

Burglars are the talk of the colony. They seem omnipresent, and to carry on their nefarious calling with equal diligence, in Auckland as in Dunedin. Besides the safe robbery at Otahuhu, alluded to elsewhere in these columns, several cases are reported from both city and suburbs. In one case, where there was a case of sickness unto death, the watcher by the bedside was suddenly startled by the entry of a man in stockinged feet. The patient was sleeping, and the watcher's one idea was not to wake him, so she calmly asked the thief to leave without giving any alarm. The pick shown in this instance was of a very high order, for the lady concerned was very badly frightened, and only splendid self-control kept her up. Another lady, entering her bedroom after dinner, was paralysed with fright on seeing the figure of a man at her dressing-table. At her entrance he turned and faced her, and so great was her terror she could not call out. Only when the burglar began to move towards the window did she find herself able to alarm the house. The man had, however, got safely down the verandah posts, and was well away before the hue and cry set up. The thief got nothing, though jewellery to the amount of some £80 was loose on the table, with several hundred pounds' worth close at hand in a strong box, enclosing a jewel-case.

In Dunedin they are equally busy and more successful. In addition to the residence of Mr Johnstone the house of Mr Shaw, at Driver's Road, Maori Hill, was also entered on Sunday evening by an individual of burglarious intentions. The circumstances in connection with the visit to Mr Shaw's residence show that the person who is making his unwelcome visits is rather a daring character. He made his entry into Mr Shaw's house shortly after seven o'clock, coming in by the back kitchen door. The house was lighted up at the time, and Mrs Shaw and two children were at home. Making coolly into the hall he peeped in at the door of the room in which Mrs Shaw was sitting, evidently wishing to see if anyone was there. One of the little girls saw him and cried out that there was a man in the house. Finding himself discovered the fellow bolted out at the back door again. He took with him a tall hat, which he had picked up in the hall. A young man coming down the road noticed him running out of the place and make off along the road as fast as he could. The action of the man was so very suspicious that he went inside to inform the family of what he had seen. Needless to say he found Mrs Shaw and her daughters considerably upset at the man's intrusion. Beyond the hat, which, however, was regained, as the thief threw it away just outside the gate, nothing was found missing. But this was not the burglar's fault. A description of the individual has been given to the police, and it will be not unpleasant news to the residents in Driver's Road if they learn that he has been brought to book.

Whether it is that there is a tendency towards litigation, or that people of Otago are bad payers, the fact is that Dunedin is a long way ahead of other large centres in the colony in the matter of Magistrates Court work (says the "Otago Daily Times"). The probabilities are that the heavy investments in dredging shares have a very great deal to do with it, as a large proportion of the cases called on are against those who, having bought shares, are perhaps willing to pay, but simply unable to do so. A little while back a northern newspaper announced as something extraordinary that over ninety cases had come before the magistrate; but that number sinks into utter insignificance when compared with the number of "blue papers" that come before the Stipendiary Magistrate here. Yesterday the total summonses brought under the notice of Mr Carey, S.M., was 109, but this is a long way short of the Court's record of 140. Of course, the published list of cases never indicates the real work of the Court, as the major portion of the cases are either confessed, adjudged, or struck out. Yesterday,

however, an unusual number of judgments were given.

The policy established by the Post and Telegraph Department in offering inducements to lads and others in the non-clerical division of the service to qualify for promotion, was continued during last year; and the Postmaster-General says it is gratifying to find that the spirit of emulation thus created has produced an increased desire for self-improvement among juniors in the service, and the consequent discovery of many promising officers.

At a recent meeting of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Christchurch, a letter was read from a lady interested in the work, drawing the attention of the Society to the fact that she knew of a boy who was giving way to all sorts of cruelty against animals. The boy's delight was to stick knives into pigs, tie fowls together by the tails, and to do other cruel acts of a similar nature. The writer expressed an earnest hope that the Society would look into the matter. The "Graphic" hopes so too, and that the young scoundrel will be well birched.

The Maoris, to the number of sixty, who were in camp in the Queen's Park, Invercargill, in connection with the Coronation celebrations, left for their homes at Colac and the Bluff after a very pleasant stay. On Thursday afternoon, after the bullock had been roasted, carved, and served to the large assemblage, the Mayor and Mayoress were invited by the chiefs to the Park, where Mrs H. D. Maire, wife of the Northern chief, and Mrs R. T. Maire, wife of the Colac chief, presented Mr and Mrs Longuet with several products of Maori handicraft, including a handbag, mats, a crown in dyed ribbonwood, a native skirt, and spear with carved head, as a token of their appreciation of the hospitable treatment they had received in Invercargill. His Worship suitably acknowledged the gifts, and complimented the visitors on the part they had taken in the celebrations.

A distressing fatality occurred at Spar Bush (Southland). A son of Mr John Buchanan, eighteen years of age, had been out shooting with a Remington rifle, and returned home in the afternoon with a cartridge in the barrel. He placed the firearm on the table, where it lay for a time, and the lad, sitting on a chair, was about to remove it, when it accidentally went off, the bullet striking his infant sister, three years of age, in the head, causing death, which took place several hours afterwards. The parents, to whom general sympathy will be extended, were away from home at the time. An inquest is to be held.

A unique experience befel several Hastings people whilst they were driving to the Napier Park races last week, reports a Napier exchange. The road between Tomoana and the Pakowhai bridge has been covered with about four feet of silt since the flood. This deposit, to some of those driving, proved a veritable bog. One party, in a buggy and pair, drove into the silt, until brought to a standstill, and it was nearly four o'clock in the afternoon before they were able to drag the buggy back again on to the metalled road, which was done with the assistance of a pair of draught horses attached to ropes. The buggy horses also had to be dragged out of the silt, which appears to be of a very sticky nature. Other traps were also bogged, and it was not until after several hours' work that they were released, when the people returned home instead of going to the races. An imprudent roadway has been formed by going through paddocks from Tomoana to the Pakowhai bridge, but most of the vehicles from Hastings went by the Shamrock Hotel or Fern Hill.

It is not every kind of cheating or imposition that brings a man within the summary jurisdiction of justices under the Police Offences Act. There is a penalty upon any person who imposes or endeavours to impose upon any person or charitable institution by any false or fraudulent representation, either verbal or in writing, with a view to obtain money or any other benefit or advantage. But this does not apply to cases of contract, in which one party gets an advantage over the other. Suppose, for instance, that someone sells you a horse

with a fraudulent warranty as to its condition, and so induces you to pay the purchase money for an animal that is, perhaps, almost totally worthless. There, it seems, you cannot have the seller convicted for an attempt to "impose" on you. It is true that he did impose, and that he did get a benefit that he would never have secured but for his fraudulent warranty. The Court, however, holds that the class of offences against which the provision in question is aimed is some imposition of a charitable sort, as where the accused has got your money by pretending a state of facts which he knows does not really exist. Where there is a contract, the buyer has some remedy in the civil courts, however shadowy it may be, and so the Courts decline to let him proceed under the enactment in question.

There was something approaching a panic, though of only a momentary sort, at the theatre, New Plymouth, on Thursday night. During a scene between the hero and heroine someone in the pit fainted, the heat and crush probably being too much for him. A cry was raised in the pit, which was probably "Air, air!" but sounded in the dress circle like "Fire, Fire!" People in the stalls jumped up to see what had happened, and the movement, probably wrongly interpreted, was instantly communicated to those in the dress circle, and a number of people, chiefly men who were near the back, made a rush for the main entrance. The usher and a few others called out "Keep your seats," "Sit down," etc., and the rush subsided as suddenly as it had begun, the knowledge that there was no danger immediately making people rather ashamed of their excitement.

At the Imperial Institute, London, when the last mail left, there were on exhibition the presents made to the Prince and Princess of Wales during their Empire tour last year. The London "Evening News" says: "The valuation placed on the presents by insurance experts at the Institute exceeds £40,000. There are objects, however, among them, such as the celebrated hat-crown of the chiefs of the Tsimpian tribe, presented by the Indians of Port Simpson to the Princess, the value of which could not be computed in coin. Prominent among the exhibits will be noted the flag of the Master of Trinity House, which H.R.H. hoisted for the first time on joining the Ophi, and which he is justified in looking upon as the first present of his tour. Among the scores of caskets presented to the Royal travellers, that which enclosed the address of the inhabitants of Kandy, of solid gold, richly studded with Colombian pearls, precious stones, and a star ruby, is perhaps the most valuable, as it costs some £2000. More striking, but hardly so valuable, is the casket presented with the address at Auckland (N.Z.) in the form of a Maori canoe, manned by seven boatmen, carrying golden paddles at the salute; the base is of greenstone, bearing the Royal arms in gold and enamel; at the top of each pillar is a golden kiwi, one of the New Zealand wingless birds. Many specimens of gold products were presented to the Prince, the most remarkable being that given by Brisbane, which is a large piece of gold-studded quartz, mounted and inscribed. One of H.R.H.'s most cherished gifts was the album of rare stamps given by the inhabitants of Sydney, the commercial value of the stamps to collectors being put down at many thousands of pounds. The famous luia feather, the emblem of chieftainship which was put in the Prince's hat by the Maori chiefs in token of allegiance, is also on view. At Brantford, in Canada, a historic gift was that of a silver casket containing the original long distance telephone; it was given by Professor Melville Bell, father of the inventor. The gift in South Africa of 173 pure water diamonds, weighing 261 carats, and worth several thousands of pounds, cannot but have been a very pleasing gift to so womanly a Princess as our future Queen. The Boer prisoners at Simonstown presented Her Royal Highness with several serviettes and a shield-shaped brooch, all made from Kruger coins. St. John's (N.B.) presented a superb mink rug, and at the same time a go-cart and silver harness for Prince Eddie, while the children of Toronto got up a cent subscription to provide a toy miniature city of Toronto for her other children. There are many gold-mounted ostrich

fans; the ladies of Brisbane gave a mirror in a gold frame, with Her Royal Highness' monogram in Australian jewels; a gold bouquet-holder, presented at Melbourne, serves also as a smelling-bottle. These are only a few notable exhibits from a large and deeply interesting collection.

A tale of the Sydney express: There was on board, amongst others, an American "drummer," who, having unavailingly spent much time and persuasion on Sydney traders, felt "curry tired." His fellow travellers, mostly Sydneyites, were discussing the lately-originated "South African Day," and one of them, turning to the man of commerce, remarked, "Say, old man, you're pretty strong on 'days' in the States, aren't you?" "Yes, that's so. Guess we've got Independence Day, and Thanksgiving Day, and there are others. But you folks out here have 'fixed' on one day that whips me. Yes, sir, and that day Sydney has made all her own, you bet." "The deuce she has. What's its name?" Then America beamed: "Well, boys, it's just this—'To-morrow.'"

One of those economical chorus girls, who occupy suites of rooms at the leading hotels on £2 5/ a week, concluded her day out at a Melb. shop by beckoning to her "boy" who stood sheepishly in the doorway. "What is it, my dear?" he asked respectfully. "I want you to pay for these," ordered the Queen with a sweep of her hand. "How much?" asked the docile male person. Her Majesty flared like a Roman candle. "How much?" she echoed scornfully. "How do I know?" and swaggered out to her brougham, leaving the unfortunate capitalist the centre of the grins of customers and shop girls, as he drew his cheque book from his pocket.

A good large lump of salt seems required with this yarn: In the offices of one of the great fruit companies in New York ping-pong is started in the directors' room as soon as office hours are over, and it is related that the office boy ignominiously defeated not long ago the vice-president of the trust. It is said that the magnate lost all his ready cash in backing himself in the contest, but as many millionaires in the State carry no more than enough to pay their car fares, this need not necessarily have been a very great blow to his financial stability. This game has also invaded Wall-street, and certain brokers have become so infatuated that they have hired a room and established a table in the Produce Exchange building, where they play every evening after the meeting of the board.

It was rather a noisy party in the bar parlour after the races, but during a momentary lull a keen-eyed hatchet-faced chap said, "Here, I'll bet a quid that no man in the room has got a more appropriate name for a backer of horses than mine!" It was his pet catch, and most of the company knew it, but a short stout stranger jumped up and said, "I'll take yer! Put up yer stuff with the landlord!" The two sovereigns having been staked, and the landlord appointed sole judge, the first speaker said with a triumphant smile, "Well, my name's Pickem!" "Mine's Chump," said the little fat stranger, and without a moment's hesitation the landlord gave his verdict—"Chump, in a walk!" He had been at the game himself.

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