

# Topics of the Day.

By Our London Correspondent.

## TRAGIC SIDE OF MARRIAGE.

LONDON, June 10.

**W**EDDINGS be funerals, a b'lieve, nowadays," says a robust old housewife in one of Thomas Hardy's novels, who marvelled at the marriage tragedies happening around her. One recalls old Mrs. Edlin's words in perusing the evidence being given before the Royal Commission on divorce. Cruelly, unfaithfulness, desertion, habitual drunkenness, lunacy—these are the sad fruits of the marriages with which the Royal Commission is concerned. If a stranger to the modern world were to come across reports of the Divorce Commission, he might well be excused for thinking that of all states of human misery modern marriage is about the worst!

The real problem before the Commission is to decide what is moral and what is immoral. Commissioners, witnesses, and public are all agreed that the object to be aimed at is maintenance of a high standard of social morality, but when it comes to an interpretation of that very abstract phrase in terms of human relationships, great are the differences of opinion revealed. Some there are among the witnesses who still oppose divorce on the ground that marriage is a holy sacrament which man-made laws can never annul. Such people regard as immoral the marriage of divorced persons, holding that the original marriage remains a sacred bond in spite of the Divorce Court. Other witnesses—representing no doubt a considerable body of educated opinion—assume that when love is dead husband and wife are better parted, on moral as well as social grounds. Can a loveless union be a moral one, even though it has the sanction of the church? And ought anyone to be immoral for moral reasons? Such are the questions which their evidence seems to answer in the negative.

Such views as these, it may be noted, are declared to be very rare among the very class for whom greater facilities for divorce are now being sought. The wife of an East End vicar, who has worked among the poor for eighteen years, told the Commission that she had never heard of one case where a man or woman among them had desired divorce, however unhappy their marriages had proved. They accepted as binding upon them the words of the sacrament, "For better for worse." Rough, even brutal, men and women, said the vicar's wife, held by the firm conviction that husband and wife were one till death. Against this, however, must be placed the testimony of magistrates and others brought into close touch with the poor, to the effect that many couples who have separated without being divorced, form lawless unions almost as a matter of course.

## FORTUNE FROM A PHRASE.

Sir George Newnes, whose death occurred this week, owed his fortune to a happy thought—a sudden idea, which, awakened by a casual phrase, altered the whole course of his life, and started him on the high road to financial success.

The story goes that one evening, when he was sitting at home reading, Mr. Newnes, as he then was, suddenly looked up from the paper before him, and remarked to his wife concerning a certain paragraph which he had just read: "That's what I call a real tit-bit." In that remark lay the germ of one of the most remarkable newspaper successes of modern times. For Mr. Newnes was quick to conceive the idea that in a paper consisting entirely of such "tit-bits" there might be a fortune, and in due course the truth of this was abundantly proved.

For a time other business connected with Mr. Newnes' post in the city prevented the project from being proceeded with, but in a year Mr. Newnes had completed his plan, and in the October of 1881, when he himself was just thirty years of age, the first number of "Tit-Bits" was published in Manchester, and the paper leaped at a bound into immediate success. In Manchester alone 5,000 copies were sold in two hours, and Mr. Newnes soon found that he must give all his attention to his new venture.

How lavishly and in what ingenious ways "Tit Bits" was advertised is well remembered. Its proprietor started the now widely-adopted system of newspaper insurance coupons, and it was with "Tit Bits" that some of the most remarkable competitions ever known were associated. One of the prizes offered was a ten-roomed house, another was £2 a week for life, another a berth on the staff of the paper—which latter, by the way, led to the post being secured by Mr. C. Arthur Pearson, who afterwards



FINLAND AT THE STRANGLING POST.

Nicholas: "You must die; but I will do it gently. It is my nature to be gentle!"

(The civic and political rights which Finland had won for her people were recently swept away with one stroke of the pen by the Czar of Russia. Thus once more does the most cruel and greedy autocracy of the age strangle one of the most democratic and enlightened States in Europe.)

founded the "Daily Express," and acquired the "Standard" and many other papers.

Sir George Newnes once started in the newspaper business, never looked back. He founded the "Strand Magazine," the "Review of Reviews," the "Westminster Gazette," and other magazines and journals, and built up a great publishing business.

## SINGER AT 107.

Still sprightly and in perfect health, King George's oldest subject in the British Isles, Mrs. Rebecca Clarke, entered this week upon her 107th year. She celebrated her birthday at the home of her son, at Wood Green, London N. Mrs. Clarke, a well-preserved dame, who looks no more than eighty, still takes a keen enjoyment in life. Every Friday, if the weather is fine, she walks up a stiff hill to the local post office, some 500 yards from her home, to draw her pension, and declares that the journey is not a bit too much for her.

Her eyesight is still so good that she has not yet taken to glasses. She threads her own needle when she wishes to do a little sewing.

"You see," I do not feel old," smilingly explained this wonderful old lady. "I got up about ten o'clock, and this time of the year I go to bed soon after eight o'clock. Do I have a nap during the day?

No, of course not! Why, I should feel ashamed of myself if I did such a thing. "My appetite is capital, and I enjoy my food as much as ever. Today, for dinner, I had a mutton chop, potatoes, bread and some sweet pudding. But I can eat anything, and I like a hard crust. I have been a teetotaler for the last forty years, and I do not feel the need of any stimulant, but I find a nice cup of tea very refreshing in the afternoon. I am quite looking forward to my birthday to-morrow, and I do hope the sun will shine."

"I can still sing a song—one of the old ones—to my great-grandchildren when they come to see me, and I can go through the steps of the old dances which were popular when I was a girl. I have no ache or pain, but I am not quite so firm on my feet as I used to be."

## SLUGGISH LIVER AND SPLITTING HEADACHES.

BILE BEANS, THE HOUSEWIFE'S FRIEND.

Mrs. J. C. Wilson, of Broad-street, off Bamford street, Woolston, N.Z., says:—"For years I was afflicted with a sluggish liver. At times I was completely prostrated so that I was unable to attend to my ordinary household duties. I would have severe attacks of biliousness, accompanied with splitting headaches, which would make me feel awfully dizzy, sick and ill. I was also a victim to constiveness, and in time my general health gave way altogether and I was reduced to a physical wreck. I consulted medical men, and tried many medicines, but without gaining any relief whatever. One day when I was awfully ill a friend persuaded me to test Bile Beans in my case. I did so, and after the first few doses began to feel I was on the road to recovery. I continued with Bile Beans; and the attacks of dizziness, sickness and headaches gradually ceased. Soon all traces of constiveness disappeared and I was perfectly free from all the ailments which had been a burden to me and made my existence miserable. In practically a short time I was completely cured by Bile Beans. Whenever I feel at all out of sorts or run-down a few Bile Beans soon set me right."

Bile Beans are the married woman's friend, and every mother should always keep a box by her. For the growing daughter or the mother Bile Beans are an excellent corrective, and a timely dose of Bile Beans will prevent much unnecessary pain and misery. Bile Beans are sold by all chemists and stores.



If your appetite needs coaxing, try "SKIPPER" Sardines—the dainty fish with the tempting taste.

**'SKIPPER' Sardines**

If your grocer does not stock them, kindly send his name and address to HENRY BLACKMAN, Box 670, Wellington.

ANGUS WATSON & CO., Newcastle-on-Tyne, England.

## RUPTURE CURED.

STUART'S PLASTER-PADS are different from the ordinary ones, and being self-adhesive they hold the rupture in place without straps, buckles, or strings, causing no pain, and do not chafe or irritate the skin. The pads contain a powerful medicine which not only cures the rupture, but also cures the most obstinate piles. If you have a rupture, or piles, or any other ailment, send for a trial of treatment. Write to-day, and "Trial Treatment" will be sent FREE. Address: STUART'S PLASTER-PAD CO., W.G. 66-67, Store Street, London E.C.4.

## P. AND O. STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY.

Steamers for LONDON, calling at SYDNEY, MELBOURNE, ADELAIDE, FREMANTLE, COLOMBO, ADEN, MANSELES, GIBRALTAR, and FLY-MOUTH, with liberty to call at RHINDESI, as under, enquiring at Port Said with the 29-knot steamers ISLIS and GIBRIS for Brindisi.

Steamers.	Tons.	Captains.	Leave Sydney.
MONGOLIA ..	10,000	C. F. Preston, R.N.R.	July 31
MARMORA ..	10,000	C. H. C. Weston, R.N.R.	Aug. 13
MOREA ..	11,000	W. L. Brown, R.N.R.	Aug. 27
MOLITAN ..	10,000	W. H. P. Sweny, R.N.R.	Sept. 10
GIENA ..	8,000	E. Street	Sept. 21
INDIA ..	8,000	R. W. Haddock, R.N.R.	Oct. 8

Steamers.	Tons.	Captains.	Leave Auckland approximately.
Mongolia ..	10,000	C. F. Preston, R.N.R.	Nov. 23
Mooltan ..	10,000	G. C. Henning, R.N.R.	Dec. 21
Mantua ..	11,000	F. W. Vibert, R.N.R.	Jan. 14
Marmora ..	10,000	C. H. C. Weston, R.N.R.	Feb. 15
Mongolia ..	10,000	C. F. Preston, R.N.R.	Mar. 15
Mooltan ..	10,000	G. C. Henning, R.N.R.	April 12

(\*Calling at Holart.)

RATES OF PASSAGE MONEY.—Single to London, £17 6s to £24; Return £24 10s and £32; available for two years. Tourist's Tickets to India, China, and Japan. Special Holiday Tickets to Colombo, available for two months. Return fares from Sydney, £11, First Saloon; £21, Second Saloon; plus 10 per cent. Passengers can be paid here for passages from England. Passengers arriving in Sydney by vessel connecting clearance may proceed on board at once.

Passengers embarking at Auckland for Australian Ports and Europe have the privilege of staying on board during steamer's detention at Sydney.

These Steamers are installed with wireless telegraphy. For Freight and Passage, apply direct to RUSSELL & BOMERS, Custom Street West, Auckland.