

Passing Notes.

BY JACQUES.

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

The churches in Australia are up in arms against Conan Doyle and his spiritualism. Two of a trade did never agree.

In last week's "Digger": "Creel" sings daintily of "the fishes that lie in the west." Well, that's where they differ from the fishers, who lie everywhere.

The "News," reporting the death of a New Zealander in Chicago, states that "at one time of his death he was Mayor of Foxton." Wonder what he was at the other times. Must have been a long drawn out affair.

Paddy's proposal to lengthen the short plank by cutting a piece off one end and tacking it on the other may have been laughable, but not one whit more so than Mr Massey's scheme of cheapening butter for us. Instead of paying three shillings—the proper market price—for that delectable but necessary commodity, our square deal friend, in his large benevolence, is going to see that we get it for two shillings and threepence, himself to pay the other ninepence out of his own pocket—that is, the consolidated revenue. A brilliant scheme, truly, if only the consolidated revenue were the purse of Fortunatus. Unfortunately, however, it is not. There is nothing in that pocket of William the Conjuror, to pay either for butter or anything else, except what we put there. It looks well in print, it sounds nice to the ear, to be told that our breakfast table burden is to be lightened to the extent of ninepence per pound of butter—or, to use the large figures that Bill loves—£600,000 per year for the lot of us; but the very plain fact is that we are going to continue paying three shillings a pound for our butter—two and threepence over the counter and ninepence through the consolidated revenue. It is exactly as though one robbed us of a fiver, and then made a present of it to us, and demanded our gratitude for it. Truly, it looks as though William has written us all down in his big list of fools. I wonder if he is right.

In the bitter controversy raging round the Ne Temere question, much has been said about the poltroonery of anonymity. In fact, some of the disputants seem more concerned about their opponent's identity than with their arguments. In a purely personal quarrel such reproach might have some weight, but, for the life of me, I cannot see any harm in a participant in a discussion on any general, impersonal matter withholding his name. Even where the motive is self-defensive it may be rather prudent than cowardly. Why should any man have something of value to contribute to a controversy on an open question be compelled to hold his tongue or pen because of possible injurious consequences to himself, his wife and little ones, that might follow on disclosure of his identity. I will go farther, and say that in most such discussions anonymity is even desirable, since it gives the various arguments a better chance of being appraised at their real value. As it is, in considering and weighing them we are too apt to permit our judgment to be influenced by the social position, reputation etc., of those advancing them. Even the letters of "Junius" might have had less weight had it been known that they came from some obscure denizen of Seven Dials. A young lady, after reading an anthology, remarked that by far the best poems in the book were those by Mr Anon. Similarly, the best arguments are often those of the nameless contributors to discussions. And, really, in these matters it is with arguments that we have to deal, rather than persons.

We all, of course, endorse Mr Drewe's demand for fuller recognition by shipping companies and others of the claims of Bluff as a port of trade. There is, however, one aspect of this question which should certainly not be overlooked. That is, the utter inadequacy of our local rolling stock to any increased pressure. At present a single large boat discharging any quantity of cargo at Bluff strips every Southland line of practically every wheel, with the result that the farmer, sawmiller, and others are held up for a week or fortnight at a time. Any sudden and considerable increase in shipping activities

at Bluff would simply mean chaos in the interior. Certainly the diversion of trade from other ports to our own would release a proportion of rolling stock from the northern lines, but would we, in view of the Dominion shortage, get sufficient of it to meet our greater requirements? Vrey doubtful—unless we can, and do, squeeze the Government pretty hard.

It was not a cheerful face that Bill showed over the back fence yesterday.

"Look 'ere, Jax," he commenced, "the H.C.L. isn't the only thing that keeps a bloke poor these days. There's an 'ell of a lot of others. Testimonials is one of 'em."

I was puzzled for a moment, but knew that the explanation would soon come. Presently I received it.

"It's like this, Jax. There's a big crowd, big an' little down at the work-shops, an' every now an' then, something 'appens to one or other of 'em. P'raps one gets promoted, or 'as a shift, or gets married, or 'e's been ten years in the shop, or 'as a birthday, or 'is wife surprises 'im with twins, or someone belonging to 'em snuffs out, or 'e scores a goal for 'is side, or 'e goes for an 'oliday, or comes back from one or some blanky thing or other. Wotever it is, or isn't, some flamin' tout goes round with the 'at to 'present 'im with some slight token of esteem" (as the blanky papers say) in the shape of a watch an' chain, or an arm-chair, or picture, or some other blasted thing that 'e either doesn't want or 'as got already. (I notice, Jax, that no one ever thinks of givin' tokens of esteem to the poor devils who could really do with 'em.) Anyway, it's 'stand an' deliver'; yeh've gotter fork out yer five or ten bob an' look pleasant. Of course, yeh can button up if yeh like, but what sorter a name are yeh goin' to get among yer shop mates. If it was only once in a long while a feller'd take no notice, but when they strike yeh every few weeks it makes yeh sit up. Many a five or ten bob that would look fine on some poor kiddie's feet goes into the 'at simply because the old man 'asn't got the pluck to buck. Wish to 'ell somebody'd start an anti-testimonialisin' society, something like those anti-shoutin' affairs. Betjer there'd be a hallelujah rush for badges."

KINGS AND PRINCES I HAVE MET.

H.M. GAVIN THE BRIGHT UN.

Sometime between fifty and a hundred years ago was born this most remarkable man of modern times—the Latter Day Luther, as he has been aptly styled. No mere paltry maker of nations he; his achievements have been on a far grander, loftier scale, and have won for him a fame that will never die—at least, for some time yet. For he it was who, alone and unaided, discovered and revealed to Christendom its abysmal and appalling ignorance on matters theological, and who thrust the enlightening torch of his transcendent genius into the Cimmerian gloom of the last twenty centuries, dispelling it forever and thereby gaining for himself the surname, or sobriquet of "The Bright One"—latterly contracted to "Brighton." As in the case of most great achievements, his methods were very simple. He just smothered up every other theological system by one of his own manufacture, which, since it is more intricate, incomprehensible and bewildering than any of its predecessors, is eminently satisfying to himself, and entitled to the greater respect and awe of ordinary mortals. It was to glean some details of this scheme and his methods of propagating it that I waited on him at his palace at Nightcaps. I found him absorbed in the endeavour to calculate the abstruse points of difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. My interruption compelled a postponement of his final decision on this important question. He showed no signs of impatience, however, but greeted me with a hospitable kindness that utterly belied the natural ferocity of his appearance. And I had my reward. In fact I learned so much of his formula for theology building and propaganda that I am quite sure that with the necessary qualities and capital I could set up in that line myself to-morrow.

It seems that the only, or at any rate

the chief essentials are the quality of cussedness; the gift of lightning volubility; a long and active forefinger, a Greek Bible, and a fair supply of five pound notes. With these one is at once invulnerable and irresistible. They are used, with, perhaps, certain necessary modifications at times, as follows:

The quality of cussedness enables one at any time to differ from anybody and everybody on anything and everything theological that they may think, say or do. It is also useful in suggesting diabolical methods of inveigling poor miserable wretches into disputes that they had no intention of entering into, and are afterwards astonished to find themselves engaged in. In the latter respect, he explained, this quality can often be raised to an exalted place among the fine arts.

Lightning volubility, or the capacity for saying more in less time than any other three men together, is an inestimable gift. By its free exercise one can get in three arguments to the slower opposition's one. By its use one can fire into the other fellow food for thought at such a rapid pace that the poor devil hasn't time to think at all. Then he gets confused, and one has him on the hip.

Should the opposition—or victim—show signs of restiveness, one brings the long forefinger into action, shooting it through his buttonhole and thereby preventing his escape. No matter if one's adversary's eyes are bloodshot and he is foaming at the mouth, that finger must not relax its gripping curve.

The Greek Bible is simply invaluable, used either offensively or defensively. For instance, should one's opponent seem to score a point by a quotation from the English version of the Bible one has merely to declare it a mistranslation, and show him the corresponding passage in the Greek Bible to prove it. As Greek print looks to the average man like pictures of magnified microbes, and as nobody can read magnified microbes, one is quite safe. Besides, the possession of a Greek Bible gains for one a reputation for erudition.

The fivers he designates his "clinchers." If a proposition is advanced that one cannot disprove then the proper course is to produce a fiver and offer it to the opposition if he can prove it. As in all systems of theology nothing can be either proven or disproven, one's fivers are absolutely secure. And the offer confounds and cheapens the opposition, and impresses the audience with a sense of one's own wealth and the strength of one's position.

After these few preliminary instructions and observations, he settled down to outline the details of his own special theological system. He spoke so rapidly during the next six or eight hours that it was often difficult to follow him. But, as far as my disjointed notes and memory serve me, I understand that there is no heaven (he'd give me a fiver if I could prove there was); there is no hell (I felt relieved); because if there was it would be a hell of a place (another fiver); that the Bible really doesn't mean exactly what it means (fiver); that not Moses, but another fellow of the same name wrote the Pentateuch (fiver); that the Book of Ezekiel, rightly interpreted, was a complete treatise on evolution (fiver); that the Greek for Jeremiah was not Omomoi, as commonly supposed, but Oimoiomoi (fiver, together with the Greek Bible this time); that the Fourth Chapter of Revelations clearly and unmistakably foreshadowed the present rise in the price of butter (fiver); that Adam had no navel (fiver); that the Tower of Babel was built from the top downward (fiver); that the Chinese constitute seven of the lost Ten Tribes of Israel (fiver); that the Scarlet Woman typified the modern press (fiver); that everybody was wrong but His Majesty, Gavin Bright Un (fiver); and that— At this moment I heard the welcome whistle of the morning train, and, overjoyed at the opportunity of escape, I hurried off, fervently hoping that my next interview would be with someone who had no particular theological views to air.

"If we have an early harvest New Zealand will be in no danger of a flour shortage," says the chairman of the Board of Trade, Mr W. G. McDonald, "If we have a late harvest there will be a slight pinch, provided there are no further importations of wheat."

The Labour Carnival after an auspicious opening on Wednesday with a remarkably successful baby show is now in full swing at the King's Hall, Clyde street. Not only are all the usual carnival features catered for, but there are also numerous novelties, as well as complete concert programmes each evening. The hall is beautifully decorated and the assistants are doing work quite up to professional standard. The success of the carnival is assured.

The Nature Column.

(By "Student.")

"Student" will be pleased to receive notes on any branch of Natural History. Observations on birds, insects, plants, etc., will be equally welcome. If using a pen-name, will correspondents please enclose real name and address.)

Dear Student.—Where did the gravel come from? This subject the town bore has again brought to light. Of course it is natural to take the existing conditions and argue that the deposits have their origin from some river or rivers coming from the north or north-east. Now, sir, in your theory regarding the Mataura river being the medium by which this deposit has reached its present position, does it not seem rather incongruous that this translucent quartz should come by a river having its source in a country void of quartz, also the whole distance from there to its mouth runs through country where little if any quartz exists. The only theory which seems feasible in transit by the Mataura or Oreti must have been in the period long before the glacier in the Wakatipu valley blocked its outlet by the moraine now existing at the Kingston end of the lake. Probably at a time ages ago the glacier would bring down quartz from out the Rouburn Dart or around the Earnslaw district, and the terminal end may not have been more than 60 miles from here. This could be possible to account for a vast deposit under the Southland plain. It would, however, in that case have come through the air gap straight through the Oreti. The second theory advocated sets one thinking, and is perhaps the more probable one. Now at Awarua Bay this gravel outcrops all along the beach nearer to the surface than here, the fall apparent this way. That of course could have been altered by a warping of the land surface, but when cut in the Bluff line and at pits here and there, there does not seem any great faulting. The lay is from the south instead of from the north-east. According to Hutton, the Southland plain is Manapouri pleistocene. Well, sir, if so, and it has every evidence of being so, how could it have come from the north-east where no Manapouri age exists. The only possible land theory according to this is one that may have an origin in the Te Anau-Manapouri district long before the Takatimos were upfing and may have come through north or west. It may be advisable to wait until you have completed your little discourse promised next week. I think your subject is both interesting and instructive, and as the railway advises one to know their own country first, one often wishes he did know it a little better. However, we do know something of the surface contour, but that is only to-day. What was yesterday?—I am, etc.,

NORLAND,

Invercargill, October 20, 1920.

Those who maintain that the water-bearing gravels come to the sea about the New River mouth, offer no evidence in support beyond the fact that the strata seems to rise at Kew, and no water was got there. They further maintain that the white quartz gravels showing right down to Awarua Bay are only the upper layers of the strata overlying the water bearing gravels. But this gravel at Awarua Bay is if anything several feet lower than the outcrop at Gladstone. It must be conceded also that the gravels in question were transported to Awarua Bay by water, and seeing that they are abundant there, the river must have flowed past the Bluff. The ancient river had a bend in it, and in flowing past the Bluff would conform to the general rule that rivers flow along the strike of the rocks.

The Bluff rock is of a granitic type called norite. Rocks of a similar type seem to run through Greenhills. From Greenhills to Riverton the water is shallow and the ground, in mariner's parlance in foal, or in other words rocky. Various rocky islets are scattered between the two points. Also as before stated rock outcrops at West Plains and is apparently of plutonic origin. From Riverton through the Longwoods granitic rocks occur and norite is found at Round Hill. Continuing in the same line a rock believed to be norite occurs at the south arm of Manapouri, and up the Grebe Valley to Monowai. It seems fairly plain that a great ridge of plutonic rocks runs from Ruapuke to Lake Manapouri. The strike of these rocks is nearly at right angles to the supposed outlet of our underground water supply. Rivers sometimes do cut across the strike of the rocks, but in this case, there is no evidence in support of such a presumption, while the fact that the white quartz gravels are found right down to the sea on the south, is strong presumptive evidence that the water passed in that direction. At any rate the

river must have flowed over that region in order to deposit the gravels.

To return to the gravel itself. The stones are small and well rounded and there is a large amount of sand evidently derived from the same source as the gravel. Quartz is a very hard mineral and does not break up or get rounded nearly so easily as the other rocks. It therefore follows that these stones have travelled a great distance. The gravel at the Waterworks is gold bearing.

A notable feature about the bore round the Waterworks is the fact that in several instances trees were met with in the lower strata. The wood is well preserved, and this must be due to some preservative agent in the water. Sulphur is present in the water and probably a certain amount of silica in solution is also present. These are preservative agents. Above the trees are two seams of lignite. It seems strange that the later vegetable matter should have been converted into lignite and the more deeply buried trees be preserved. This, however, is not altogether a singular occurrence in New Zealand, as similar conditions have been met with in the North Island. So far the wood taken from the latest bore has not been positively identified, but a good botanist hazarded the opinion a few days ago that the tree had been a white pine. The wood is now a deep reddish brown, is very fibrous and curly. Another gentleman of experience could not place it with any timber now growing in Southland. A piece of this wood is to be placed in the museum along with the section of the old trial bore shown there. When the deep bore was put down a tree was met with at 550 feet. This wood on being exposed to the atmosphere, rapidly changed and became more like lignite. Wood to last many thousands of years must have been rapidly covered to a depth. Otherwise the agencies which now rapidly dispose of organic matter would have destroyed or changed its character. Some of the wood which came out of the latest bore had traces of the bark still adhering, though worn and rubbed as if it had been subject to abrasion such as would be caused by floating down a river.

GORE RACING CLUB.

ACCEPTANCES FOR FIRST DAY.

The following are the acceptances for the first day (Saturday) of the Gore Racing Club's Spring meeting:—

First Hack Handicap, £150 (seven furlongs)—Marching Order 9.0, Catnach 8.8, Martifors, Mettle Drift, and Cammie Jack 8.0, Blue Admiral, Moneymusk and Sartolite 7.12, Etta 7.8, Kokovai, Laton, Martial Dance and Red Eagle 7.7.

Orama Trot Handicap (harness), £140, class 3.43 (one mile and a half)—War Chimes, Quickmatch, Sweet Chimes, Laura Child, Houli Jim, Hazelfield, Dart Rosine, and Bell Fire scratch; War Spot and St. Mihel 25yds hind; Seaward Spot 36 yds; Armistice, Black Harold, Evening Chimes, First Toll, Hoch Aye and Red Empress 48yds; Coldwater, Geyers, Biddy Tracey, 72yds; Rosebery, 87yds; Full Cry, 96yds; Silver Shoe, 108yds.

Wakaka Handicap, £275 (one mile and a distance)—Eles 3.5, Meles 5.5, Tim Soldier 8.5, Jock 8.4, Linden 7.9, Bengarop 7.3, Silent King 6.12.

Dominion Hack Handicap, £175 (six furlongs)—Post Haste 9.0, Martifors 8.12, Mettle Drift and Sunlit 8.12, Martua 8.11, Sartolite 8.10, Lady Knight and Wild Night 8.7, Vice-Grand 8.4, Admiral Fisher, Canio, Glenhupai, Good Start, La Palmas, Midle Fedalma, Royal Admiral, Red Eagle, Sealight, Strowna, b m by Rose Noble—Kea and Wild Shot 8.2.

Wantwood Steeplechase, £145 (about two miles and a quarter)—Palladio 11.3, Take Down 11.0, Glenisla 10.9, Dunmore 10.7, Miss Trixie 9.10, Cannan, Precious Metal and Whipcord 9.7.

Stewards' Handicap, £150 (six furlongs)—Silver Peak 9.6, Killowen 9.4, Michaela 9.1, Satisfaction 8.5, Rolkelaine 8.3, Eight Bells 7.12, Rodshire 6.13, Silent King 6.12.

Balfour Trot Handicap (saddle), £125, class 2.35 (one mile)—Ferry Wahoo, Moonglow, Miss O'Neill and The Show scratch; Hazelfield, 36yds behind; Dragoon, 36yds; Elma Boy, 60yds; Erce and Evening Chimes, 72yds.

Charlton Handicap, £160 (one mile)—Thaddeus 8.12, Kilkee 8.9, Marianne 8.4, Twinkle 8.3, Revolution 7.12, Mirza 7.9, Awahou 7.9.

The penalties earned at the N.Z.C. Spring meeting are included in the following lists.

The salaries of Civil servants in Prussia have been raised to meet the increased cost of living. The amount required to provide the increase is 1,631,000,000 marks.