

part of her sex all desire for such honours. The lady's humility was shown by the estimation placed by her on the abilities of existing Members, to whose intellectual level, she expressed a belief, some women might possibly in 10 or 15 years attain. The Parliament now existing she defined as "The Wellington Farce of Follow my Leader to the tune of £240 a year," adding that no more ability was required for playing the part of Member than for playing lawn tennis.

"Her Cherished Idol—Alice (sobbing): 'What can be more cruel or heartrending than the disappointment a girl suffers when she discovers that her ideal is unworthy, that her cherished idol has but feet of clay?' Kitty (consoling): 'It is terrible, my dear; an' Mr Notman's feet were the biggest part of him.'"

Indifferent, meantime, as, according to the President, the Legislative Chamber is, the Legislative Council is much worse. "A most material modification of their powers of veto" is the mildest correction which the lady proposes.

The address in short, was throughout a glorification of petticoat government. In fact an improvement on that motto which these ladies propose for their combined political organisation "The New Zealand women's Federal Council" would be "Self-righteousness (rather than righteousness) exalteth the nations." These ladies evidently regard themselves as strongly—even violently, exhaling the odour of sanctity, and they are firmly convinced that on them—and on them alone—the salvation of the country, if not of the world, depends.

"A gouty old gentleman, after making his will, called his serving man and remarked: 'Michael, I've left you in my will all the impudence I possess.' Michael: 'I'm glad to see by your generosity I inherit the greater part of your estate.' 'Well, well, Michael, you have come into your inheritance remarkably soon.'"

The Presbyterian Synod of Otago has also expressed a "down" on the Legislative Council. The Synod's temperance report lays it to the blame of the Council that the Liquor Bill introduced by Government has not been passed in a satisfactory form.

Of the cause of temperance generally the report takes a hopeful view. It thinks, however, that "the spirit of aggressive work is perhaps lacking"—in which probably old toppers and their kind will discern something of a threat. The Clutha district is referred to commendably and the Clutha report—to which we recently alluded as defective in grammar but gushing in confidence—is quoted.

"'My task in life,' said the pastor complacently, 'consists in saving young men.' 'Ab,' replied the maiden with a soulful longing 'save a good one for me.'"

Among the methods proposed for the advancement of the cause is another experiment on that *corpus vile* the schoolboy. He is to have a text book on alcoholism and its effect on the human system introduced into his course. No doubt it will be comparatively harmless. The schoolboy, as a rule, is not yet advanced enough to seek a common relief from an enforced attention to dry subjects.

"'Schoolmaster: 'What's your father?' New Boy: 'Dead.' Schoolmaster: 'No, no. What was he?' New Boy: 'Buried.' Schoolmaster: 'No, before that, I mean.' New Boy: 'Alive, sir.'"

The Legislative Council, however, remains under a cloud. It may be a question for Governors in future to consider as to whether sanctioning appointments to it does not involve a complicity in demoralisation. The majority of the hon Councillors are evidently, to say the least of it, no better than they ought to be. It would be impolite not to receive the dictum of the Women's Franchise League, and disrespectful not to regard the Presbyterian Synod.

What are we to understand, therefore, of the defensive condition of New South Wales? The Colonial Secretary says the colony was never in a better state of defence. He, at the same time, accepts an authoritative statement to the effect that certain high military officers fail in qualifications and that large quantities of the powder on hand are useless. For efficient defence, he explains, there must be a larger expenditure. On the whole it seems reasonable for us to conclude that—if, in the respect in question, there was never a better state of things, bad, as the saying is, has been the best.

Lord Salisbury boasts great things of the late elections. He claims them as the turning point in the political history of the Empire. There is, however, a turn down as well as a turn up. Lord Salisbury must wait a little while to realise which has been taken. Meantime, he promises aid to the farming industry. He evidently judges, and judges rightly, that a steadier and less critical support

might be gained in the country districts than in the towns. Foreign opinion, as we have seen, expected something—it did not exactly know what—from Lord Salisbury. His Lordship's appeal to the conservatism of Hodge—through his personal interests—is clever, if—considering the power attained to by the towns—it is not too late.

"Magistrate (to prisoner): 'Way did you leave that town?' 'Didn't think I was strong enough, your worship, to bring the town with me.' He was sent to prison for fourteen days in order that he might guess again."

Sir Robert Stout's periodical charge against the Government, with respect to advertisements, is not borne out by the Parliamentary returns. From these it may be seen that the Opposition papers have had a very fair share in the plunder. We do not know that it is the first time for Sir Robert Stout to make a mistake—periodical or otherwise. We should be rash to predict that it would be the last. Still, they say, it is never too late to mend.

Here is news that seems to promise at least a postponement of any immediate breach of the peace. The Czar, we are told, has fixed his coronation for May 18. If the Czar can help it, then, nothing will occur during the intervening months to prevent the ceremony from taking place or to mar its splendour. Those who recollect the Crimean war will remember the coronation that followed it—that of Alexander II—as particularly marking the reconciliation of Russia with her late enemies. May the coming event be more propitious still, as further promotive of friendships that have not been broken.

*On dit*, that a uniform consolidated debt, proposed for colonial federation, would save, in interest, one million per annum, or sufficient to cover the cost of federal government; that a man at Ballarat named Kelly has invented a torpedo to fly as well as dive, and render protecting nets useless to ships; that French opinion pronounces Russia unlikely to neglect a chance of squeezing China; that an expedition of British troops against the Ashantees is impending; that the French have annexed certain islands in the Society group; that it should be cheering to Mr Seddon and others to learn that the Dunedin Women's Franchise League take a "watchful interest" in them.

The bicycle also, it would appear, has been pressed into the service of Satan. Not that, in horns and hoofs—with a tail or without it,—a tail, too, would form a remarkable adornment for the wheels, he visibly figures on them. But invisibly he occasionally sits behind, or, possibly, avoiding the traditional place of his offspring, pallid death, before the rider, directing his course. The bicycle also, in a word, is made an instrument of Sabbath-breaking. So much we learn from the report on religion delivered to the Presbyterian Synod. Religion generally, in fact is not in quite so flourishing a condition as it might be. But here is the climax:—"Pleasure-seeking is also spoken of as involving serious desecration of the Lord's Day. It appears in several forms, such as bicycling, fixing football and cricket matches on a Saturday, feasting the visiting teams afterwards, and sending them to their homes on Sunday not always in the best mood for being considerate of the feelings of others. Shooting and fishing are also indulged in by some. Even amongst professing Christians, who have a regard for the sanctity of the day, it is reported that Sabbath visiting, not for religious edification, but for ordinary social intercourse, is common.

"Bacon: 'Did you notice Miss Fussanfeathers on her wheel to-day?' Egbert: 'No, I didn't, and she ran into me.'"

Sanity, then, can take strange shapes. So much, at least, we seem to gather from the following cablegram, dated London, October 29.

"The Lunacy Commission has released Miss Lanchester, aged 24, whom her parents seized and confined in an asylum owing to her desire to live with Socialist agitators without marriage."

A defeat of the French Ministry took place last week, by a momentary union of Socialists and Conservatives, on a question of inquiring into a recent railway scandal. A new Ministry has consequently been found, with M. Bourgeois for Premier. Under the circumstances of the times the new Minister for War may possibly also attain to exceptional prominence. He is M. Cavaignac.

An official announcement has been made of the engagement of Princess Maude of Wales to the son of the Crown Prince of Denmark—the prince, that is, to whose rational ideas of human nature, even as contained in royal vessels, we referred a week or two since. His royal consort, perhaps, may give him a better conceit of himself. The marriage, meantime, will be, once more, a family affair—bride and bridegroom being first cousins.