

# After Dinner Gossip.

## Hot With Their Own Petard.

The other evening, when a party of Auckland musical amateurs was returning from giving a concert in the suburbs a couple of street musicians entered the reserved carriage in which they were. The newcomers, ignorant of the character of their audience, at once got to business, prefacing their performance that "by the gentlemen's leave they would give them a little entertainment." The quality of the same proved only very middling, but a fellow-feeling for the performers made the amateurs kind, and when the bat was passed round by one of the minstrels the harvest was good. But the amateurs meant to have their revenge, and suggested to their would-be entertainers that it was only fair they should be entertained in turn. So, choosing one of their most effective pieces, they struck up. They had proceeded but a very little way when the countenances of the two strangers became a study. They were quite able to appreciate the excellence of the little concert and dumbfounded to know what it might all mean. Song succeeded song till the train drew near Auckland, and then a wag among the amateurs suggested that the hat should be sent round the two. The proposal, made with all seriousness, bewildered the street minstrels all the more, and they must have felt not a little embarrassed at the prospect of losing their earnings of half-an-hour before. But the joke was cut short by the train coming to a stop, and the "professionals" and the amateurs parted company.

## Crushed by Coronets.

The coronets for peers and peeresses which are now displayed in West End jewellers' shops in London have a fatal fascination for the man hurrying to keep an appointment as well as for the man of leisure. Nine persons out of ten stop to gaze at the clumsy and rather tawdry headgear, and but few realise the weight which the unfortunate peers will carry, fortunately for a short time, on their heads. At Percy Edwards' establishment in Piccadilly there is quite an exhibition in the window. The coronets of a duke, a marquis, an earl, a viscount, a baron, with the corresponding and much smaller coronets for the ladies, are on view, with the legend—"Coronets to order." Anyone can buy a duke's coronet for £14 5/, although that of an earl is the most expensive, the price asked being £16 10/. The coronet of a baroness is the cheapest, being only £10. Some peers prefer to have the silver balls frosted, and coronets thus treated certainly have less of a Christmas-tree appearance than the bright variety. The metal work, which is of silver-gilt, is made as light as possible, and yet the coronet of an earl weighs no less than 26ozs., and that of a duke 29ozs. The coronets are lined inside with white satin, and silk ribbons are attached to those of the peers—whether to fasten under the chin or to carry them by is not quite clear. The peeresses' coronets have two dangerous-looking silver-gilt pins, which meet in the middle of the inside of the lining, and there will probably be many a faint scream uttered at the crucial moment of the Coronation ceremony.

## The Noble Savags.

The young Englishwoman who fell in love with the Matabele styling himself Lo Ben at Earl's Court, and married him in spite of the remonstrances of her friends has recently made her appearance in the Divorce Court, and tells a miserable story of her married life. Early in 1906 the twin were wed very quietly by a registrar. Lo Ben remained as one of the "stars" of Filling's show, and made a tour of the provinces with his wife by his side. Inside of four months the instincts of the barbarian

husband awoke, and blows, kicks, bites, and beatings with an assagai were the portion of this white woman who had abandoned her caste and stooped to marry a savage to whom wives by custom are slaves, tillers of the ground, and docile recipients of any brutality. In Glasgow Lo Ben kicked his wife so terribly as to endanger her life, and in one of his fits of temper "blacked both her eyes." Throwing beer bottles at his wife, bundling her and a companion into the street, and using the most atrocious language, were among his lighter recreations. Eighteen months or less of this kind of life completely cured Mrs Lo Ben of her liking for her Matabele prince. Steps were taken to procure a divorce, on many grounds, and the petitioner appeared in court to ask that her unlucky marriage might be undone. The long series of acts of cruelty, she said, was not exactly what she expected when she "married a savage," as his lordship put it; rather she preferred to look upon Lo Ben's misdoings as the acts of "a baby"—the artless freaks of the noble black man. The respondent made no appearance, but it was stated that he had stayed in England when the rest of the collection returned to Africa, with intent to reside here permanently. Sir Francis Jeune's mind was fully made up on the main issue. It found expression in the curt sentence, "This woman chose to marry a savage, and now she is sorry for it." A legal point arose as to respondent's "domicile," and the case was allowed to stand over until counsel can establish the Court's jurisdiction.

## Much in a Name.

The similarity of many of our Maori place names is responsible for not a few mistakes. A wrong vowel in an address may send a letter miles in the wrong direction. The Christchurch "Weekly Press," in its last issue, is led into a pardonable error through the likeness of the two names Nihotapu and Waitotapu. Referring to the description of the former district in a report furnished by Mr F. Moorehouse to the Tourist Department the journal vouchsafes a little geographical information on its own account, with disastrous results. "The fame of the scenery and fine waterfalls at Nihotapu, between Wairakei and Rotomahana, is spreading." No doubt it is, but it would be well if it were spread with a little more accuracy. If the Christchurch visitor finds himself benighted somewhere among the punice-covered ranges between Wairakei and Rotomahana in a vain search for those waterfalls, he will have a good case against the "Press."

## A Recipe for Pro-Boerism.

A writer in the "Sheffield Daily Telegraph" counsels a new method of dealing with the pro-Boers for which he cites two precedents, one from America, the other from Germany. The former is particularly interesting. In 1863, President Lincoln was cursed with a similar "Stop the War" agitation, fomented by well-meaning fanatics, and stimulated by political adventurers, and when he discovered that the utterances of this faction were, indeed, prolonging the contest, he gave them due warning to "keep their tongues in order," and then, as this was ineffectual, had their leader, a member of Congress, arrested. This individual was charged with "publicly expressing sympathy for those in arms against the Government of the United States, and declaring disloyal sentiments and opinions, for the object and purpose of weakening the power of the Government in its efforts to suppress an unlawful rebellion." He was found guilty, and, finally, as the best way of disposing of him, was handed over to the enemy, who accepted him! One wonders if General Botha would care to accept any of our Pro-Boers?

## Coronation Robes.

With deep anxiety society at Home is awaiting the Earl Marshall's final decree regarding the Coronation robes—even those not destined to wear them. For they will have to be modified. Thirty-nine yards of velvet and some six or seven yards of fur would be no joke on a broiling mid-summer day. Of course, it is probable that the petticoat kirtle and mantle which form the robe so much discussed will look better when well made and worn, but it must be confessed that the style is more suited to the times of Queen Caroline, to the days of the long pointed waist and the voluminous skirts which preceded the crinolines; for these lightened somewhat the combination of velvet and fur. But in these days of chiffon and lace, when an arm strap may be formed of a single string of pearls, or a spray of roses, the furred lapels with the cascades of lace, velvet, and gold cordings seem a little unmanageable.

## Suppressing Tattersall's.

This is how the Adelaide critic criticises the Federal Government's action regarding Tattersall's:—Premier Barton, some say stimulated by his dear friend and bookmaker Humphrey Oxenham, has determined to wipe out Tattersall's at all hazards. Had there been any general public protest against these sweeps, one could understand Barton's peculiar somersault on the question, but he has been simply squeezed by the bookmaking interest and gone under. For the Sabbath party he does not care a rap. The question of appealing to the Federal High Court Barton will not hear of, because he knows that the action of the Commonwealth will not hold good at law, and he means to get his big fist in first.

## On the Veldt.

A young Queenslander who recently returned from South Africa relates that he was told of an orderly to a colonel on the staff, and the first day out they were under heavy fire. They dismounted, while the officer examined the position, through his glasses, but soon things got so warm that they had to take to their horses again. The Queenslander threw the colonel's bridle over the neck of the horse in the usual bush fashion and did not bother about holding the stirrup. "Damn you, sir," exclaimed the officer, "don't you know how to hold a horse?" "No, sir," was the prompt reply. "I've never been a damned groom before!" For a moment the colonel glared, but he said nothing until they were out of fire. Then he produced his cigarette with: "Have a weed, youngster?" "After that," said the Queenslander, "he was as good as a father to me."

## Lost by a Nose.

A correspondent of the Wanganui "Herald" recalls a most amusing incident that occurred at a meeting of creditors held in one of the northern towns of New Zealand. The bankrupt was a great sport, and had an interest in a horse that he had extensively backed to win one of our big steeplechases. When asked by the Chairman if he (bankrupt) had any offer to make his creditors, the reply was: "Well, gentlemen, I am sorry that I cannot pay anything at present, but can assure you that you only lost your money by a nose, as if — had won the — Steeplechase, I could have paid my creditors in full." And this is all that estate ever received.

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