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WHAT HE WISHED TO SAY.

A certain crochety old farmer once had trouble with his neighbour, and as a result sought his solicitor.

"I want yeow ter write him a letter an' tell him this here foolishness hez got ter stop," he said. "I know what I want ter say, but I ain't got the larin' to put it right."

"Very well," said the lawyer, "what do you want to say?"

"Waal," answered the farmer, "begin by tellin' him that he's the blackest, lyin'est, thievin'est, low-downest scoundrel on airth, and then work it oop."

Women often pose as martyrs. Men for women's sakes are hourly crucified.

Passing Notes

BY JACQUES.

Laugh where we must, be candid wherever we can.—Pope.

It is time that "the good die young," Wellington must be able to give New Zealand towns points in sinfulness. According to the "Southland Daily Times" a "lady" was recently charged there with a theft of a ring in 1817. An old offender, I presume.

PRINCE AND SALES GIRL.

PANAMA, April 1.

At the ball given by the British Minister, the Prince of Wales asked for an introduction to Miss Carleyne Cranberry, a sales girl and danced four dances with her.

The cable-man at Panama accurately appraising our tastes, and impelled by a keen sense of duty, flashed the above message to us a few days ago. It must have cost a bit, but hang the expense, since it set our loyal hearts palpitating with pride, and gave an added zest to our breakfast bacon. That our own little Prince should descend from his exalted pedestal to seek an introduction to a pretty girl of the people, and that he should dance four times with her—well, it simply staggered belief. You see, we have read our "Young Lady's Novellettes," and so know that princes and lords are not as other men, even where a pretty face is concerned. But there it was, in print, and cabled too—two sure guarantees of its truth. And now that we have got used to it and we are, feeling hungry for a little more of the same sort of thing. The appetite, you know, grows by what it feeds on. It would be so nice, for instance, to know whether he prefers his breakfast eggs hard or soft boiled, his fancy in socks, and his favourite method of wiping his Royal nose, unless indeed it is treason, or sacrilege, or lese majeste something of that sort to refer to the Prince's nose, as it is, or used to be, to speak of the Queen of Spain's legs. Anyhow, let us hope that the cable men everywhere will continue sending us the stuff that our soul loveth.

This is the age of professions. Like Byron's heroes, "every day and hour brings forth a new one." But plentiful as they are, they are mostly overcrowded arenas, in which men fight with each other, like the gladiators of old, for very life and even the sexes are brought into unnatural and unhealthy conflict. A French professor, M. Paul Carnot, has, however, suggested a new one, "for ladies only." It is that of professional maternity. Of course there is nothing new in the idea of maternity for women; they possess peculiar qualifications for it, and have, therefore, in that domain, always enjoyed complete immunity from the competition of that brute man. But, so far as I know, it has never before been given professional status. The whole details of the French professor's scheme—which is intended to cope with the decline in the birth rate—are not yet to hand, but we read that the "mission is to be confided to volunteers," who will be properly "remunerated," the children to become charges of the State. (Poor little beggars!) The proposal shocking as it is to our staid British prejudices, shows that the French intend to sink all prudish qualms and grapple with the birth-rate problem in dead earnest. That being so, and since almost anything may happen in France, if the proposal experiment proves at all successful, we may yet see established there its natural corollary in professional and remunerated paternity.

There seems to be trouble brewing in Ireland just now, if one may believe the daily papers. It has long been an open secret that there was some slight dissatisfaction with English rule in that Green Isle, but of late it has become more pronounced, and protests against the tyranny of the Lassenach are occasionally made. These mostly take the form of assassination—not too many, about one an hour being the average—with Sunday free fights and pitched battles between the troops and populace, and a little dynamiting to fill in the slack times between. The situation is rather delicate, and may easily become serious, if not tactfully handled. Whether the present Government is equal to the settlement of the difficulty remains to be seen. So far, little

has been tried but repression—the worst weapon possible. Charles the First lost his head, England lost America, Louis of Franco and Nicholas of Russia lost their thrones and lives through its use, and hundreds of historic instances of its utility could be cited. The reason is very plain. You may bludgeon your obstreperous neighbour into submission or insensibility, but you will not make a better friend of him thereby. There is no use blinking the fact that right down the centuries we have ruled Ireland with the rod, which we used pretty freely at times, with no other right than our superior strength gave us. Small wonder that the Irish regard us rather as a harsh stepfather than an affectionate brother.

Ireland is tired of the role of sleeping partner in the firm of John Bull and Co., and wants to break away completely and set up in business on her own account. This, we say, we cannot allow, as her secession would jeopardise England's safety. It is to be feared, however, that the argument of John Bull's self-interest will have but little effect on Pat, who will retort that his own interests are HIS first consideration, and that he believes these will be best served by separation. We have ourselves largely to blame for Paddy's present hostility. Time was when he asked for, and would no doubt have been satisfied with a limited measure of autonomy. But, whatever he asked for, we offered something less, until at length, his patience snapped, and he decided to go "the whole hog or nothing." A few years ago the cry in Ireland was for "dominion autonomy"—the same measure of self-government as we in New Zealand possess. This we refused, at the instigation of Ulster, who raised the religious bogey—a bogey that was never perceptible to Emmett Parnell and scores of other Irish Protestant leaders. Accession to their demands then would not only have been just and proper, but would have provided a safety valve that seems much needed now. Can we keep Ireland within the Empire? That is the question. Evidently not by force, for as has been said: "You may stamp out Sinn Feinism in Ireland, but you will have to stamp out nearly every Irishman in doing it." The only way to keep her is to win her confidence and affection if we can, by giving her the fullest possible measure of justice. But perhaps it is now too late, thanks to Ulster and its Romanist bogey.

Religion is, no doubt, an excellent thing in its way and place, but it is a pestilent thing when used for political purposes, as we in New Zealand proved at the last elections, if never before. Still there is always a savour of good even in things evil, and the eternal feud between Catholic and Protestant provides no exception to that rule. It has, at the least, given us some good stories. Here is one of them:—

A lady had bought a beautiful green parrot, and called in her gardener—a true son of the old Dart and of Mother Church—to inspect it. Pat was charmed with its appearance and colour, particularly the latter.

"What a purty bir-rd, ma'am," he said, "will it talk?"

"Oh yes, Pat," said the lady, "just scratch his head."

Pat did so, and the gratified bird responded with "Hurroo for Ireland."

Pat was delighted beyond expression at discovering that the bird was so patriotic in sentiment as well as in colour, and again scratched Polly's head. This time, however, the bird (which had possibly once belonged to Mr Howard Elliott) screamed out the imprecation, "To the devil with the Pope!"

Pat started back, speechless with anger and dismay. Again the parrot screamed out "To the devil with the Pope."

Then Pat's wrath broke loose. Glaring balefully and shaking his fist at the feathered P.P.A. member he shouted, "Be the holy poker, it's only your colour that saves ya, ye spalpeen. If ye wor a canary now, I'd wring your blasted neck!"

Scientists have stated that man in the distant future will have no use for his teeth, which will therefore depart in accordance with the slow and sure gait of Nature.

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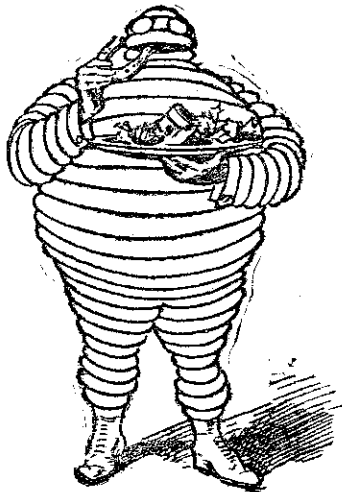
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