

JUDGMENT.

(Continued from page five.)

Foster out of the way I am afraid of nothing, but if he turned up again, hunted outcast though he is, I should be afraid of him.

The detective laughed.

"You don't mean that. With your wealth and your power you would have little reason to fear such a contemptible rival."

A sombre look came into the face of Beaumont Chase.

"Ah, Webb, you are clever in your way," he said slowly. "And I dare say you know a good deal about men, but I rather think there is one subject on which your education has been neglected."

"What is that, sir?" inquired the detective respectfully.

"Women," replied the other quietly.

"When a woman loves a man his misfortunes make him stronger not weaker. Where women are concerned, Webb, I am no fool, and I tell you that Dick Foster, down and out as he appears to be, is a very formidable rival. Anyway, I am taking no chance. I rely on you to see that Dick Foster and Kitty Millbank never meet. If—"

He stopped abruptly and moved to the window.

Some sound outside attracted his attention, and he stepped out on to the terrace. The detective followed him.

They stood side by side on the terrace and looked out to the great gates at the end of the drive.

The sound of a motor car could now be heard approaching. In another moment the car itself turned in at the gates.

Seated in it was the hunched-up figure of Judge Millbank, carefully wrapped in a great fur-coat. By his side sat the graceful slim figure of a girl.

The eyes of the millionaire flashed and a sign of satisfaction escaped his lips.

As the car turned in at the gates an old man leaning on a garden hoe stepped out of the way.

He touched his cap as the car flashed by.

The girl saw him, and smiled graciously in return.

(To be continued.)

THE ROYAL TOUR.

The following is published for general information and returned men are asked to make themselves conversant with the position.

PARADES.

The R.S.A. invite as many as possible to appear in uniform. The parade will constitute soldiers in uniform and those in mufti. Each section being kept together.

RAIL WARRANTS.

As it is the expressed wish of H.R.H. to meet as many of the returned soldiers as possible, your headquarters has arranged, in conjunction with the Departments of Defence, Internal Affairs, and Railways, for the issue of a free rail warrant available for one day only, to each ex-soldier who is located where a parade is not being held to enable him to travel to the nearest concentration point.

Any returned soldier desirous of availing himself of this privilege must apply to the nearest Defence Office for an order, which he must present to the stationmaster (at his "home" station) in exchange for a ticket before boarding the train.

Note.—If the returned soldier's "home" station has no stationmaster, then the order will be exchanged for a ticket by the guard.

It will be readily seen how necessary it is for the Railway Department to know how many people will be travelling to the various concentration points, and, therefore, the above method of issue will enable the Defence Department to aid the Railway Department by giving the desired information.

In company with the returned soldiers which will be travelling, there will also be territorials, cadets, scouts, and school children, therefore headquarters would ask that every assistance be rendered by local associations to see that their members are well posted on the necessary details.

TRAIN ARRANGEMENTS.

These will, of course, be made known later on, but the Defence officials should be in a position to notify the time-table when the orders are being issued.

AVAILABILITY.

Local associations are asked to stress the following points as forcibly as possible:—The bearer of a ticket issued above must return to his "home" station on the day of issue or he will be obliged to pay his fare when he makes the return journey.

Unless a returned soldier makes application and receives an order from the

nearest Defence Office he cannot avail himself of the free rail warrant.

The following places are concentration points, and a guide to returned soldiers who are availing themselves of the privileges of the free railway warrant. The three places, Balclutha, Gore, and Invercargill, are the nearest points that a parade will be held.

To Balclutha.—From all stations Kaitangata and Catlin's River branch. From Crichton, Kuriwao, and intermediate stations.

To Gore.—From Clinton and intermediate stations. From Charlton and Mataura. From all stations, Tapanui, Waikaka, and Switzers branch. From Balfour and intermediate stations (Gore-Lumsden.)

To Invercargill.—From Brydone and intermediate stations. From all stations on the Edendale-Glenham, Waimahaka-Tokanui, Bluff, Tuatapere, Nightcaps, Hedgehope, and Kingston lines.

MEALS.

The civic authorities in Invercargill have made provision to supply returned soldiers with free meals. The object of this is to make sure that the men will be able to get a meal. The local caterers will be hard pressed on that day, and this procedure will overcome the difficulty. Returned men who are availing themselves of these facilities can obtain tickets from the secretary, R. S.A., Invercargill.—Ed.

FORESTRY.

The members of Court Star of the South held a very successful meeting, the Chief Ranger, Bro. A. W. Jones, occupying the chair.

Bro. C. Edwards reported on the continued progress of the Juvenile branch attached to the Court, and stated that the last meeting, held recently, was a most encouraging one, and that the boys were steadily adding to their numbers.

The District Secretary (Bro. J. Macfie) made a presentation on behalf of the United Otago District to the retiring District Officer, Bro. A. W. Jones, as a token of appreciation for services rendered on the executive, and congratulated the recipient on being the first ex-juvenile member and youngest brother to attain to the highest position open to members of the Otago District of Foresters, and also on the results obtained by his energies in matters making for the advancement of the Order. P.D.C.R. Bro. R. Folley, on behalf of the Court, also endorsed the remarks of the previous speaker. Bro. Jones, in reply, thanked Bro. Macfie for coming from Dunedin to honour him, and expressed gratification at the loyalty and support he had received from his colleagues and the members.

At the close of the meeting the soldiers and nurses from the Convalescent Home, together with their friends, were entertained at a social evening. Bro. C. W. Patton has had the organising of these various functions. A very enjoyable programme was gone through with cards, dancing, musical items, and story and song. Mr Hodgkins and Mr S. Craig, representing the Red Cross Society, were present. Mr S. Craig outlined the work of the Red Cross Society at the Convalescent Home amongst the soldiers, and also thanked the Foresters for the way they had entertained the inmates, and also for their gifts, which were much appreciated. Bro. Patton acknowledged, on behalf of the Foresters.

ENGLAND, OH! FOR ENGLAND.

A FEDERATION SONG.

(From "The Pageant of Life.")

Old England needs her children,
She needs them every one,
From India's morning-bugle
To the last sunset-gun;
North, east, and south she needs them,
And in the furthest west,
And where the channel waters
Storm round her rocky breast.

The day is surely coming
When all alike she'll need,
And far-off true descendants
Of the old island-breed.
The day is surely coming
When all may have to strike
For England, ho! for England—
So all must fare alike.

"For England, ho! for England"
The great deep-throated cry
Rings far across the waters;
A million mouths reply,
"For England, ho! for England,
Till England's work be done,
And England's work is timeless
And measured by the sun."

George Barlow, "Poetical Works,"
Vol. VI.

The Nature Column.

(By "Student.")

On May 7th. Mr J. Fowler lectures before the Southland Naturalist Society on the Monowai region. The lecture will be illustrated by lantern slides. Mr Fowler has made several exploration trips into the district and knows as much about it as anyone. The lecture is open to the public and free. Interested people are always welcome. If you are interested in nature study join the Society, the fee is 2s 6d. This notice is somewhat belated but next month we will give our readers more warning.

I mentioned last week Mr Guthrie Smith's plea for the protection of the weka. He says, "Such a bird perpetually on the lookout like St. Paul's Athenians, for something new and eternally patrolling his beat, would instantly detect the smallest signs of an intruder; and, although the nests of the black rat are beyond his reach, their young when first on the ground, must be largely taken. The grey rat's family, too, must share a similar fate. Nor does the weka confine himself to the young of either breed. In the protracted twilight of the southern summer, often have I watched our camp wekas hunting a grown rat through tussock and tangle fern; and I believe it is a fact, that in parts where the weka is plentiful, camps are kept more free of vermin by this bird than by cats or dogs." In another place he states, "It is too much species as the crows, the robins, the tits, the warblers, the thrushes, the saddlebacks, the bush creeper, the yellow head, the white head, the wrens, the tui, the bellbird, the pigeon, and the parakeets, that the presence of the weka is an unmixed boon. If they still continue to survive it is to his ceaseless vigilance, his policing of the woods, his eternal patrol of them by day and night, that they owe their lives."

"If then, in New Zealand any serious interest ever comes to be taken in our native birds, the most efficient method of preserving the smaller tree-breeding species lies in the propagation of the weka. Of all the birds that deserve our care he comes foremost, and assistance withheld from him is help denied to half the indigenous birds of New Zealand."

What a recommendation to our acclimatisation societies if they would only take it up. It is indeed a pity these societies, who are now little more than public gamekeepers, do not spare a little of their time towards restoring the native avifauna. Instead of risky experiments in introducing aliens like the Mallard duck, which owing to its habit of crossing readily with other species, threatens the purity of our native ducks; it would be far better to encourage the spread of native birds. I think it could be safely said that a dozen wekas in the Waihopai reserve would cause more joy and amusement to the citizens of Invercargill, especially the kiddies, than 100,000 trout placed in the Waihopai.

Mr R. Gibbs is of the opinion that the introduced birds brought with them diseases, which the New Zealand birds being less resistant readily fell a prey to. Though I have no evidence supporting this view, the theory seems sound. We know that in mankind at any rate the same thing happens when different races mingle.

Mr Gibb thinks that the decline of the indigenous birds is now coming to an end, and that they are holding their own. In the back country, he found the robin not quite so friendly as of yore, but still in fair numbers. The fern bird is around Invercargill in places, and the bellbird and tui seem to find civilisation not so bad after all. The bellbird and tui were in flocks on the gum trees at Tuturau, and they had acquired a taste for late apples. He also noticed bellbird nestlings in the avenue alongside Queen's Park.

It would be a pleasant surprise if our city fathers would resurrect from its pigeon hole, the long lost project for establishing an aviary at Thomson's Bush. It would cost so little in comparison with the pleasure it would give. Hundreds of pounds can be spent on playing areas, and rightly so, for the sake of a few hundred players. A fraction of the sum so spent would give us an aviary, providing amusement and instruction for the children, and pleasure to those of us who, though we twanged the shanghai blithely in our youth, now take more interest in watching the habits of our feathered friends. Invercargill is not richly endowed with natural attractions, but what we have got we should make the most of, and we are certainly not making the most of the Waihopai scenic reserve. It should be the show place of the town. The bush should be enriched with native plants not now represented. It should be considered a crime to destroy the character of our bit of bush by planting oaks and other trees of foreign extraction.

Passing Notes.

BY JACQUES.

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

As I write this the rumour reaches me that the railwaymen's strike is settled. It is to be devoutly hoped that it is true, and that before these lines appear in print the wheels will be turning with their usual cheerfulness on every line from Auckland to Bluff. We all dread and detest the strike. It is a crude and dangerous weapon—dangerous not only to the strikers themselves and to their opponents, but even to that part of the community with whom the strikers have no quarrel. It is like a bomb thrown, which does not discriminate between its intended mark and innocent bystanders, but deals out with dreadful impartiality its shattering blows to all alike. It is the sense of danger to itself that makes the public usually hostile to the strike; and, unfortunately, this feeling of hostility is almost invariably carried past the mere fact of the strike to the strikers themselves. We do not stop to consider whether or not direct action in any given set of circumstances is justified or necessary; we are content to blame those who are, or seem, responsible for our own inconvenience and injury, just as we condemn the French Revolution and the horrors of Bolshevism in Russia without the least inquiry into their even more horrible causes. In this state of mind we swallow with avidity any stories that will serve to discredit the striker, and give some colour of justification for our prejudgment of him. Incidents of really minor significance are magnified into "atrocities"; excusably heated words are reported as "seditious utterances," and so on. And even where they do not occur there is always at hand some grovelling pander to fabricate them. Truly, lynch law has its good points.

The foregoing remarks are prompted by certain incidents in connection with the present (or recent) strike. Probably no other strike was ever more justified, or commanded a larger measure of public sympathy, while the action of the men throughout the whole trouble was remarkable for its restraint. Yet, no sooner had the railwaymen opened hostilities than the usual fighting tactics of the other side were exhibited. First, we had the most common newspaper heading, "A Lightning Strike," the obvious implication being that the men were using the bludgeon of surprise to drive the Government into submission, whereas the plain fact was that they had uttered warning after warning before finally taking action, and their reluctance to strike was shown by the eagerness with which they had tried, one after another, every other path that might possibly lead to amicable settlement. Even in their ultimate action they proved most temperate and forbearing, instead of calling out all the men from end to end of the Dominion, as they might have done, and were expected to do, the leaders contented themselves with what was, at most, only a partial strike. Then an attempt was made to excite the hostility of our loyalists by the suggestion that the strike was deliberately timed to coincide with the Prince's visit. I have been personally assured by a loco. railwayman, who is exceptionally well informed on matters pertaining to the strike, that the coincidence was purely accidental, and this is borne out by the fact that the leaders offered to permit the running of such trains as were necessary for the passage of the Prince and his retinue through the country. Then a defective fire bar was discovered, and at once the whisper went round that it was a case of sabotage—another "atrocities," in fact. Fortunately, this was promptly nipped in the bud, so no particular harm was done. But it is interesting as showing what dirty tactics are sometimes employed in industrial warfare—and not by the workers, either. There were not the only instances of attempts to discredit the railwaymen, but it is not necessary to cite more of them. For my own part, I consider that the strike was fully justified, and was conducted in a most

exemplary way, and sincerely hope that it will result in the railwaymen obtaining some measure of that common justice which has been so long denied them.

It was the second smoker on the morning train from Winton to Invercargill. An animated discussion was being waged on the chances of the southern railwaymen being called out. Arguments pro and con were being rapidly exchanged, when one man quietly remarked that he had inside and reliable information that the South Island men would down clips and shovels that self-same day at noon. This brought to his feet an excited but incredulous specimen of the country's vertebrae, who, in the tone of one who knows that he is clinching the matter, yelled: "But damn it all, man, they can't strike before six o'clock tonight. I've got a return ticket to Winton!"

I HAVE NO INFORMATION.

"In reply to the question of the Honourable Member, I have to state that I have not yet received any information on the matter."

(Mr Massey's usual method of evading awkward questions).

Er—, Gentlemen, we'll now devote a little time to queries; Of which you've tabled, as I note, A rather lengthy series. The most of them deserve, I grant, My close consideration; But answer them at once, I can't—I've had no information. The cost of our Samoan trip I cannot state off-hand, sirs; Nor yet if trusts have got their gr. On this, our happy land, sirs. If Scapa Jellicoe will fill The Governor's situation, I'm not prepared to say until I get some information. If railwaymen have struck, and why, I really cannot say, sirs; Nor do I know what signify The letters P.P.A., sirs. And whether we have had a war, And banded the German nation, I'm not aware at present, for I've got no information. If Edward, Prince of Wales is here, I cannot say precisely; Nor know I if the profiteer Is doing very nicely. You ask if Postal men desire Increased remuneration—You'll have to wait till I enquire, And get some information. The bird that catches me has got To be an early riser; The man's a fool who knows a lot When ignorance is wiser. I find it safest, gentlemen, With each interrogation, To say I'll talk about it when I've further information.

Speaking of evasion reminds me of another story. The Vicar was writing his sermon for Sunday, and did not wish to be disturbed.

"If anyone calls, Bridget," he said to the Irish maid, "I can't see them." "Shall I tell them you are out, sorr?" "No, that wouldn't be the truth, you know, Bridget," her master replied. "If they should ask you if I am in, you must give them an evasive answer."

"What's that, sorr?" asked Bridget. "Why, the sort of answer they can make anything or nothing of," explained her master.

"Yiss, sorr, I understand," said Bridget, and withdrew.

The sermon written, the Vicar emerged and asked if anyone had called.

"Yiss, sorr," said Bridget. "One gentleman called and axed if you were in."

"And what did you say, Bridget?" "I hope you did not tell him an untruth!" "No, sorr," replied Bridget, "I just gave him a 'vassive' answer. I asked him if his grandfather had rats in his garret."