

"Early days of Home Rule" is the title of a lecture to be delivered by Mr J. P. McAlister, barrister, etc. (of the firm of Toie and McAlister). The greater part of it will embrace personal reminiscences. Mr McAlister, during the early days of Home Rule, was private secretary to the late Isaac Butt. Aucklanders, certainly the Irish portion, are favoured by having such a person in their midst to relate the story of Home Rule by one who took an active part in its inception. It will be under the auspices of the Irish National Federation, the proceeds to be devoted to the Irish Parliamentary Fund. The president, the Hon J. A. Toie, will preside, and a large audience is expected. The date of the lecture is to be fixed at to-night's meeting of the Federation.

We have to go from home to hear news. The Sydney *Bulletin* of September 9th, says:—"In Maoriland native lands are exempt from taxation, therefore immense areas of white capitalists' land are now registered as belonging to Natives, who hold them in trust." This is a serious allegation against those who at all times express pious horror at the devious means of the proletariat. How to cope with it is the question.

The Choral Society on last Tuesday week rendered most successfully Cowen's beautiful cantata "St. John's Eve." The principal soprano part was taken by one of our young Catholic ladies, Miss O'Sullivan, who possesses a voice of rare excellence. Rich, mellow, and powerful, combined with great expression and taste, and a clear enunciation, quite devoid of affectation, it is no wonder that the young lady in question has at one bound stepped into the foremost place amongst our local vocalists. Commenting upon her recent effort, the *Evening Star* said: "Miss O'Sullivan afforded some evidence of the great power of her voice in the higher notes, where she reveals most gracefully to the charm of her auditors." A local professor of music has gone so far as to say that Miss O'Sullivan has a fortune in her hands, which I quite believe. She is also a splendid pianist. The Sisters of Mercy (Ponsonby) are to be complimented upon the great success achieved by their brilliant pupil, and I will be sadly disappointed if, in the musical world, she does not become a gem of the first water.

"Whether is the pulpit or the stage most conducive to the moral welfare of the people?" was debated one evening last week; where, above all places, would you imagine? In a coterie similar to that over which the ultra-Radical with the handle to his name, and his *protège*, the Hon Bolt, presided in Dunedin some time back, you say. Not at all, but under the eaves of an Anglican Church in the suburbs, and in a society under the *ægis* of that church, and above all, the good pastor attended and championed the pulpit. All to no purpose, for the devotees of Thespis gave the pulpit second place. This is in accord with the times. Mundane *versus* spiritual affairs are as six to one. "Our splendid educational system" takes possession of our youth for six days, instilling into them the world—the world only relaxing for one day in favour of the spiritual with the result as above. We are pacing it fast, very fast, indeed, *Messieurs*.

We have in one of the State schools in our midst a pedagogue loyal to the core. Two or three times a week he assembles the children under his care in order to have them sing "God Save the Queen." So enthusiastic did this loyalist become the other day at the conclusion of the anthem that he doffed his *caubeen* and called for three cheers for the Princess May and the Duke of York. When George Augustus Sala returned home he said the colonists were not loyal. What would he have said to this? The Empire is still safe!

The lowest tender for the Devonport waterworks was L3864, the tender above it was also under L4000. The engineers' estimate was L4600, upon hearing which the lowest tenders asked the Council leave to withdraw, which, after demur, they did. The lowest tender then was Messrs Cole and Moody, L4136 5s 6d, and they have intimated their willingness to proceed with the work. Devonport will ere long prosper by this great boon.

The Female Franchise is the question of questions with us. It absorbs all others. What will be its effects? Will it benefit most the "ins" or the "outs"? Will they vote for Prohibition or Moderation? You hear that the moral standard of our public men will be raised. Each political organisation vies with the other in offering facilities for enrolling the "new power." It is amusing and instructive to watch the tactics of quondam enemies and lukewarm friends of the woman suffrage. Those who had been most assiduous in carrying around petitions against the granting of the "boon" are now as busy wooing the fair ones. The enemies of yesterday are the friends of to-day. It has always been, and is ever likely to be, in the game of politics. Meanwhile, hundreds of women are registering. With time alone rests an answer to the queries above. Discarding them all, let us ask ourselves how will the "new power" affect us who form the one-seventh? It goes without saying that I refer to the education question. In this respect we claim but our own. We do not desire to wrong or hurt the present system. We wish to perfect it. Knowing and feeling this, let us march onward, conscious of ultimate and complete victory. Register and organise; these are the means to that end. Depend upon it, we will be sought

after, the enemies of yesterday will be the friends of to-day, and will espouse our cause as a means to their ends. Put in motion our latent power, nothing daunted by defeat, for victory is awaiting us.

I watched one afternoon last week a break load of women en route to Onehunga, there to address a public meeting. There are those, and plenty, who agree with this, but the majority would, I think, say "Better for them to stay at home." At the meeting in question one woman said, "Women should educate themselves politically, as men did not care for dolls of women." The chairwoman capped this by saying that "one effect of the women in politics would be to have less talk in Parliament and more work." This reminded me of the story of a celebrated doctor who, with a number of lady friends, visited a cave wherein lay a lot of human skulls. "That, and that, and that is a female skull," said the doctor. "How can you tell," enquired one of the ladies. The doctor replied "by the marked difference in the amount of jaw which denotes the female skull." Among the many virtues likely to accrue to us under the new regime talk, of whatever kind, is sure to find a congenial home in the political woman.

Here is a remarkable case. A bankrupt named J. E. Banks had placed in the Union Bank for him by his mother and brother a sum of £400. The Official Assignee, Mr Lawson, took proceedings to secure for the creditors in the estate the said sum. Judge Connolly decided in favour of the defendants, with costs against the plaintiff, who found himself in an awkward position, as the judge ruled that he must pay the costs out of his private purse. The law as interpreted is no doubt sound, but not equitable. The Official Assignee will in future say to creditors, "You had better try yourselves."

DIED WHILE IN PRAYER.

"Another man was found in a kneeling posture, his face buried in his hands, as if he had died in prayer."

I clip this pathetic sentence from an account of the St Etienne coal mine disaster which occurred in France, in December, 1891. The fire had been smouldering for years in a remote part of the mine but its further advance had been stopped by barriers. Yet they proved insufficient at, and the terrible fire-damp exploded, scattering death throughout the mine. Such incidents are too well-known in England to need further explanation or comment.

Has it ever struck you that the interior of the human body is like the interior of a coal mine? Well, it is. All the operations go on in solitude and darkness. Gases are engendered in it that are just as dangerous as fire-damp. Generally they—yet hold on, let's have the little story first.

It's about a woman. In fact, it's from her, too, and is sure to interest somebody; may be you. She says that a long run of time, from childhood to years after her marriage, she never knew what illness was; that is, so as to remember it or to have it make a mark on her, as we may say. But mighty few folks manage to escape the old slave driver altogether. No did she. "It was in the summer of 1890," she says, "when I began to feel bad. My appetite was poor, and what I did eat gave me great pain and distress. My food seemed to lie like lead; and after every meal, no matter how simple the food was, I had the most excruciating pain you can imagine. I had a nagging, thudding, pain at my chest, and through to my shoulders, that was very hard to bear. So bad was it that I thought something (perhaps a tumour) was growing within me. As soon as ever food entered my stomach I used to say, 'It is beginning,' meaning the gnawing pain.

"I took all kinds of things for relief, and applied mustard plasters to the chest, but nothing did me any good. After a time I dared not take a proper meal; I was afraid to eat, and got very thin and weak. It was as much as I could do to go about my house-work. In October of this year (1891) Mrs James Mercer, of 176 High street, Longton, recommended me to try Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup, and I got a bottle and commenced to take it. After a few doses I felt relief; my food agreed with me, and by the time I had taken one large bottle all the pain had left me, and I now feel as well as ever I did."—Yours truly (signed), Mrs ELIZABETH WRIGHT, 12 King street, Hanley, Staffordshire, November 19, 1891.

You ask me what the sad fate of the miners has to do with the case of Mrs Wright. I'll tell you in half a minute. This lady says she was taken ill in the summer of 1890. Now, do you suppose the illness and the cause of the illness came up at the same time? By no means. Cause first, effect afterwards—that's the order, always. And, see here! A cause may be at work for weeks or years before you notice any results; and, until you do notice results, you don't know there's aught gone wrong. Isn't that so? The miners, to be sure, knew there was a fire in the mine. But it was fenced off from them, and they thought they were safe. The barriers leaked, and death gripped them in a twinkling of an eye.

The body is like a mine, as I have said. Disease and death are caused by the action of poisonous gases and acids inside of it. They all start from the stomach and then creep into every part; sometimes fast sometimes slow. In some acute diseases very fast. The doctors often call gout an "explosion" of uric acid. The source of all these things is indigestion and dyspepsia. Slight symptoms first, then the more terrible and alarming. Watch the way it comes on. This was Mrs Wright's ailment. She suffered fifteen months before she found out what the matter was and what to do. Gracious, mercy! if we only knew the sort of things that go on in our bodies we'd understand that it's about as dangerous to work in a kitchen as in a coal mine.