

Topics of the Week.

Advance, Rotorua!

The public has no doubt arrived at the conclusion that in securing Mr Donne to superintend the Tourist Department, and Dr Wohlmann to supervise the Rotorua Sanatorium, the Government of New Zealand has achieved two of the most felicitous and prospectively remunerative investments made for some years past. The hands of both these gentlemen have been busy ever since their respective appointments, and already the results of their labours are so patent as to enforce recognition even from the most careless observer. But what has already been accomplished—and it is much—is a mere trifle to what is promised. Money is to be spent freely, and no effort is to be spared in making Rotorua one of the most pleasant, as it is assuredly one of the most curative and beneficial sanatoriums and health resorts in the world. New bath houses of a most elaborate and up-to-date stamp are to be erected, and many thousands of pounds are to be expended in utilising and improving the natural wonders of the district. But while the money is being so freely spent at Rotorua one might suggest that the equally valuable and delightful waters of Whakarewarewa might be made far more accessible to visitors. The oil bath at "Whaka" is perhaps the very finest and most pleasant to use in the whole thermal district, yet save to visitors to that charming host Mr Nelson, it is to all intents and purposes blocked to tourists. It is housed in a wretched little building, and can only accommodate a very limited number at a time. I understand a certain amount of what one may term the Rotorua grant, is to be allocated to Whakarewarewa, but the proportion has not been stated. I have no hesitation in saying it should be a large one, for Whakarewarewa has been unduly neglected from a bathing standpoint, and should now have its fair share—with back pay so to say—for its further development. At Rotorua a few hundred pounds might very well be spent in putting the Blue, the Duchess and Rachel Baths in white tiles. This would immensely add to their attractiveness and remove any possible misconception as to the cleanliness of the water. The advances made and the improvements promised at the Hot Lakes are subjects for our universal satisfaction; for unquestionably this marvellous district is one of our very finest national assets.

Maori Girls' School Bazaar.

Some months ago a brief article appeared on this page calling attention to the movement on foot for the holding of a garden fete and bazaar in connection with the proposed school for Maori girls. The date of the affair and certain details in connection therewith have now been arranged, and I therefore make no apology for returning to a subject which is, or should be, of interest and concern to every member of the community. It is not too creditable to our sense of what is right and just, or to our generous instincts, that it is only now that a movement for the better education of our Maori sisters should have come to a head. Such schools as that which it is now hoped to set upon a sound and prosperous career should really have existed in some numbers in different parts of the colony long ago. It may be said that our public schools offer free to Maoria, as well as to Europeans, the advantages of a liberal education. But this is mere paltering with the question, and skirting our responsibilities. Book-learning as acquired in the schoolroom is good, is indeed essential, but its value is enormously discounted, if not entirely lost, if there is no social training, no inculcating of those unwritten laws of conduct to our fellow men and women, without which life in a civilised community would be intolerable. There is no use imparting knowledge unless you also give instruction as to how to use, enjoy and take advantage of that know-

ledge. This in the case of our own children is, or should be (the distinction is, I fear, necessary), imparted at home. But it is to be feared that with the Maori race there is little of this. In fact, how can there be any till you educate the girls, who are to be the mothers of future generations? We provide excellent residential schools for Maori lads, and they turn out men as cultured, high-minded and useful as any nation might be proud to own. But where are the mates for these splendid specimens of a splendid race? We have educated them above the level of their women folk, and they must either be galled at having to take as life companions those who, however loving and lovable, cannot share the inner and intellectual life, or they must, as I know they do in many cases, forget the advantages of the training and education they have received, and sink back into the primitive conditions of the race. And this, good readers all, is not a question for anyone else but ourselves. We have the enjoyment of this exquisite land, which was the undoubted heritage of this Maori people. We have acquired it—acquired it fairly, but it is part of our moral bargain that we should look after their interests as if those interests were our own, as indeed they are. It is the duty of every man, woman and child in this community to do something to the establishment and upkeep of such institutions as the Maori Girls' School. There are other calls upon us, there are many deserving institutions desiring our support, but from none does the appeal come with more moral force than this. It is a responsibility we cannot shirk if we desire to do right. Exactly what our contributions should amount to is a matter each of us must arrange as our means and our sense of right dictates, but it is certain that even the humblest of us, even those with most calls upon us, should afford a trifle to a cause of such immense social importance to us as a colonial community.

Are Women Drinking More.

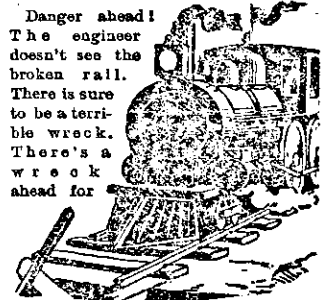
In such an essentially abstemious colony as New Zealand, the query put in the above heading may come with a somewhat unpleasant shock, and savour unduly of the sensational. And therefore, to start without giving a false impression of my meaning, let me affirm my belief that the general run of women in this colony are, to all intents and purposes, teetotalers, and that a more temperate community would be hard indeed, to find. But this is not the question. The majority, admittedly, are not merely temperate, but total abstainers; but is this majority decreasing—and are more women every year accustoming themselves to resorting, even in moderation, to alcohol as a pick-me-up and general stimulant? I fancy, and I should say, I fear, that the answer must be given in the affirmative. A few years ago, if one went out to spend the evening at a musical party or a round game of cards, spirit drinking amongst the ladies would have been thought the height of bad form. Now it is quite as usual to see young women—more especially those belonging to the set denominated as "smart"—taking their whisky and soda at such entertainments. I am not saying that at present they take too much—that would be a gross libel—but they take it, they enjoy it, and in not a few cases they display an obvious eagerness for supper time—not observable in teetotal days—which tells its own emphatic story of desire. There is, moreover, an increasing tendency amongst our New Zealand women to take stimulants during the day. At a recent race meeting not a hundred miles from Auckland, the amount of liquor semi-secretly consumed in the ladies' retiring and cloak rooms was, I understand, appalling, and some scenes nearly approaching the disgraceful were witnessed. It will be said, perhaps, by some, that here is another case of one law for the men and another for the women, and that for a woman to take a rather large quantity of stimulants should not be more shocking than for a man. And it is true. There is and must

be a separate law for women and men in this, as in many other matters of social ethics. If you ask, indignantly, "Why this is so?" echo must answer "Why? but the fact remains hard and fast, unjust and unfair as it may seem. Yet, in the matter of drinking, the law is altering for men. An improved moral code has arisen. For a man to be drunk even amongst men nowadays is considered discreditable even in a very loose set, and to be drunk in the presence of ladies is to become a social pariah. The shouting habit is dropping more and more into disrepute, and the habitual tippler, even if he does not get visibly drunk, is looked at more and more askance, not merely in business, where, indeed, his day is definitely done, but in social circles also, where his habit is regarded as that of a bore, and to bore nowadays is to sin unforgivably. This being so, it is a pity if the tendency to regard drinking by women as venial is on the increase. Women drink (and drink secretly also) in the Old Country to a fearful extent, and this and drug habits are working havoc amongst them in all grades of society. Thinking of this, and at the risk of being considered old-fashioned and out-of-date, I must confess I am sorry to see young women taking even the most moderate amount of spirits save as medicine. Wines and beer, etc., are different. They are frequently beneficial and not seldom necessary, but to see women drinking whisky and soda as a convivial beverage is personally repugnant, and the increase of the practice is, I feel, my readers will agree, not a good or creditable thing for us as a colonial community.

and even stockbrokers, so that the indignant aristocrats have been driven to this expedient of making the regiment too hot for intruders for them to care to remain. The whole evil, it will be seen, is in making the sole aim of officerdom in these regiments social prestige and pleasure. The men who enter as officers do not do so, in the majority of cases, with any idea of spending their lives as soldiers of the King. They merely use the regiment as they use school and college, a training in life, and from a pleasurable point of view, as they use their clubs. The study of their profession is secondary to the pursuit of pleasure, and they usually throw up their commissions directly they succeed to the great fortunes and estates to which so many of them are heirs. This state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue if certain regiments are to be well officered. The matter aroused much comment in the early and more disastrous days of the war, when it was painfully evident that several of those in positions of responsibility did not know their business. It was then stated that when peace was declared and the opportune time had arrived there would be stringent reforms in the direction desired. Up to now no great effort seems to have been made in this direction. It is to be hoped that the latest scandal will turn attention so much to the affair that a thorough purging of evil and social influences will take place, and that in future we shall hear no more of scandal or inefficiency amongst the officers of our crack cavalry regiments.

The Grenadier Guards Scandal.

The Grenadier Guards outrage, and the consequent scandal which has arisen therefrom, will, despite its incredible brutality, not have been altogether without its uses if it once more and for the last time rouses public indignation against certain gross abuses connected with the officers of our army. This is by no means the first time similar discreditable outrages have disgraced certain regiments. Some twelve or fifteen years ago, as some readers may remember, disclosures were published showing how a crack cavalry regiment had, by systematic bullying, blackguarding, boycotting and "hazing," driven some young officers from the regiment, simply because the smart set ruling affairs did not think the birth and breeding of the youngsters sufficiently good to render them fit to associate with beings so high and mighty and superior as themselves. The object of this set has been to make certain regiments as strictly private as the most exclusive clubs. With the enormous rise of the upper middle classes in wealth and social prestige, the older families have, however, found it impossible to keep what they would consider the objectionable out. The style and expense of living have been designedly set as high as possible, in order to make the entrance to the mess prohibitive to all except the enormously wealthy. But this has failed to exclude the sons of wealthy merchants



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