

SNYDER GOES TO ONE AND WINS A CLOCK.

An art union, mixed in with a fancy bazaar, got up by a lot of pretty girls, in their best muslin dresses, and put up to all sorts of devices by their mothers is about as risky a bit of business for a man to have anything to do with as it is going to a races and betting all the money you've got on the favorite horse, only to lose it; and quite as big a delusion as a fancy box of bon-bons which is nearly all gilt paper with riddles and love questions printed about, but precious little confectionery that isn't plaster of Paris.

The most expensive part of an art union is winning a prize. Losing half-a-dozen prizes is as cheap again and don't cost a quarter of the money. Some one had said to me on that fatal Saturday night, "buy an art union ticket for three shillings." I said "three shillings was equal to six pounds of sirloin of beef paid for in cash, and taken delivery of by yourself and I couldn't afford it."

Then at last a ticket was put up to be thrown for and, just like my usual bad luck I became the winner of one for a shilling and like my bad luck again that miserable wretched ticket won a clock—a five guinea affair, guaranteed to go several weeks without winding, striking the hours and half hours and waking you with an alarm rattle an any hour of the night, with all the latest improvements in clock engineering given in.

What money I should have saved, what anxiety I should have been spared; what trouble of mind I should have been freed from, if I had only lost that clock instead of winning it. When it became known in that room that I had won a clock, one girl made me go in a raffle for a saddle of mutton; another for a glass bead basket valued at its weight in gold. Another would put me down for a cosy; another for a doll almost as big as the dear young lady who asked me so insinuatingly to take just "one little chance at half a crown." And all because I had won a clock.

I saw it was quite well understood that I should spend three times its value. I said to myself my dears all this is very charming and a very spicily affair; but it's just a little too expensive. Then I left the room and hadn't got out of doors two minutes when I was rushed by a lot of fellows who said what a lucky one I was to win a clock and I must shout, and I had to shout in shouts as thick as a hail shower. No sooner had six men taken their drinks than another eight or ten as the case might be by some curious bringing about of things took their place and this game was kept up until I wondered where the landlady and her two assistants got so much liquor to serve out; and I was wondering in my mind what was the population of Coromandel and how many more liquors would be wanted.

But that wasn't all by a long way. When I got home with the clock, my family insisted I should show its beauties by setting it going. And it was wound up in several places. In fact wherever there was a hole to wind it. When the pendulum was set in motion it went away for a bit at a speed as if it was being driven by a high pressure boiler when it was suddenly gave forth a sound in its inside like a bottle of ale which had burst and was emptying itself of its contents. Nothing would make it go any more, so we tried whether it would strike. This experiment was a delicate operation. We lifted the hammer; screwed up the bell and we wound away at a hole which we hadn't noticed at first when the hammer struck a hundred and forty three and then stopped short as if it had quite enough of it for one go off.

had we got a little way towards accomplishing our object, than either the fiddle has begun to scrape, or the organ to blow, or the piano to strum, not unfrequently all three at one time to opposite tunes. Our reporter has lost flesh considerably from the difficulties he has had to contend against. He has mixed up shipping news with police reports, and local intelligence with Church matters, which it has been found almost impossible to separate, unravel, and sort up. The sounds penetrate to the very heart of the room in which the composers work. If the air played has been lively, quick, and sparkling, we found the composers pegging away tremendously, and keeping time with the tune. If it was slow music, we didn't get any setting done at all; and our afternoon's publication was thrown back considerably. Terrible thoughts of wicked deeds have flashed through our mind. We considered after deep thinking whether we should be justified in shooting one or two of the miserable wretches of players, as a caution to others, but this, upon reflection, would not answer. The fears of death would not deter a man who cannot play on an instrument, but thinks he can, from abusing it. We mentioned our trouble to a friend of sound discretion, but at the same time of liberal views, for his advice. He considered a little, and then said we ought to be thankful that things were no worse. We asked how that could be possible. "Why, my dear sir," said our friend, "supposing that in addition to the pianos, and the organ, and the fiddle, and the concertina, there had been a couple of trombones and a big drum on view and for sale—how about it then? for there is not a man living who would not try the powers of a drum if he had the chance, and even a man with a deep consumption on him would go in for a trombone; for I have known it to be so. In every depth there is still a lower depth. So with your musical instruments there is no ending of them. You know there might have been half-a-dozen tambourines, or a set of bells, or a pair or two of nigger minstrel's bones, or a triangle—just imagine the possibility of an orphceide being among them!" Our friend's advice was that we ought not to think of taking human life; but there were two courses upon to us. One of which was to fire the premises; the other to break through the dividing partition during the dark hours of the night, and getting at the instruments, smash them to smithereens. The latter course would serve a double purpose. It would stop amateurs practising, and the destruction of the instruments would be gratifying to one's feelings. We had determined upon the smashing experiment, when, to our delight, the force and strength of which words cannot depict, we read in our columns that the whole of the things were to be disposed of without reserve by public auction as on Saturday last; and they have gone, and we are that glad that we propose giving a banquet in commemoration of the occasion. This living next to an auction room partitioned off by merely thin deal boards occasionally leads to strange mistakes. About six weeks back we found our reporter had sent into the printers an account of a violent thunder storm which had broken over Gisborne. We were just in time to take it from a foreman who was about to place it in a compositor's hand to set in type. We knew there had been no thunder storm. The fact was our reporter just having been engaged was strange to the place, and he had taken the removal of some hundred bags of oats by means of a hand-truck over the hollow flooring boards of the auction room, as so many peals of

thunder, which he described as "occurring at regular, but rapid intervals, causing much alarm to timid and nervous females."

MY SENTIMENTS.

THE law, as it is manipulated by lawyers to suit the particular circumstances of a client's case, is about as flexible and elastic as the answers of a candidate, when he stands his public examination, before a crowd of electors and makes promises which he couldn't keep if he would and wouldn't keep if he could. A week ago an agent in Wellington sued a man for debt. That man was defended by Mr Barton who contended that his client should have been sued by the principal. Mr Barton gained the case. Just a very few days before this in Otago a principal sued a man for unpaid goods which his (the principal's agent) had sold for him. That man also employed a lawyer who contended that the agent must sue and not the principal. This lawyer also gained the day. Gentlemen of the long robe which should it be? That's what I should like to know before I express my sentiments on the difficulty.

Two learned divines, one from a Dunedin and the other from a Christchurch pulpit, have thought proper to go out of their way, and a very long way out of their way, with more than one turning to it, to instruct editors of newspapers as to what is their duty. Editors sometimes go out of their way to instruct divines what should be their duty, so I suppose the thing is quite fair. If I am permitted to give an opinion, derived from some experience, I should say the duty of an editor is to make the paper he controls, a good paying enterprise, and he can only do this by supplying a good article, just as a baker or a grocer tries to increase business by supplying good bread and tea and sugar. People of the present day are just as good judges of a newspaper as they are of what they eat and drink, and if it is not to their liking the proprietor is not very long in making the discovery without receiving any hints from the pulpit.

The millers of Dunedin have sent a circular to the produce dealers in that City and suburbs stating they will not supply those who import flour and other breadstuffs from Oamaru and elsewhere, and conclude the circular thus: "The object and fairness of this will be apparent." It may be apparent, but in common with the produce dealers my mental vision does not take it in. Millers were wont to occupy themselves by grinding down wheat pure and simple. Then they ground down maize with their wheat, occasionally sorted up with damaged cargoes of rice. Now they want to grind down the produce dealers, and where the grinding system is to stop at I don't pretend to say.

It is not very often I venture a prophecy. I will do so this once. A gold fever is raging on the Thames. Moanatarie shares, which six weeks ago could not find buyers at a few shillings, are now quoted at £21. My prophecy is, that within the next twelve months more people will have been ruined by trading in these shares than will have made anything out of them. Information to this effect will be gratefully received and promptly acknowledged. Two men died raving mad, one committed suicide, Haley tried to perpetrate murder; more than a hundred men went "broke," and no end of misery was caused by the celebrated Caledonian claim. Walter Williamson, the greatest prospector on the Thames gold field, died miserable, and was buried by subscription. Bryan, who discovered the rich auriferous cement at Charleston, on the West Coast, is now a cripple begging for a meal. The Frenchman who opened up Fox's, gambled £500 away in one night, and was found drowned the next day. Jack Doble who struck a new and immensely rich patch of gold at the Dunstan died of consumption in a hospital, not leaving a shilling to his wife and six children. Is it true then that gold is the root of all evil? The two or three half dozen men who became rich through mine speculations what have become of them? And to what good account did they turn their money, and how many sleepless nights and feverish days did the unwholesome excitement cause them?

Mr Emmet the singing Minstrel has entered an action against the owners of the Jane Douglas steamer for causing him to miss the mail steamer for Frisco. He lays his damage at £2000 for the

mouth's detention. Allowing that Mr Emmet would sing ten songs a night for twenty-four nights in his month, £2000 is not a bad figure to reckon them up at. It's equal to the united salaries of the Archbishops of London and Canterbury, with a pluralist or two and a dozen curates thrown in. But then Archbishop's can't sing "Schneider how you was," which makes all the difference. With regard to the £2000 which Mr Emmet sues for I really—I really do—wish he may get it.

The question still remains unsettled—what is a *bona fide* traveller, that is when the obtaining a pint of beer on a Sunday is concerned? It has lately been decided that a man coming off a two year's whaling voyage and landing on a Sunday morning, knocks at a public house door for a drink, he is not a *bona fide* traveller. But then a woman who walked two miles out of Auckland city and back again is a traveller and may be served stimulants—or in plain terms, get brandy, rum or beer as she may call for. Then again what constitutes a lodger has not been settled. Some little time ago a man early in the day went into a public house in Lyttelton in his shirt sleeves and told the landlord to put him down for a bed. Upon the strength of this he was considered a lodger and had three drinks. In the afternoon he called and had three more drinks. Then he told the landlord not to keep his bed as he shouldn't want one. Was that man a lodger or was he not? It is as hard to decide when a man is a *bona fide* traveller or lodger as when he is *bona fide* intoxicated.

I take the following from one of the newspapers. I forget now which, and its of no consequence:—

"As an instance of the process employed by the missionaries in New Zealand in the early days to christianise the natives, the *North Otago Times* relates that a certain Rev. Mr Wilson acquired in the days of the past, from the natives of Opoiki, under a doubtful tenure, about 10,000 acres of land. The land was of an excellent quality—better than the tenure. The purchase money, or the consideration given, was one cow, one old plough, two pairs of blankets, and sundry bottles of rum. The doubtful title was, however, validated by the missionary's son, who, somehow or another, happened not long ago, to become one of the Land Purchase Commissioners under Government.

This is nothing to what I have known. An early settler in Western Victoria purchased from a tribe of blacks 20,000 acres of land at Batesford, near Geelong for the annual payment of a ton of flour, and 20 pairs of blankets. I have seen the marks of each man of the tribe on the deed—a sheet of foolscap—duly witnessed. Then the tribe went to war with another tribe when the whole were killed. The buyer never made but one payment. That twenty thousand acres were afterwards sold at an average of £16 per acre.

A newspaper correspondent for the *Lyttelton Times* complains that a Government appointment in the Solicitor General's office has been given to a young son of Mr Batkin, the Secretary to the Treasury. His claim to the appointment lay in the fact of his father being one of the heads of departments. Now I ask the correspondent if such a reason is not all sufficient. What is the use of being the head of a department without it enables a man to get appointments for his sons, husbands for his daughters, billets for his poor relations and something good for himself. Why that is the true meaning of being at the head of a department. If that correspondent only knew what a man had to go through before he got into the arm chair of a Government Office—the toadying to his superiors, the bowing down to Ministers, the beseeching to members of Parliament the too frequent loss of all manly respect for himself—he would think the head of a department should possess the power of conferring appointments upon his sons, and his sons, sons to the third and fourth generation, besides a rise of salary at frequent and irregular intervals.—

SNYDER.