

HERE AND THERE.

There has been a startling break in the chain of British successes which Lord Kitchener has eabled home with such monotonous regularity. On three recent occasions (one rapidly following on the heels of another, we have had to bear the chagrin of hearing of defeat where we had grown used to read only of victory. The Boer plan is so obvious in these reverses that one wonders they have only adopted it now. By a few well-laid traps to give your enemy to understand that at any moment he may fall into the hands of a hand much superior to his own, is to force him into a less extended method of warfare. For many months now comparatively small parties of British have been separately scouring the country and thereby covering immense tracts, to the evident consternation of the Boers. The late disasters teach us that such tactics cannot be pursued save in a more limited way, and then not without the utmost caution.

The remark made in the House last week, that Bellamy's had become a mere drinking shop, may be comparatively true, yet it does not follow even if that is the case that the place should be shut up. Members have surely a right to be catered for in the matter of liquid refreshments if they desire such. Even the prohibitionists will admit how grateful the cup of hot coffee is during a long night's sitting, and the beef tea has a reputation for sustaining qualities that dates back to the time when port wine was an important though unsuspected ingredient in it, and it was in favour with temperate, intemperate, and total abstainer. I am ready to admit, however, that there is something in the argument that a House without Bellamy would probably keep earlier hours.

The other week we commented favourably on the protest raised by the Women's Political League against the publication in the newspapers of the proceedings in divorce suits. Since that time the organisation has been moving further in the matter, and seeks to get legislative support to its proposal by means of an act providing either that all such cases shall be heard in camera, or that the Judge shall have power to prohibit the publication of certain parts of the evidence. A Judge in the South has recently, in an application made to him, condemned the former expedient. And there are many reasons to be urged against it. It is not in the interest of justice that these trials should be virtually secret any more than any other trials. Further, it is not in the interests of morality that wrong-doers in this respect should have their misdeeds cloaked from the public eye, when with a great many of the offenders the fear of public scandal acts as their principal deterrent. But the suggestion that would give the Judge authority to withhold from publication anything in the evidence which appearing in print might have a prejudicial effect on the morals of the community, and the suppression of which would not affect the case—that suggestion is an excellent one.

The British bulldog has need of a very good reputation as a set-off to his fur from prepossessing visage; and I understand he is credited with no end of virtues, gentleness among them, by his friends and admirers. Unfortunately some degenerate representative of the breed is always getting himself into hot water, as last week, when a fierce brute almost tore a man to pieces at Riverhead. The description of the frightful injuries inflicted by the animal—the victim's ears were hanging by shreds of flesh, his scalp was torn away in several places, his nose and feet were bitten through, etc.—almost give one the impression that the man was an unresisting sufferer. One would have imagined that any man of even less than the average strength could have tackled the brute and in desperation broken his bones with his naked hands. If he could not, bulldogs are even more dangerous assailants than one had

thought, and should be given a wide berth.

The Bishop of Carlisle is convinced that the emptiness of churches on Sunday can be traced to "the amount of attention given to recreation on Saturday to relieve the strain which we all had to undergo." That he holds is tending in one way or another to make men take less interest in things spiritual and so to be less diligent than in former days in their attendance at the means of grace.

A rather amusing breach of promise case has recently been heard in Ohio, United States. The man sued for failing to keep his plighted word to the fair one put in as a defence that the girl when he proposed to her weighed 10st. She increased to 22st, and he abandoned her because she did so. The lady alleges that her great weight spoils her chances of getting anyone else, which is undeniably true, and that as the adipose tissue accumulated while she was waiting for him he is guilty of contributory negligence.

The mistaken arrest of Lillywhite on suspicion of murder at Colchester is going to prove almost as expensive to the authorities as it must have been disagreeable to the accused. The Colchester Town Council has been reckoning up its expenses in the affair, and they do not fall far short of £400.

The chief health officer of the colony is now collecting evidence as to the most suitable sites for sanatoria for the treatment of consumption. There is quite an ideal place on the slope of Tongariro, beyond Tokanua, which it is to be hoped the officer will inspect. The chief drawback to it is its distance from civilisation, but, apart from that, its altitude, the purity and invigorating quality of the air, the hot and medicinal waters all mark it out as a place in ten thousand for consumptives, if there is anything in the open-air cure.

Some youngsters in Feilding district recently meted out summary punishment to an unfortunate rooster which they discovered trespassing on a field. They caught the bird, painted it green, tied a kerosene tin to its wings, and left it to founder in a ploughed paddock. It was shockingly cruel, as the Feilding "Star" remarks, but there is no denying the fact that maltreated fowls elicit a much less degree of sympathy than horses, dogs or cats in trouble do. It is questionable whether the compassionate eye of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals takes particular cognizance of the woes of hens, or they might have their hands full. We are not so callous, however, as the Italian market women, who may be seen quietly gossiping while they pluck their poultry alive.

Our prohibition friends would do well to read the recent findings of the Investigating Committee of the British Society for the Study of Inebriety. They entirely consult those who believe and preach that drunkenness is hereditary. It is not denied that drunken parents may beget degenerate offspring, who in turn may become drunkards; but the drunkenness of the latter is not a specific inherited taint, but the result of weakness of mind or body or the evil environment in which they are brought up. This conclusion coincides with the dictum of science that there is no instance of the hereditary transmission of an acquired characteristic either in the animal or the vegetable kingdom.

A cablegram announced on Monday that French cruisers had interfered to prevent an engagement between a Venezuelan and Columbian gunboat. France's action is dictated largely by the fact that she has large interests in Panama, and holds a large part of the Venezuelan bonds. On the latter ground other European Powers might also interfere to keep the peace between the two countries. It is the United States, however, which will probably claim to be chief arbiter in the matter. The authorities there are

contemplating an extension of the Monroe Doctrine so as to embrace the proposition that there shall be no wars between the people of the American continent. The opportunity now presents itself to propound that doctrine openly and act upon it, but how such an attitude would suit the European Powers with interests in South America is questionable.

A Dairy Commissioner in America is so persuaded of the truth of Dr. Koch's contention that the tuberculosis of animals cannot be communicated to man that he has publicly offered to eat flesh and drink milk infected with the germs of tubercle, provided an annuity is guaranteed to his family in case of the result being fatal.

Mr Napier probably knew what he was saying when he declared that Mr McGowan was prepared to forfeit his portfolio in retaining the 'Prisco' mail service for Auckland. But whether Mr McGowan would actually do so or not, it is certain that no member or Minister who did not fight to his last breath against any attempt to do away with the service or alter the port of call need ever show his face to an Auckland constituency again.

Monarchs are flesh and blood after all, and whatever the considerations of policy which decide the courses even of the autocrat of all the Russias, he cannot fail to be touched by the delightful attention of the French. To be carefully guarded and so sumptuously feted is enough to elicit from even less generous-hearted men than the Czar an impulsive expression of friendliness, but France will make a mistake to presume too much on the alliance between the two peoples. Everyone understands that the Czar is not Russia, and that mightier movements than he can control guide the footsteps and shape the destiny of that giant nation. We may expect a strong wave of Anglophobia to follow the Russophile demonstration. Already the French have been striving to incite the Spaniards against us. They may now try the Russians.

A case recently came before one of our Police Courts in which a woman punished her drunken husband for his inebriety by tying him up to the verandah post upside down and leaving him all night to repent of his folly. This device will remind colonists from the North of England of an ancient practice still in vogue there called "riding the stang." In this case the drunkard is placed astride a pole carried on the shoulders of two men. His feet are made fast together below the pole and he has to balance himself as best he can—an awkward and difficult business—while he is marched round the town.

In reference to Mr Monk's desire to secure from New South Wales the early records of New Zealand which are kept in the archives of the Mother colony doubt has been expressed whether the New South Wales Government would be willing to part with them. One can scarcely suppose they would refuse save on the grounds suggested by one joker that their own early history is so dubious in its character that they would fain retain our records to give it an element of respectability.

OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

CORNWALL PARK.

The two pretty views of Cornwall Park and One Tree Hill are from photographs taken by Mr Bartlett, the well known photographer of Auckland.

THE SISTER LAKES OF WONDERLAND.

The average tourist who visits Rotorua seldom makes the acquaintance of the neighbouring lakes of Rototoi, Rotomua, and Rotoehu. They lie off the beaten track. But for picturesqueness none are inferior to

Rotorua, and Rotomua far surpasses the latter in the beauty of its scenery. It only requires that there should be easy access to them, and they must become favourite haunts for the camper-out.

THE LATE EMPRESS FREDERIC.

The English mail just to hand has brought us some beautiful pictures from our London correspondent illustrating the mountain home of the late Empress Frederic of Germany, together with the most recent portrait of that gifted princess. Our readers, especially our lady readers, will feel a strong interest in these views, notwithstanding they come to hand some time after the sad event to which they have reference.

TRIAL TRIP OF THE AORERE.

On Monday last, at the invitation of Messrs Henderson and Macfarlane, the agents for the Wanganui Settlers' Steam Navigation Company, a number of gentlemen assembled to take part in the official trial trip of the new Tunnel boat Aorere, contracted for by the local firm of W. A. Ryan and Co.

This is the second boat on this tunnel principle that Messrs Ryan have successfully tendered for and turned out, and the results obtained more than justify the enterprise shown in adopting a new method. Among the invited guests were His Worship the Mayor (Mr A. Kidd), Mr F. Dillingham (United States Consul), Mr A. B. J. Irvine (manager Union Steamship Company), Mr A. B. Donald (Donald and Edenborough), Mr Miller (manager New Zealand Express Company), Mr Oakden (Paterson and Co.), Mr G. Paterson, Captain Nash (of the Herbert Fuller), also Misses Bell, Whitson, and Spinks.

A start was made at three p.m. and almost before it seemed possible Rangitoto Beacon was broad beam. Here, lying to, an assault was made on the many good things provided by the hosts.

Mr Dunnet, in a neat speech, commented favourably on the enterprise of the Wanganui settlers, and expressed himself satisfied with the new launch in every particular, and in concluding proposed the toast of "The Steamship River Steamship Company," which was drunk with enthusiasm. Mr Sproul (passenger agent for the Oceanic Steamship Company, with Henderson and Macfarlane) then called for the toast of "The Guests," to which Mr Irvine, manager of the Union Steamship Company, appropriately responded. He said the launch surpassed everything he had before seen in point of speed and easy running, and on behalf of the guests thanked the hosts for their most enjoyable outing. Mr Irvine then proposed the health of the contractors, Messrs W. A. Ryan and Co., coupled with the name of Mr C. Bailey, jun., to which Mr Whitson replied on behalf of the firm, and then called the toast of "Our Hosts," which was drunk with acclamation, Mr Dunnet responding.

Mr Spinks, when called upon, for a speech, remarked that the engine was doing his talking.

The Aorere was then steered for the Devonport wharf, where some of the guests were landed. The launch covered the distance from North Shore in the fast time of ten and a half minutes, Queen-street wharf being reached shortly after five o'clock. The Aorere has been built by Mr C. Bailey, jun., to the order of W. A. Ryan and Co., and was shipped via Onehunga to Wanganui on Thursday last. Her dimensions are 42 feet overall, 8 feet beam, draught 9 inches, and she will accommodate about fifty passengers. Being built on the tunnel principle, the 24-inch propeller, driven by a 13-horse-power "Union" oil engine, will work in only nine inches of water, and hence the boat is a valuable acquisition for river work. The contractors and owners are to be complimented for the successful manner in which she acquitted herself, performing even more than was expected of her, and the local agents are confident that she is the forerunner of many more of the same class.