

the case of the sleepy sermons of the minister of Baldinville—to be read while surgical operations are being performed. What the original speeches sound like, only those who hear them can ever know, for the printed utterances of Members in many cases, if not always, represent second thoughts. A writer in the *Bendigo Advertiser* says of this curious anomaly of Parliamentary procedure: 'The New Zealand *Hansard* is, I believe, like the tight little island itself, unique. There the reporters take a verbatim report of the proceedings, and in due time the members receive a proof of the speeches delivered. The members carefully read through the proofs, and carefully revise them. Sometimes the revised version contains little or nothing of the original speech, but it goes forth as the "only and original," marked with the hall mark of *Hansard*, which, according to popular belief, is as incapable of lying as George Washington. Second thoughts are best after all, but to few people is permitted to amend rash words that took the legitimate place of golden silence.'

### A Suggestion.

The old Celtic problem runs: 'Melodious is the closed mouth.' And Mr. Armour, the late American millionaire, used to say: 'Most men talk too much. Much of my success,' he added, 'is due to keeping my mouth shut.' A percentage of our members are dumb oxen, and commit enough silence to be multi-millionaires and off-set, to some extent, the exuberant, verbosity of the rest. They remind one of the touching excuse which was offered by a Connecticut gentleman who was asked to 'say a few words' at the funeral of his wife's mother. 'No, parson, no,' he replied with great emotion, 'I didn't come here to make a speech; I came here to have a good time.' As regards the long-winded talkers in both Houses, we might, in view of the approaching session, opportunely submit to their earnest consideration the following remarks made by an eminent Scottish divine when asked how long it would take him to prepare a speech. 'That depends,' said he, 'upon how much time I am to occupy in its delivery. If I am to speak for a quarter of an hour, I should like a week to prepare; if I am to speak for half an hour, three days will do; if I am to go on as long as I like, I am ready now.' The 'ready-now' speech seems to have hitherto found most favor with our parliamentary orators.

### Compulsory Purchase.

In the course of two able and well-informed articles, the *Oamaru Mail* has put its finger upon the grievance that lies at the root of the Irish question. This is the land trouble. It condemns in scathing terms the halting, temporising, and tinkering land legislation. 'The men who are dealing with the question are not fit to deal with it. There will be not finality in the projected amending legislation, and that cankering bitterness which has been gnawing at the heart of the Empire in recent years, and which has greatly aggravated the evils of the South African war, will continue. There is only one possible settlement of the Irish land question, and that is a settlement based on the compulsory taking of the land.' 'If the adoption of this principle in New Zealand,' says the *Mail*, 'was warranted by circumstances, its application to a thickly populated country like Ireland is demanded by absolute necessity. Nor is there any rational objection to its adoption anywhere in the wide world where circumstances demand it. It has now no real enemies in this country. Familiarity with it has bred approval and comparative contentment. There is a chorus of admiration of the success which has attended its operation, and the cry for its more liberal application is heard everywhere. The only fault that is found is that our Government do not exert their power liberally enough. If the Imperial Government could only realise what could be accomplished in Ireland with the New Zealand land for settlements law in operation and a man like the late Sir John McKenzie to administer it—inspired with unquenchable enthusiasm and unswerving determination—all their terror of consequences would disappear, and they would adopt it without hesitation. What it has done for Waikakahi and Ardgowan it is capable of doing for every acre of Ireland. As we have said, so long as the people who desire to settle on land pay a fair price for it, they have the best right to it. It is indisputable that the mere possession of capital should not confer the right to a monopoly of land, to the exclusion of the people who would thus be deprived of the ability to live in their own country. A thorough-going land settlement policy for Ireland would transform the face of that country and the faces of the people, and turn the hearts of millions from bitterness to a feeling of supreme satisfaction.'

SOME time ago Lord Ranfurly was asked by the Government to consent to serve for a second period as Governor of this Colony. His Excellency agreed to accept an extension of his term by one year, and the Secretary for the Colonies has signified his Majesty's approval of the commission being extended. The period will therefore expire in April, 1904.

## In Lighter Vein

(By 'QUIP'.)

\*.\* Correspondence, newspaper cuttings, etc., intended for this department should be addressed 'QUIP,' N.Z. TABLET Office, Dunedin, and should reach this office on or before Monday morning.

'THERE'S nothing like a little judicious levity.'

R. L. STEVENSON.

### The King's Uniform.

It appears that even in this land of liberty one is not always allowed to don and wear what he likes. The other day, in Christchurch, a man was charged that he did, by parading the city in an old military coat, with a sheet of music on his back, disgrace the King's uniform. There seems to be 'suthin' wrong' here. In the first place, I don't believe that that is the King's uniform. I have seen over 500 pictures of King Edward, and in not one of them was he upholstered in that particular fashion. In the second place, if the particular shade of that old coat suited the complexion of the man that wore it, or was in keeping with the color of his tie, why not allow him to continue to be a 'joy for ever'? It is about as difficult to find a trace of aestheticism in Christchurch as it is to discover anything about a train in that bundle of advertisements known as the Government Railway Time-table. As regards the sheet of music, the poor man may have heard that 'music has charms to soothe a savage breast,' and, perhaps, not unreasonably concluded therefrom that a sheet of it, disposed after the fashion of a porous plaster, might also cure his lumbago—if he had any. The gentleman's name was Brown. He is no relation, however, to another gentleman of that name, celebrated in song, whose body is undergoing the process of decomposition in the grave, and whose soul, if I remember rightly, keeps marching along as if it were the Wandering Jew or the man with the wonderful cork leg. Both, it is true, belong to the great Brown family. But there is no relationship between them, just as there is none between the musk-duck and the sardine, although both of these belong to the smelt family. The information against Brown was laid by a rather zealous volunteer officer named Farthing, who showed a great deal of pluck thereby, because, generally speaking, a 'brown' is equal to four farthings. The 'copper' very appropriately concluded this incident of bronze

### St. Valentine's Day.

A poet of the eighteenth century is responsible for the following (slightly adapted):

'This month bright Phœbus enters Pisces,  
A merry time for foolish misses,  
For always when the sun comes here  
Valentine's Day is drawing near.'

Of course if you have to get the children ready for school, you will not have time to watch the sun entering the constellation of 'the fish with the glittering tails,' but you can, nevertheless, learn that Valentine's Day is drawing near by keeping your eye—either eye—on the diminishing number of stationers' windows that display the wares supposed to be suitable to the occasion. This year, as usual, there is the same old lot of violently colored and boorish rubbish, referred to in moments of forgetfulness as the 'comic valentine, the same old lot of clasped hands inside circles of forget-me-nots, the same old lot of white pigeons carrying letters with the same old red seal on the back, the same old overfed and podgy infant 'mid nodings on' but a quiver, shooting an arrow at the same old anatomically-impossible heart. 'Nuthin' noo' in it all. You can get the pick of the basket for a 'bob'—and monstrously dear at that or any price. In the days of Charles II. it used to be worth one's while to receive a valentine. The garrulous old Pepys tells us, for instance, in his *Diary* that he gave his wife a valentine worth four or five pounds, adding, 'for it is fit the wretch should have something to content herself with.' 'Wretch' in those days was a term of the softest and fondest endearment, just as the word 'companion' did not mean an associate, but a rascal or 'lewd fellow of the baser sort.' In these days it is empty-headed girls and postmen who are most affected by the advent of St. Valentine's Day.

'Apollo has peeped through the shutter,  
And awaken'd the witty and fair;  
The boarding-school belle's in a flutter,  
The twopenny post's in despair.'

Now, since the postage has been reduced to a penny, the post ought, according to the rule of proportion, to be in two despairs. To prevent this, as far as possible, all those who are going to send me motor-cars, or cases of champagne, or men-of-war, as valentines this year will kindly do so by rail, and please to prepay them,