

# "The New Zealand Graphic."

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# Here and There.

A posthumous paper by the late M. de Blowitz, the famous Paris correspondent of the "Times," appears in the August number of "Harper's." It deals with the inside history of How Bismarck Retired, and is said to reveal for the first time the true story of that important event in German politics.

Jerome K. Jerome is writing a new book of short essays, similar to "The Second Thoughts of an Idle Fellow." The book will contain numerous illustrations. It is said to be the most finished book of its kind that has appeared for some time. The title will be "Tea-Table Talks."

To illustrate the rapidity of thought, a famous scientist says that if the skin is touched repeatedly with light blows from a small hammer the brain will distinguish the fact that the blows are separate, and not continuous pressure, even when they follow one another as rapidly as one thousand a second.

Louis Couder, a sculptor of Montreux, in France, is sixty-eight years of age, and his beard measures a little over seven feet. When he was only fourteen he heard was a foot and a half long. He wears most of it inside his waistcoat, and he asserts that his life-long exemption from colds and chills is due to its protecting influence.

A strange tale has shocked Melbourne society—the announcement that the late Hon. Duncan Gillies, (ex-Premier and ex-Speaker) was not a bachelor, as the world had generally understood him to be. It transpires that the marriage took place in London during Mr. Gillies' term as Agent-General, and that the lady was well connected in English society. Mr. Gillies left no will, and there were no children of the marriage.

A director of an American railway has a private car which is fitted up in a novel manner. All its chairs, cushions and bed mattresses are constructed on the pneumatic principle. At night the seat cushions are emptied of air, folded and packed snugly away, and the larger cushions for the beds are brought out of their place of concealment in the sides of the car, and pumped full. It is said that these pneumatic cushions greatly reduce the fatigue of a railway journey, and that in time they may cause a revolution in the building of palace and sleeping cars.

Good progress is being made now with the North Island Main Trunk railway works. Men are now engaged erecting station houses and other buildings as far along as Piraka. At this station several houses are to be built, and several carpenters are required. Mr H. Ferguson, of the Labour Bureau, states, however, that as the building trade is brisk locally it is hard to get carpenters. The Bureau is prepared to send a few carpenters up with free passes over the railway, and while they have to work under the co-operative system, care will be taken that they do not receive less than union wages.

E. Phillips Oppenheim, author of "The Traffickers" and other well-known books, is publishing a new novel. It will be called "The Yellow Crayon." The author tells about the Order of The Yellow Crayon, a secret society, composed of the nobles of the earth, and instituted for united action against Anarchists and Socialists. Its titular head is the Emperor of Austria, while the real chief is an unprincipled scoundrel, in spite of his lofty title of Prince. The members of the order were under oath to obey to the letter all commands written in yellow pencil of a peculiar shade. A certain Duc's wife was ordered to take part in an attempt upon some high English Government officials, but her husband notified the Emperor of Austria and the order is crushed.

At White Cliffe, New South Wales, William Hicks, working by himself on the open country, a few weeks ago made a splendid discovery of opal at fifteen feet from the surface. Hicks encountered a big vertical seam going down in the shaft. It opened out on beautiful opal, estimated to be worth £300. The opal was mostly in large stones of excellent quality. A rush set in as a result, and the ground has been pegged out for some distance in every direction.

It was reported at the meeting of the Council of the New Zealand Wheelmen, held in Christchurch last week, that a suggestion had been made from Australia that J. Armstrong, winner of the Warrnambool-Melbourne road race, should be sent by Australasian subscriptions to compete in next year's Paris-Bordeaux race, the leading road event in the Old World. It was decided to write to the Union Velocipedique de France, stating that if the Bordeaux-Paris race were run unopposed New Zealand might be represented.

A provincial firm in England recently issued the following advertisement:—"Wanted, a boy who never saw a game of football: one who does not know the difference between a drop-kick and a penalty. To such a treasure a liberal salary will be paid." To this the following answer was printed:—"A boy, answering such requirements and specifications would not be worth his salt. He wouldn't be worth the powder to blow him up. He would be too dead to bury. He would not have life enough to crawl off and die."

A return of religious instruction given in the schools of the Auckland district on school-days before or after school hours was presented to the Education Board last week. The return showed that such instruction was given in 27 schools, and that in ten instances clergymen were the instructors. The denominations included in the return were Church of England, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Methodist, Congregational, Baptist, Church of Christ, and Salvation Army, while in about half a dozen cases the instructors were classed as undenominational.

An old man who recently died in a London lodginghouse lived there for twenty years, never spoke to a fellow-lodger, and was only heard to speak there when paying the landlord sixpence for his bed. Every morning he fringed away with a leather bag to the Houses of Parliament. Outside here he picked up all the cigar and cigarette ends. This process was repeated in the main West End streets, down the Strand, and through the Temple. He made his "find," which usually weighed over 2lbs. into 2d packets, and sold them to the lads employed in Southwark and Blackfriars work-shops as they left their work.

At Kotuku, on the West Coast of the South Island, the Cooper Oil Syndicate has started boring with the Harbour Board's diamond drill, and have now reached solid sandstone at a depth of 120 feet. Hot saline water geysers, struck in two of the other bores, at a little over 400 feet in depth, are still active, and sending up streams, one continuously and the other at hourly intervals. The sediment is of a faint pinkish white colour, encrusting the ground round about, and apparently will form in time something of the nature of the North Island terrace formation.

The competition of electric railways is being felt by the great steam trunk lines in Great Britain. The Great Western Railway, for example, has been forced in self-defence to introduce motor cars to serve as feeders to the railway in the country districts. These will hereafter run between the stations and outlying towns and villages to pick up the passenger traffic and connect with the regular trains. These motor cars are to be operated, however, by steam power. Each one will accommodate fifty-two passengers, all seated.

Mange in dogs is due to the presence of a parasite in the skin, which should be cleaned well with soap and warm water. An ointment made as follows is then applied to the affected parts: Pot. sulphurata, 1oz; prepared lard, 8oz.

A remarkable instance of a prayer promptly answered is told in the "Social Gazette" by Adjutant Pruden, who has charge of the Salvation Army Metro-pole at Bethnal Green, England. When he was in charge of the Army's Leeds home he was anxious to make some alterations in the establishment. "I was loth to do so without some tangible evidence that the cost of these alterations would be forthcoming. After prayer, however, I decided to have the work begun. Next morning a gentleman called on me, and stated that a friend of his in America had sent him a sum of money to hand to the Salvation Army. He gave me the money, which was the exact amount required for the alteration."

The Synod of Waiapu considered the teaching of Maori among its clergy, and passed the following resolution: "That the Synod respectfully asks the Senate of the University of New Zealand to include Maori as one of the optional subjects for the matriculation examination of the University, as the Synod considers that such a subject should be fostered equally with subjects like Latin or Italian in connection with the education of the Maoris, who, in the preparation of English, have already to prepare what to them is a foreign language."

A missionary to a South African tribe has translated Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" into the language of the people. The illustrations have a modern and unusual aspect, but serve to make the story plainer to the understanding of dwellers in that region. The "slough of despond" is the mud hole of the "veld." Christian starts from a "kraal." A war dance feast serves to represent Vanity Fair. Apollyon is a formidable creature, having the head of a wolf, the scales and tail of a crocodile, and the eyes of an owl. Genius like Bunyan's has the whole world for its sphere of influence, and the dullest intellect in the darkest portion may catch some gleam of that wonderful light.

Information has reached the colony that some two hundred tourists from Canada, who have chartered two special steamers to convey them on a tour round the British colonies, will probably arrive in New Zealand early next year. Their movements are at present uncertain, but they are expected in Australia in November. Should the party visit New Zealand, as in all probability it will, ample opportunity will be afforded the Canadians of inspecting the varied and, in many respects, absolutely unique scenery of both the North and South Islands, and, needless to say, a warm welcome will be extended to them by brother colonials.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward lately expressed her opinion that George Meredith, as a novelist, created by his genius his own public. To illustrate how this can be done she told a story of Ludovic Halevy and a drawing of a dancer by the impressionist, Degas. The artist gave the picture to Halevy, who proudly showed it to his wife, and presently they were disputing as to which was the head and which the feet of the dancer. Their friends, one by one, took part in the dispute, which was not settled until study of the impressionist's drawing resulted in comprehension. Then everybody could tell at a glance where the head was and where the feet, and wondered that he had ever been blind to the beauty of the sketch. So it was with Meredith, thought Mrs Ward; one must study him long enough to comprehend him before enjoying his books, but afterward the enjoyment was lasting. And because Meredith's books are now read by the thousand where they were once read by the score, Mrs Ward assumes that the multitude have learned to comprehend him. All of which, though kindly, seems to be dubious praise of a novelist. A writer in "The London Chronicle" strongly combats Mrs Ward's view. "Lots of us," he declares, "are true-blue Meredithians, but how many were brought into the fold by conversion? We are what we are by abounding grace; but the others, so far as I have observed, remain unconscious of their forlorn condition."

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