty the dish of the plums and juice was the work of a few minutes; and when they had cleared the lot Hare unfastened his handkerchief, and turned all the frogs into the empty dish. "My word! this will be a sur-prise packet for old Lion, won't it?" chuckled Hare.

3. After carefully replacing the crust on the dish they carried it back to the dining-table, and awaited the arrival of Dr. Lion and the boys. Presently they all came trooping in to their dinner. "Ah!" said Dr. Lion as he took up his knife and fork to cut the pie, "we have a famous tart here, my boys, and I'm sure you will all enjoy it. Mrs Lion made it with her own hands." But the moment the Doctor removed some of the crust out sprang a whole army of frogs. "Great jumping tadpoles!" he roared, "the plums have come to life!" Hare and Jacko fairly yelled with laughter; in fact, their laugh was just a little too loud, for Dr. Lion suspected a trick at once. And in the end the truth came out, and Hare and Jacko were sent to bed early without their tea.



ANIMAL LIFE.

Doolittle Goode: How did you spend your holiday?

Somers Holliday: Oh, I led a dog's life.

Doolittle Goode: No! What did you do?

Somers Holliday: Lay around and slept.

NO CURE FOR IT.

Jones: What's the matter, old man?

Smith: Can't sleep nights.

Jones: Ah, insomnia; I know just the—

Smith: No; baby.

THE PROFESSIONAL WAY.

Mistress: "Does your policeman lover ever ask you for a kiss, Norah?"

"Cook: "No, indade, mum! Whin a policeman see anything he wants he takes it widout asking."

THE CONCEALED HUSBAND.

Jinks: When burglars were in your house the other night did Mrs Filkins look under the bed for a man?

Filkins: Yes; and found one, too!

Jinks: One of the burglars?

Filkins: No, me!

PREJUDICED VIEW.

"Paw, what is an 'independent paper?'"

"An independent paper, my son, is one that usually tries to throw its influence in favour of some political party in such a way that nobody will suspect it."

WHERE HE FOUND IT.

Penelope: O, I like that new song of yours so much. It is so sweet and sad, especially that line, "You never fail to meet me Sunday night." What gave you the inspiration for it, Mr Quaver?

Quaver: My board bill.

O.P.H.

Phlipp: Say, Todd, do you want a tip?

Todd: What is it?

Phlipp: Go and stand in front of a bank. There's money in it.

STILL IN THE SWIM.

Neighbour: How did your daughter's marriage with that count turn out?

Mrs Brickrow: Her last letter states that he has spent all her money, and she is taking in washing; but then, I presume, she washes only for the nobility.

A DIFFERENT MATTER.

Tom: I paid a visit to Miss Sweety's house yesterday, and found her old man at home.

Dick: Ha! What did the old bear do? Kick you out?

Tom: Oh, no. He was very polite: asked me to call again.

Dick: You don't mean it? Why, he never lets any one call on his daughter.

Tom: I wasn't calling on her. I was trying to collect a bill the old man owes the firm.

THE OTHER FELLOW.

"Talk about woman's fickleness and capriciousness!" she exclaimed scornfully. "I'd like to know how she can beat man when it comes to being vacillating and mentally unreliable."

"What's the matter now?" asked her dearest friend.

"Why, if it were not for man's inconstancy I'd be engaged to be married."

"Tell me about it."

"Well, he asked me to marry him, and I refused. I didn't think I wanted to, you know, but afterward I made up my mind that I did, and the fickle thing never asked me again."

NOT NECESSARY.

"Can you prove all the things you say in your campaign arguments," asked the conservative voter.

"That's not the point at all," answered the practical politician. "The only question we are concerned with is whether the other people can disprove them."

SPORTY.

Walker: This bride was quite a popular girl, wasn't she?

Watkinson: Yes, indeed. The Evening Scarifier sent its sporting man to report the wedding. He printed a list of rejected lovers half a column long under the heading "Among Those Who Also Ran."

A YOUNG PHILOSOPHER.

"Mamma, I heard somebody to-day say that matches were made in heaven; how about that?"

"I believe that is the fact, Willie."

"Well, what in thunder do they want matches there for, if there's going to be no night there?"

RECOGNISED HIM.

Mrs Casey (reading war news): Wan soldier wor morthal wounded, an' his lasht words wor "Gimme whisky."

Mrs Dolan (whose husband is at the front): Hivin hilp me fatherless childer, thot wor Pat.

ALL FOR THE BEST.

"They say that women have a very deficient sense of humour," remarked Willie Wishington.

"Yes," answerd Miss Cayenne, "And perhaps it is just as well. If we had too much discrimination in such matters we couldn't smile at so many well meant masculine efforts to be funny."

FILIAL PRESCIENCE.

Fond Mother: You say Mr Willing objects to my presence in the drawing-room when he calls?

Daughter: Yes, mamma.

Fond Mother: I wonder why?

Daughter: I'm sure I don't know, unless it is because he loves me for myself alone.

HARD TO UNDERSTAND WOMAN.

"Oh, you can't please a woman," he said disgustedly; "it's no use trying."

"What's happened now?"

"I met that pretty Miss Brown in a dark hallway and kissed her. I didn't think she'd mind, you know."

"And she did mind?"

"Well, she pretended to be very angry, so I thought I'd smooth things down by telling her that it was all a mistake, that I thought she was somebody else."

"And then?"

"Why, then, she really was angry."

THE TWO WAYS.

Mrs Geyer: Men have different ways of making home happy.

Mrs Meyer: How so?

Mrs Geyer: Some do it by staying at home and some by going away.

MODEST MAN.

Braggs: What? Miss Romanz. No, she's not for me. She told me the other day that the man she marries must be handsome rather than wealthy.

Briggs: Well, you're certainly not wealthy, but ——

Braggs: Of course. That's just it. I hate to have a girl throw herself at my head that way.

GRATITUDE.

Young Lady: Give me one yard of—why, haven't I seen you before?

Dry Goods Clerk: Oh, Maud, can you have forgotten me? I saved your life at the seaside last summer.

Young Lady (warmly): Why, of ccurse you did! You may give me two yards of this ribbon, please.

NOW THEY DON'T SPEAK.

Mrs Nexdore: I notice you've got new paper in your hall.

Mrs Peppery: How do you like the design?

Mrs Nexdore: It seems to me it's rather loud.

Mrs Peppery: Yes, that's why we selected it. We thought it might drown the sound of your daughter's piano-playing.

WELL SPOKEN OF.

"I believe that last book of mine was a good deal talked about."

"Yes, I have often heard it referred to."

"Have you, really, now. By whom?"

"By you."

WASN'T GIVING HIMSELF AWAY.

Father (meaningly): Who is the laziest boy in your class, Tommy?

Tommy: I don't know, pa.

Father: I should think you should know. When all the others are industriously studying or writing their lessons, who is it sits idly in his seat and watches the rest, instead of working himself?

Tommy: The teacher.

PATIENCE.

Irate Landowner (to angler): "Hi, you, sir! This is my water. You can't fish here."

Angler: "O, all right. Whose is that water up there round the bend?"

Irate Landowner: "Don't know; not mine. But this is."

Angler: "Very well. I'll wait till that flows down here!"

DEGREES OF CLOSENESS.

Borrowit: You've got a double. I saw a fellow down town to-day that I was sure was you. I even struck him for a loan before I discovered my mistake.

Pinchit: Must have been a very close likeness.

Borrowit: No, he was quite the opposite of close. That's how I knew it wasn't you.

"LATEST" BUT NOT "LAST."

Tenor: Have you heard me sing my last song?

She: No; but I wish I had.