

JUDGMENT.

(Continued from page 5.)

"Webb, you are delightful! But now really, what is it you want?"

"Only to serve you, sir, and earn my salary."

"Good! And as a preliminary you would like me to give you—what?"

"Nothing, sir! But I hope you will permit me to give you something."

"Really! That's a change! What?"

"Advice."

Beaumont Chase laughed aloud.

"Excellent, my dear Webb, I thought it must be something cheap! Well, fire away! I can spare you ten minutes."

"A little longer than that, I think," said the detective drily. "You hope shortly to marry, I believe?"

"Well?"

"The lady is Miss Millbank."

"Of course."

"When is the marriage to take place?"

"Three weeks from to-morrow. The thirteenth of next month."

The detective smiled a significant smile. "It will not take place on that date. Unless it takes place earlier—much earlier—it will not take place at all," he said smoothly.

"What the deuce do you mean?" cried the millionaire, springing to his feet. "Enough of this mystery-mongering. What's wrong? Out with it and cut the cackle!"

Mr Webb stepped back a pace, and sidled behind a heavy chair. He was a little alarmed at the other's vehemence.

"Please be calm, sir, and I will be as explicit as possible, I bring bad news. Miss Millbank has consented to marry you because she believes the man, Dick Foster has fled the country, and is now safe in South America or some other distant part of the world. Is that so?"

"Yes, yes! Well, what of it?" said the millionaire impatiently.

"If she knew that Foster was still hiding in England, it might make a difference."

"Possibly!"

"She is only marrying you out of gratitude for helping him to escape?"

"Well?"

"If he should be arrested, and Miss Millbank discovered that you had not kept your word but had lied to her from beginning to end—"

"What on earth are you driving at?" demanded Chase, in evident alarm.

"Simply this, sir. The police have obtained a clue, and Dick Foster may be arrested at any moment."

"Good lord!" exclaimed Chase, staring blankly at the speaker. "That mustn't happen! Not before the thirteenth of next month, anyway. After then, nothing matters. Once Kitty is my wife, Foster can hang for all I care. Where is he hiding?"

"I don't know."

"You ought to know."

"I can't help it, sir. I have done my best!"

"Well, what do you suggest?"

The detective stroked his chin and peered out from his half-closed eyelids.

"Money can do a great deal," he observed significantly. "Couldn't you hasten the wedding?"

Beaumont Chase gave a startled movement, and a bold, resolute look came into his dark eyes.

"By Heaven, Webb, you are right!" he cried. "A special licence! It can be done. On Thursday—the day after to-morrow—Kitty shall become my wife!"

(To be Continued.)

ADVANCE TO SOLDIERS.

DEPUTATION TO MINISTER OF LANDS.

A deputation from the standing sub-committee of the New Zealand Returned Soldiers' Association's Executive waited upon the Minister of Lands recently regarding the closing down of the advances under section 2 of the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act. The aim of the deputation was to obtain some assurance that applications would be received upon the production of documentary evidence that genuine contracts for the purchase of properties had been entered into prior to the sudden notifications of the suspension of the advances. The Minister was unable to give this assurance, stating that he could not commit the Government, and that the matter would be considered by Parliament as soon as possible after the opening of the forthcoming session.

The New Zealand Returned Soldiers' Association intends to circulate local branches throughout the Dominion for particulars of cases where genuine contracts were entered into prior to or within, say, a week of the Minister's statement notifying the suspension or the "slackening" of the advances. These cases when in hand will be presented to the Minister at the earliest opportunity.

SCOTCH! NOTCH! POTCH!

BURNS AND OTHER PEOPLE.

(Contributed by the Groper.)

My barmie noddle's working prime,
My fancy perkit up sublime
Wi' hasty summons,
Hae ye a leasure-moment's time,
To hear what's comin'—

—Burns.

The best of known of local Haighs (J.R.) naively suggests that he and the illustrious Sir Douglas hark back to a common ancestry, once resident at "Haighmore" in Yorkshire. When asked for an explanation as to the absence of the terminal "h" in the Field Marshal's name, J. R. suggests that a certain great grandfather of the family had a niece, whose second son's first cousin went North of the Tweed on a wooing excursion. Here he secured a thrifty Scotch wife, who, for purposes of economy (i.e. ink saving) deleted the final "h," hence the Scotch Haighs are English after all and should spell their name "Haigh."—Tell the Field-Marshal.

The imp at my lug suggests that some such unfortunate happening has occurred in the name Hargest. A man to have achieved in a brief year or two of war such fame as our Lieut.-Colonel must have Northern blood somewhere. Without more ado we'll pick up the lost "Mac." It is no concern of our readers where we found it. Of one thing be sure—vote for

"MAC" HARGEST.

A fighter is needed on the Land Board.
But bring a Scotsman frae his hill,
Clap in his cheek a Highland gill,
Say such is royal George's will,
An' there's the foe;
He has nae thought but how to kill
Two at a blow.

Europe's political arena in 1920, with its several arguments, brawls, and blood-lettings in progress, is not unlike the Europe of 1790. At home the Court has been greatly purified, principally by the nobility of Victorian era women. St. Stephens governs more liberally if less strongly.

"Pimps, sharpers, bawds, and opera girls" still line the paths of opportunity and dalliance. The memory of "Cut-throat Prussian Blades" is fresh upon us and Prussia is still Prussia.—Foch says so and Foch knows.

In 1790 Burns wanted to know:—
How the collieshangio works
Atween the Russians and the Turks;
Or if the Swede, before he halt,
Would play anither Charles the Twait;
If Demark, anybody spak o't;
Or Poland, wha had now the tack o't;
How cut-throat Prussian blades were
hingin';
How libbet Italy was singin';
How royal George, the Lord leuk o'er
him;
Was managing St. Stephen's quorum;
If sleekit Chatham Will was livin';
Or glaikit Charlie got his nieve in;
How daddie Burke the plea was cookin';
If Warren Hastings' neck was yunkin';
The news o' princes, dukes and earls,
Pimps, sharpers, bawds and opera girls;
If that daft buckie, Geordie Wales,
Was danglin' still at hizzies' tails.

Some of the younger generation of dog and gun men hardly realise that a crime it was to shoot game, by trespass, in the land of Burns. Thus wrote "Robbie" to his friend Rankine, whom he characterised as "The whale o' cocks for fun an' drinkin'!"

'Twas ae night lately, in my fun,
I gaed a roving wi' the gun,
An' brought a patrick to the grun',
A bonnie hen.

And, as the twilight was begun,
Thought nane would ken.
The poor wee thing was little hurt;
I strait it a wee for sport,
Ne'er thinkin' they wad fash me for't;
But, deil-ma-care!

Somebody tells the poacher-court
The hale affair.

Some auld, us'd hands had taen a note,
That sic a hen had got a shot;

I was suspected for the plot;
I scorn'd to lie;

So ga't the whistle o' my groat,
An' pay't the fee.

But, by my gun, o' guns the wale,
An' by my pounther an' my hail,
An' by my hen, an' by her tail,
I vow an' swear!

The game shall pay o'er moor an' dale,
For this, niest year.

As soon's the clockin'-time is by,
An' the wee pouts begin to cry,
L—d, I'se hao sportin' by an' by,
For my gowd guinea;
Tho' I should herd the buckskin kye
For 't in Virginia
Trowth, they had no muckle for to
blame!
'Twas neither broken wing or limb,
But two-three draps about the wame
Scarce thro' the feathers;
An' baith a yellow George to claim,
An' thole their blethers!

Burns "hit off" the public men of his time with the deft hand of genius. Ministers of religion were his especial fancy. He applauded a good man when he met him and did not spare the other kind. From "The Twa Herds":—

What flock wi' Moodie's flock could
rank,
Sae hale and hearty every shank;
Nae poison'd sour Arminian stank,
He let them taste
Frae Calvin's well, aye clear they drank,
O' sic a feast!
The thummart, wi' cat, brock and tod,
Weel ken'd his voice thro' a' the wood;
He smelt their ilka hole and road,
Baith out and in;
And well he lik'd to shed their bluid,
And sell their skin.
What herd like Russell tell'd his tale.
His voice was heard thro' muir and dale
He ken'd the Lord's sheep, ilka tail,
O'er a' the height,
And saw gin they were sick or hale,
At the first sight.
He fine a mangy sheep could scrub,
Or nobly fling the gospel club;
And New-Light herds could nicely drub,
Or pay their skin;
Could shake them o'er the burning dub,
Or leave them in.

Sic Twa—O' do I live to see't,
Sic famous twa should disagree't,
An' names like villiam, hypocrite,
Ilk ither gi'en;
While New-Light Herds, wi' laughin'
spite;
Say neither's liein'!

Would it not be rather interesting could we have Burns' description of one or two persons this town has seen.

The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley;
And lea'e us naught but grief and pain
For promised joy.

True the surly face of winter scowled on us last Thursday week, but Invercargill for once laughed in his face, demonstrating that the Scot is merely ice-clad with volcanic heat smouldering beneath. His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, won all hearts irrespective of birth or creed, age or sex. This is as it should be, for the British Throne stands for law, order and liberty. But we love the Prince for his own sake—for his ability to prove himself, by word and action, one of ourselves.

"The grief and pain," if anywhere felt, was merited. In a community such as ours the idea of two or three hundred people being "drafted" for special privilege is ludicrous. Are we not all John Tamson's bairns—Shaun O'Sullivan's or Bill Smith's. The Prince recognised us as such and wished to see us all. He gave opportunity for all who wished to see him. In other words His Royal Highness doesn't want to add to the battalions of snobbery whose silly chatter might remind us of a day when Burns said:—

What of earls with whom you have supt,
And of dukes you have dined with
yestreen;
Lord, a louse, sir, is still but a louse,
Though it crawl in the curl o' a queen.

"The Groper" congratulates Captain Duncan Rae on the handling and appearance of his Guard of Honour.

Returned soldier Dick Gould for the obvious interest the Prince took in him during the inspection—onlooking ladies sighed.

The Tourist Company for supplying so many high grade new cars for the Prince's entourage.

The Hibernian Band for excelling itself at Garrison Hall. It is really possible to have too much of a good thing. The selections were rather lengthy for the occasion.

Captain Mawson and his High School Cadets for the sturdy bearing of all ranks.

And the people of Invercargill for "doing themselves proud" and learning how to cheer!

It is seldom that the miserable can help regarding their misery as a wrong inflicted by those who are less miserable.

Passing Notes.

BY JACQUES.

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

The personnel of the present Cabinet, the renewed activities of the P.P.A., and the possible visit of Sir Edward Carson to these islands, promise a busy time for the "Tablet."

Some humours of the Prince's visit. Among the crowd at the corner of the Crescent and Dee street was an excited old lady. Her excitement increased as the minutes passed, and when at length a motor car came crawling along she became almost hysterical. "Look at the dear lad," she gasped. "Isn't he every inch a Prince?" But it was only Inspector Rennie, after all.

Another incident. As the returned lads filed past for the Royal handshake the Prince asked of one: "Were you in Gallipoli?" "No," said the digger, "but"—brightly—"I've been to Wallacetown." Evidently he regarded both places as about equal in point of excitement.

Another Digger, meeting the Prince during his later walk saluted and enquired "How do, Prince?" The Prince's response was, it is said, equally cordial, though somewhat less abrupt.

Which reminds me. When an Australian cricket team went to England in the early 'eighties they were introduced to the present Prince's grandfather, then Prince of Wales. He was affability itself, and asked after the health of each. In reply to the Royal greeting of "How do you do" one bright and shining light blurted out, "Oh, not too stinkin', your Highness!"

Every war yields much dirty linen for the wash, and the latest and greatest differs only from those that went before in the magnitude of its laundry work. It was one long series of blunders, and now there is much searching for scapegoats. Mutual recriminations are as "thick as autumn leaves in Vallambrosa." "You did," and "I didn't," are heard on every side. It is only a few weeks since Lord French told us things that left a very unpleasant taste in our mouths; and now Sir Ian Hamilton is saying equally unpalatable things in even more vigorous language. The ignominious failure of the Gallipoli campaign was primarily due, he says, to the incompleteness of the arrangements at the outset, and to inadequate forces and red-tape bungling throughout the whole struggle there. When one remembers in what a slipshod way Britain always enters on her wars, and the disastrous effects of political intermeddling in every one of her greater campaigns, one is inclined to believe that there may be much in the General's statements. We have never yet had a great general, or admiral, either, for that matter, who did not put in a lot of his time cursing red-tape interference or apathy, and Sir Ian may have had as much reason as the rest of them. Mr Keith Murdoch, however, will have none of that. He insists that the failure of the enterprise was entirely due to Sir Ian's incompetence, and pushes forward, in support of his contention, the fact that Sir Ian was relieved of his command, and never received a further appointment during the war. This may, of course, be accounted for by the need of the real culprits for a scapegoat. It is a pity that the findings of the Gallipoli Commission were so vague and negative in character; with a little more determination and courage it might have been able to place the blame with some accuracy. As it is, we have only the heated words of excited disputants as to the ultimate responsibility for the terrible wastage of precious lives in that disastrous adventure, and the truth may lie anywhere between the two extremes they present.

It is not always judicious to put into print words of which you do not clearly know the significance. In a brightly written article in the "Auckland Weekly News" on the "silk stocking" phase of the high cost of living, "William's Wife" refers to the flapper, and to what her "young brother-in-law calls the tartines and nutcrackers." "Nutcrackers!" Really "William's Wife" should get William to carefully revise her proofs.

Which somehow reminds me of a story told of a certain eminent judge in divorce. Dining at a friend's house one day he was seated next a demure young thing, who looked too innocent for words. But she

had evidently been studying the divorce reports pretty closely, for presently she startled the company by saying, in a voice audible all over the room: "Judge, in the report of a case before you yesterday I noticed the words, 'Virgo intacta,' which were repeatedly used. What is the meaning of the term?" The company gasped, but the judge did not bat an eyelid. Turning to the young lady, he asked, "Do you know the meaning of 'vra avis'?" "Oh, yes," replied the damsel. "Well, my dear," said the judge, "the two terms are practically synonymous."

General Dyer, the hero (?) of Amritsar, is doing a little whimpering about his recall and degradation. His crime, he contends, was "a horrible duty," and received the approval of "every man in India." Well, let me quote from an article by H. N. Brailsford, published in the "Daily Herald," of December 11, 1919. Inter-alia, the writer says: "A British general, with fifty rifles and two armoured cars, marches in cold blood on a city, finds the population holding an orderly meeting in an enclosed place, and then, without a word of warning, and without the customary merces of blank cartridge, or shots fired in the air, proceeds to mow down the dense unresisting crowd for ten solid minutes, while it struggles to escape from the enclosure. It kills 400 catright, and wounds three times that number, and leaves the wounded agonising on the ground. It is true that a day or two before some mobs in the neighbouring city had burned two banks, killed a bank manager, and beaten an English woman. If General Dyer had come on one of these mobs in the act, and fired into it in hot blood, one might have understood his act. But these citizens were engaged in nothing criminal. I heard a friend say yesterday that the Germans did nothing worse in Belgium. But we were not at war with India. These people were our fellow citizens, the relatives of our Sikh comrades of the great war."

Thus Mr Brailsford, and his testimony does not endorse General Dyer's claim to the approval of every man in India. It is good for the Empire's credit that we have men amongst us who are too honest to close their eyes to their countrymen's crimes, and are sufficiently courageous to speak the truth at whatever cost.

THE SOLDIER'S DREAM.

Our bugles sang truce—for the night
cloud had lower'd,
And the sentinel stars set their watch
in the sky;
And thousands had sunk on the ground
overpowered,
The weary to sleep, and the wounded to
die.
When reposing that night on my pallet
of straw,
By the wolf-scaring faggot that guarded
the slain,
At the dead of the night a sweet vision
I saw,
And thrice ere the morning I dream'd
again,
Methought from the battle field's drear
ful array
Far, far I had roamed on a desolate
track:
'Twas autumn,—and sunshine shone on
the way
To the home of my fathers, that woe
comed me back.
I flew to the pleasant fields, traversed
so oft,
In life's morning march, when my
bosom was young;
I heard my own mountain-goats bleating
aloft,
And knew the sweet strain that the
cornreapers sung.
Then pledged we the wine-cup,
fondly I swore—
From my home and my weeping friends
never to part;
My little ones kiss'd me a thousand
times o'er,
And my wife sobb'd aloud in her fulsome
of heart.
Stay, stay with us,—rest; thou art
weary and worn;
And gain was their war-broken soldier
to stay;
But sorrow returned with the dawning
of morn,
And the voice in my dreaming
melted away.