

Passing Notes.

BY JACQUES.

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

Two local wool magnates have awaiting them, as their shares of surplus wool profits, cheques for twopence and threepence respectively. Greasing the fat pig's tail again!

Mr Wilford has discovered that petrol, even in small quantities, can be landed here at 23/- per case. Perhaps the Prices Investigation Committee will find out something about it later on.

A few days ago the "Times" reported that the local clink had put up a Dominion record in that it had been absolutely untenanted for a whole fourteen days—and nights. This fact—if fact it is—demands investigation. Of course there are some who will be ready with their glib explanations, but the phenomenon admits of other interpretations than theirs. Can it be, for instance, that the accommodation afforded by our most prominent institution has fallen so far behind the requirements of this progressive age that even the convivial and paralytic—who are by no means pernicketty, as a rule—turn up their noses at it? If so, no time should be lost in removing this reproach and restoring our fine old public hostelry to its former proud position in the public favour by furnishing it with all the comforts of a home, and otherwise making it as attractive as possible. Such a course would, moreover, free the John Hops from the danger of drifting into the ranks of the unemployed.

Consider the rates, how they grow. Within the last five or six years they have advanced nearly cent. for cent., and it is now nearly as costly to own your own home as it was to pay rent before the war. This would not be so bad, perhaps, if we received anything like fair value for our money, but one has only to look at our waterhole footpaths and grass grown, stone quarry streets to realise what a very small quid he is getting for his hard earned gold. Is it not about time that we began to consider the matter of replacing our present cumbersome and effete methods of municipal administration by something on the lines of the American system of government by commission? This system, which places the administration of the various departments absolutely in the hands of responsible experts—has been in force for years in the United States. No town, large or small, that has once tried it, has ever gone back on it, and every year it is being adopted by others who have closely watched its operation elsewhere. Among its results are more efficient service, more economical administration, the elimination of corruption, etc. Losses have been changed to gains, bankrupt municipalities have been restored to solvency, rates and taxes have been reduced, and in many other ways the system has justified itself. The experiment is worth a trial, I think.

Mr Massey is still tinkering with the matter of the reform of the Legislative Council. When he has finished we will probably still be somewhere in the vicinity of where we were before. It is a pity that, instead of all this patching and re-making, the whole abomination were not scrapped at once. There is no logical reason for the survival of this representative and symbol of medieval privilege at the present day. At one time the bi-cameral Parliament may have been necessary, or, at least, understandable, but it is difficult to find a sound reason for its being in this democratic age and country. Where it endorses the will of the people, as expressed in their more representative chamber, it is superfluous, and where it thwarts that expressed will it is undemocratic and mischievous. Even its supposed chief function of checking hasty legislation could be performed equally well, and at considerably less expense, by a revisory committee elected by, and from, the "lower" House. But perhaps this suggestion is seditious.

"Jax," said Bill savagely, "Those patent medicine ads. are about called in."

I looked an inquiry, and he explained. "Y'avent seen the missis lately, an' I'll

tell yeh why. 'Bout a month ago some swine threw over the front fence a bundle of those little books that ask yeh if yeh 'ave any specks before the eyes, an' pains in the back, an' other things, an' if yeh 'ave yeh want to take Purple Pellets at once unless yeh want to die. Well, the old woman got 'old of these an' started readin' 'em. Next mornin' she 'ad 'eart disease; said she could reckonise the symptoms from the book. I 'ad to get me own breakfast, while she sent one of the kiddies for half a dozen large size boxes (three times the quantity of the smaller ones) of the pellets, together with some of the tonic that makos 'em work better, an' some of the ointment for local application, an' other things to complete the outfit and cure yeh in no time. Me and the kids 'ad to get our own meals an' do all the 'ousework while the missis took the pellets an' read some more of those blanky books. After a week or so, she found out that it wasn't 'eart disease at all, but Bright's disease an' consumption. So she dropped the pellets and the other things, an' started on a new tack, this time Pulmonoleo an' Uricocide Backache Pills for the liver, kidneys, stomach an' other parts of yer flamin' anatomy. Also the tonic an' ointment an' plasters an' other things that went with these, too. She consumed quite a lot of these before she found, through readin' more of the symptoms in another book, that she was on the wrong track, an' that it was really appendicitis, with complications, that was the trouble with 'er. So off she sends for some of the Magic Mixture (an' more tonic an' pills an' other stuff) that was the only thing that could save 'er after the doctors gave her up an' all other things 'ad failed. At present she's on a course of Salvation Syrup (with more pills an' 'eteteress) for chronic dyspepsy—which is what is the matter with 'er accordin' to the symptoms in the Syrup book. Asked the doctor the other day what he thought about it, and 'e said there was nothin' wrong with 'er at all, only that she 'ad been scared by those advertisin' books. When I told 'er this she said the doctor was a fool, an' that if I wasn't an unsympathisin' brute. I could see for myself that she was at death's door. The 'ouse is chock full of medicine bottles an' misery; it's just awful. I think the Government should stop these medicine blokes scaring people out of their lives, an' making others wish to 'ell that they were dead."

KINGS AND PRINCES I HAVE MET.

KING SLANDAN FERGUSON.

I must confess that my interview with the King of Necropolis, though interesting and instructive, was not exactly exhilarating. True, his welcome was very cordial and his manner most affable, but I thought I detected a note of insincerity in his expressed hope that I was quite well. Also it seemed to me that a shadow of disappointment momentarily clouded his classic features when I assured him that I had just been medically passed as a first-class risk for insurance. Then he remarked hopefully that the editor of the "Digger" had not been looking too well lately, and perhaps —. But again I shattered his optimistic anticipations by informing him that I brought absolutely no prospect of immediate business, that I had been sent merely to make enquiry into the present condition and future prospects of his—er—profession. Obviously disappointed, but still courteous, his Majesty invited me to be seated, and himself settled in an easy chair to answer my queries.

Yes, he admitted, there had certainly been a most serious falling off, amounting in fact to a slump, in business lately, nor, at present, did future prospects appear very rosy. Quite a number of factors contributed to this melancholy state of affairs, but easily foremost among them stood the two following: First he would place the present H.C.D.—which, he explained, meant the High Cost of Dying. Though the High Cost of Living had made most men long to chuck the sev—er—pass over to that blissful bourne where everything is free, yet expiring had now also become such an expensive matter that

hundreds, who under other, happier circumstances would long ago have snuff—er—decantly defuncted were deferring the process in the hope of a possible fall in prices. At present, however, he could offer no comfort to these; there seemed every prospect of dying remaining a luxury for the well-to-do only for a long time yet.

Another cause, he proceeded, for the present unsatisfactory state of business was to be found in the regret—er—remarkable wave of rude health which seems to have swept like a curse—er—blessing over the community. Our late East winds, smallpox, and other things had given reason for hope, but, alas! folks seemed somehow to have acquired a most damnab—er—wonderful power of resistance to these influences. Possibly another epidemic might strike us, when things would brighten up again; in the meantime, however, the position was most discouraging. In fact, if it were not for the doctors, motor hogs, and those fellows who "didn't know it was loaded," the whole trade would be threatened with disaster. To the doctors, particularly, he felt that he owed no small measure of gratitude and esteem. Were it not for their kindly favours—well, he did not know how he would manage to get a crust. The motor hog also, as providing an impetus to trade, was not to be despised; while the man who "didn't know 'twas loaded" was easily deserving of a national testimonial.

Yes, he reflected—in answer to a further question—there were certainly some embarrassing features about his profession. For instance, for one in the line to inquire about the condition of a friend's health was sure to excite a fierce suspicion as to motives, and he knew of more than one lifelong friendship that had been ruptured by this simple cause. Again, to congratulate a convalescent on his recovery was to find oneself at once bracketed with Arnanias and Tom Pepper and other illustrious liars. Then there was the difficulty about advertising effectively. One could not, for instance, follow the lead of the drapers and others, and "invite inspection of our fine display of coffins," or announce that "caskets would be sent on appro," that "for quality, style, and finish they were unequalled," or "money back if not satisfied after one week's trial," or that one "will be pleased to see old customers and welcome new ones," or that one's coffins "once tried are always used," and so on. Yes, the industry had its disadvantages. Perhaps the greatest of all was the necessary suppression of all display of natural feeling. When other business potentates struck a bonanza they could throw up their hats and dance a can-can in the public streets. But in his profession, the more occasion there was for glee the more sad and solemn one had to look, and it was not even safe to rub one's hands together in satisfaction until one had reached the dark privacy of the coal cellar.

Still, he added, brightening somewhat, it had its compensations. Chief among these was the wide scope that it afforded for the free exercise of the artistic faculty. Everything was designed with a view not to utility only, but to beauty and fitness. To illustrate this he led me into the "Casket Room," where, among many others, was a delightful creation in rose-wood, gilt handles, and pink silk. Now this, he explained, would require very slight alterations to bring it into tasteful harmony with my complexion, besides being, as he could tell at a glance, as good a fit as if it had been made to my order. Proceeding then to the Hall of Statuary, he directed my attention to a beautiful piece of sculpture, representing a pined angel about to take its flight from the pinnacle of a lofty marble pedestal. This, he suggested, would be eminently suitable for me, since it symbolised the purity of my life and hinted at my future pleasant destination. With my name and my many sterling qualities inscribed thereon, it was a thing that I might well be proud to lie under up at the East Road Ossuary. He could do the two—the casket and monument—at a reduction, and throw in the inscription by way of a bonus, besides storing them for me until required. I thanked him fervently, and regretted that, besides being reluctant to trespass too far on good nature, other engagements then due prevented my remaining to discuss at greater length such a fascinating subject. So bidding him a hasty adieu I hurried away, and it took three tidy spots out of the editor's private supply to restore my disturbed equanimity.

Lumsden motor garage proprietors and hotelkeepers anticipate a record season for the Lumsden-Ta Anau-Milford trip in the coming season. The Milford track will be opened on November 1st, a month earlier than usual.

DRAUGHTS.

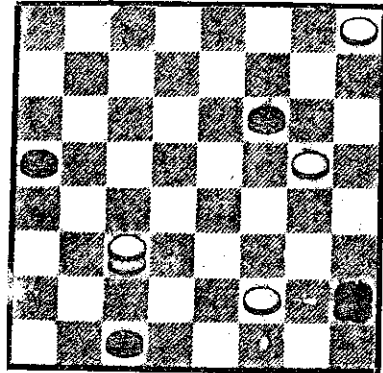
(Conducted by F. Hutchins).

All communications of interest to readers of this column to be addressed to "Draughts Editor," 28 Biggar street.

Players can help to maintain interest in the game of draughts by sending along solutions, criticism, games or items of interest to readers of this column. Address all such communications to "Draughts Editor," 28 Biggar street.

PROBLEM 31.

By Mr W. O'Malley (Queenstown).



Black 3, 20, 22, King 5.
White 6, 17, 29, King 11.

Black to play and win. Very neat.

SOLUTION OF PROBLEM 30.

Black 1, 11, King 2.
White 7, 14, 19.

White to play and draw.

- 17.9A* 9.6B 7.3 3.7
- 1.5 2.9 9.14 Drawn.
- a. 7.3, 1.6, 3.8, 11.16, 19.12, 6.10, 14.7, 2.4.—B. wins.
- b. 7.3, 5.14, 3.8, 11.16, 19.12, 2.7.—B. wins.
- c. 14.9, 6.13, 3.8, 11.16, 19.12, 2.7.—B. wins.

Played between Mr G. Coaff, Norwich, and a friend:—

AYRSHIRE LASSIE.

| Black—COAN. | White—FRIEND. |
|-------------|--------------------|
| 11.15 | 10.15A 23.14 16.19 |
| 24.20 | 19.10 9.18 23.16 |
| 8.11 | 6.15 31.26 12.19 |
| 28.24 | 32.28B 5.9 27.23 |
| 4.8 | 7.11 21.17 18.27 |
| 23.19 | 30.26C 3.7 22.18 |
| 15.18 | 12.16 17.14 15.22 |
| 22.15 | 26.23 9.5 24.8 |
| 11.18 | 8.12 26.23 9.18 |
| 26.22 | |

- a. 7.11 is more popular.
- b. 21.17 is best at this point.
- c. Cutting 24.19 is quite good, and draws.

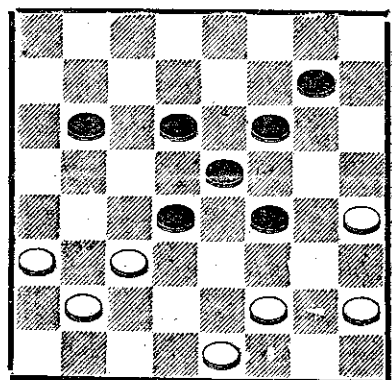
The subjoined game was contested between Mr W. Thomson, Drumlembie, the Argyleshire champion, and a Friend:—

KELSO.

| Black—FRIEND. | White—THOMSON. |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 10.15 | 23.16 4.11 14.18 |
| 23.18 | 12.19 22.17 26.22 |
| 6.10 | 18.15B 6.10 5.9c |
| 26.23 | 11.18 27.24 17.13 |
| 1.6 | 22.15 11.15 3.8 |
| 30.26 | 9.14 32.27 13.6 |
| 15.19 | 25.22 7.11 2.9 |
| 24.15 | 8.11 29.25 24.20† |
| 10.19 | 15.8 |

†See diagram:—

BLACK.



WHITE.

Black to play.

- 9.13 23.26 30.26 11.16
- 21.17 22.18 14.7 20.11
- 8.12 13.22 26.23 27.20
- 27.24 21.17 7.3 11.7
- 18.23A 26.30 23.27 15.18B
- 25.21 18.14 3.8 Drawn.
- a. 12.16, 17.14, would draw for White.
- b. 21.17, 9.14, etc.—Drawn.
- c. 11.16 appears good.
- d. An interesting game.

Draughts is both entertaining and instructive, giving both mental exercise and mental recreation, which is as important a factor as physical exercise and recreation in the development of the whole man.

NOTES FROM CALCIUM.

(Own Correspondent).

Bachelors' Ball.—The Press was not invited to this function but frequent peep through the window revealed a particularly gay assemblage of interesting looking ladies and interested-looking gents. In case someone else is giving you the facts of the affair I leave it at that.

Explanatory.—The eteteras will appear in a future issue of this journal as your correspondent strained his principal writing foot trying to get a good view through the window to see who was having the most dances with his best girl.

N.B.—Brevity is brevity.

P.S.—How can people expect a fellow to report a ball that he has to watch through the window!

BACHELORS OF CALCIUM.

(Special Correspondent).

Delightful music, excellent floor, winsome women, stalwart men, delicious edibles, squally weather—such in brief were conditions prevailing at Calcium on Friday evening last when a large number of young people from far and near gathered at the hall in response to the invitation of the Calcium bachelors. Digger T. MacKenzie and Miss R. Bisset (Lorne), led off the grand march in which some fifty couples participated. They start to finish the function was carried out with a swing that reflects much credit on all responsible.

A feature of the night's enjoyment was the splendid music supplied by the orchestra—Miss Nuttall (piano), and Messrs Crooks (violin), and Hunter (cornet). Their harmony and choice of music delighted dancers and non-dancers alike. During the supper interval Mr Hunter played a cornet solo, "Bubbles," which will be long remembered by those privileged to hear it. Miss K. McNeil kindly played several extras.

The office of M.C. was capably filled by Mr Wm. Mollison, and to him, as convenor of the floor committee, must also be given a great measure of the credit for the excellent dancing surface provided. Mr A. McWilliam, ably assisted by a committee of youthful bachelors, was responsible for the supper arrangements, and it is due to his organising ability that the large gathering was catered for with thoroughness and despatch.

Prominent amongst the articles of male decoration shone out the badge of the R.S.A. Fully sixty per cent. of the men present had seen active service. You Digger is a very adaptable person—picking the wind up Fritz, hewing a home out of the wilderness, or circling to the sweet strains of an orchestra—he performs each or all of these services as naturally as a hen lays eggs.

No account of this ball (or any other either) would be complete without mention of the ladies' raiment. It can be described adequately in two words—gorgeous and sufficient. To say more would betray the ignorance of your "special" in matters of feminine and textile. To say less would betray his entire lack of appreciation of what is artistic and decorous. A bolder spirit would inform your readers that the dresses were varied and various, but what I really want to make clear is that they were more "more so" than "less so." One thing is certain, if the male heart is as susceptible to feminine charm to-day as it was some years ago, matured bachelors in and about Calcium are going to be a very scarce commodity. There are a few cases—hardened, old—but we must get back to our dance.

We have mentioned the Grand March. There were others—new and old. The fox-trot, new to these parts, the Nine Pins, know to our ancestors (not a la Darwin), the Voluptuous Waltz, Destiny with its haunting melody, La Rinka that makes you wish you had rollers on your shoes, the King's Own with its suggestions of regal pomp and military splendour, and so on through a long and varied programme. It was two o'clock before the thought of next day's duties, or other matters of more or less importance, drew the more timid spirits homewards. Half an hour later the last dance was announced, and thus concluded what is unanimously voted the most enjoyable dance of the year. (What do the ladies say?) The bachelors have asked your "Special" to thank all those who contributed to the success of the function, especially the "Digger" management for its prompt and efficient printing services.

A honey-bee weighs rather less than three-hundredths of an ounce. These bees are actually sold by weight, and they average about 5000 to the pound. The queen, of course, are heavier, the weight given referring to workers.