

sleeping at the time in the adjoining tenement, and what would have been my feelings had it been consumed in the flames? I acknowledged the possible circumstances, but pleaded in mitigation that the untimely loss might have proved a source of gratification to its father. I was mulct in five shillings and costs, the costs being three times in excess of the fine. I asked the Clerk of the Court to whom the costs went, and he told me that the question was an impertinent one. I asked again whether he would furnish me the items which went to make up the fifteen shillings demanded of me over and above the fine, when he said he would do nothing of the kind. I remarked that it was quite possible he had wrongly added up the figures, but he refused to give me any satisfaction. He said costs were costs, and they were never allowed to be disputed. I said I thought I ought to be allowed to inspect the bill of particulars. His reply was that perhaps I did think so, but he was not going to gratify my curiosity. After this I paid a visit to my old housekeeper. I explained how I had been the victim of mistaken powers, and besought that she would return once more to my household. But she said no. Thank heaven she had escaped a fiery grave. She knew all my good points, but declined to have her days brought to a premature close by my mode of life. She hoped she might live to see the day when newspapers would be done away with which kept honest men out of their beds the best part of the night.

BARMAIDS AND THEIR USES.

I notice that another clergyman down South has been denouncing barmaids as iniquities. I should like to know what business parsons have to bother themselves about barmaids. Everything living has its use in this world. Nothing is made in vain. Sparrows are useful to eat the caterpillars which destroy the farmers' crops. Cats are useful on the top of houses at night time that we should learn the value of sleep when we can't get it. A dirty-feeding pig will make beautiful ham for a sandwich. Fleas offer one a lesson to keep his temper and not swear. I never could see the use of snails or rhinoceroses, but I have no doubt they serve a purpose. Barmaids are useful for fools to talk to who would not be listened to by anyone else. If the class of spoonies I have in my eye had not barmaids to fly to, sensible people would not be able to exist. I rather like barmaids myself. There's something tall in being able to go up to a barmaid when four or five spoons are hanging about her, and saying, "Polly, my sweetest, do me a shandygaff with the chill off," or something equally smart, and then winking the left eye while you drink, ask her whether she can whistle "Pop Goes the Weasel" to flats. You walk off, leaving the spoons to think that you know a good deal more about Polly than they do and this makes them envious and pleases you. One of the greatest pleasures of life is the power to aggravate.

JUVENILE BEGGING.

At this moment I am interrupted by a knocking at my door. I open it and find standing before me a young girl—she may be ten or she may be twelve years of age. She has the fresh bloom of early girlhood on her face. Neatly attired, and modest-looking withal. In her hand she holds a card, ruled in parallel lines. She comes a-begging on account of some mission—a good mission, I have no doubt. It is to further the cause of a church. She shows me her card, and in childish words she asks me to contribute; to which entreaty I at once refuse.

I say to her, "My dear child, whoever sent you upon this mission is doing you, unintentionally I dare say, great wrong. By-and-by—may the time be long and distant—it will probably become your lot of stern necessity to come in hard contact with the world, when you will be called upon to do many things and make many requests which you may have but will not care to make. But those who have sent you forth upon this mission, whether it be parent or clergyman, should have borne in mind that, although when the fresh bloom has been brushed from the fruit, it may still be good fruit, yet it has lost much of its early beauty. You have been sent out to meet with many a cold answer, many an unkind rebuff, and it may be to hear words which you ought not to hear. The cause you are pleading for with childish lips is no doubt a good cause, but it should have

been pleaded for by age that has matured and is able to answer a refusal or reply to a taunt."

And so the child went her way, and I here note it that those who send out young children to beg for money from door to door, no matter for what object, do them a grievous wrong. I did not ask that child from whence she procured the money which purchased the pastry, the remains of which were about her mouth and face, nor that packet of confectionery which she held in the same hand with her begging card. I did not ask her, I say, because I would not have her add the sin of a lie to that of pecculation. Will my good friends profit by the counsel which this intimation is intended to convey?

"Snyder," in the *Coromandel Mail* asks:—Why should we blame members for doubling their honorarium: for asking and obtaining free passes on the railway lines of the colony; of living at Bellamy's on the cheap at the expense of the country? Did we not, as the electors of several constituencies, send such men to represent us? Is it not known that there are members who actually filch the soap placed in the lavatories; who steal postage stamps and stationery; who put dinner bread into their pockets and carry it away? Yet have we not elected these men to represent our most important interests. Before any of us venture to engage a domestic servant, or a clerk, or storeman, we invariably require to know something of his character and antecedents. We do not accept the applicant's own words for what he has to say for himself. But in the case of a representative who is to assist in framing our laws, we allow him to stand on a platform, or on the floor of a public hall, or on the stage of a theatre, and when he tells us he will do this; advocate that and the other thing, we hip-hip hurrah him, and then send him to the Assembly to ignore and repudiate every promise he has made. It is all no more than what we are entitled to expect—nothing more in deed and in truth than what we thoroughly deserve.

A CORRESPONDENT asks the "Poverty Bay Standard" "What is a Government Whip?" The Editor (the genial "Snyder") replies:—"A Government Whip is generally held to be a flunkey. So long as he is under engagement he is required to be instantaneous at the beck and call of Ministers. He is bound to do their bidding in season and out of season; by day or by night. There must be no rest for the soles of his feet, and he must have no mind which he may call his own. A government whip is chosen for certain qualities he is found to possess. He has to discover whether a member of the House is for or against the Government. If against the Government the member must be coaxed. The Whip will ask him if he as a son he would like to get into the Customs, or the stamp, or the Treasury Department. Whether he (the member) would like to be placed on the roll of Justices of the Peace. A Government whip must be able to stand with equanimity a snubbing. Sometimes the snubbing will come from the Ministers whom he is so faithfully serving. But he must be humble and subservient. He is not expected to black the boots of a Minister, but he must carry the box which holds a Minister's papers and official despatches."

SNYDER'S TROUBLES.

(Southern Cross.)

"What has become of Snyder?" is a question we are occasionally asked by friends of ours, who note the absence from our columns of his clever, humorous, gossiping letters about men and things in New Zealand. We have been making the same inquiry ourselves at "Snyder's last address," and we find that a good many things have happened to him sufficient to account for his want of attention to ourselves, but that there is every probability of his resuming his acquaintance with our readers as soon as he gets off his hands a little family and business transaction. He has, it seems, been trying to run a newspaper on his own account on one of the old-established gold-fields of the colony, and he begins to find it won't run in any direction but the Insolvency Court, so he proposes to present the interesting but wayward periodical to a member of his family, who has not yet had an introduction to the venerable tribunal. He says:—"I shall leave the _____ to one of my sons, who tells me that having never met with any difficulties in life as yet, or not of a kind worth mentioning, he should like to be left on his own hook, that he may have an early experience of what being ruined really means. At present he is quite unacquainted with the sensation. I have never denied any of my children a rational enjoyment, and so have indulged him in running a newspaper in a district which has been going down, down, and still downer, from the first day I came to live in it. Talk about the young lady with the young gazelle to glad her with its dark blue eye—and the rest. Her continual misfortunes were not a patch upon what mine have been. I never yet made a voyage, and I have made many, but I have got wrecked, or the ship took fire, or run short of provisions, so that we had to live on half a biscuit a day and a salt herring, and one wine-glass of water. I never travelled in a coach but what the axle broke, or the two leaders bolted, or the coach went over an embankment. I never bought a share in any speculation but what shares went down within five minutes after receiving the transfer. Even the last time I went from here to Auckland, which is a four hours' trip, we narrowly escaped a 'terrible and fatal accident.' The boiler was found to have no water in it, and the bottom was red hot. We had to out fires and sail back in a gale, with the loss of bulwarks and nothing to eat for six hours. Oh, you don't know what I have had to go through in my time."

CONTRIBUTIONS BY "SNYDER."

MY BARBER: THE ROYAL RADICAL RESTORATIVE—THE BARBER FALLS FOUL OF NATURE—HIS RUSE FOR DYEING HAIR—BLACK EYES.

"CAN such things be," I said, "and man, proud man, a little lower than angels, still permitted to hold a place in creation?" "They be, Mr Snyder, I do assure you, if be's the word that's fit and proper to be used on the occasion." It was my barber I was in conversation with, although he styles himself hair-dresser, perquier and perfumer to some grand personage who lives in a far distant land, and whose cranium was never manipulated by any other one than his head valet. But I let that pass. I had placed my head under his hands, telling him to be easy on the edge of his scissors, by not taking too much hair off. I told him to direct his attention only to trimming the points and parts of unequal growth, and to leave the bulk of it to take care of itself; "because, Mr Snips," I said, "my hair does not yield such a rich and abundant crop as it did once upon a time, ere I fell into the sere and yellow leaf, and my tailor took a pride in me. Therefore," I continued, "deal gently by me."

"No, Mr Snyder, what you say is a sad tale; your hair isn't, I am quite sure, what it used to be when you were your father's pride, and your mother's darling. Mine would be the same—just the very same as yours—wanting in strength and glossiness did I not preserve it in its pristine vigor by frequent applications of the Royal Radical Restorative, as used by

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales—price four-and-six by the single bottle, or taking three, ten shillings."

I told Mr Snips that I thought of thinking about taking three bottles at the wholesale figure, but I would not give him a decided answer just at that moment.

He said, "Certainly not," and then he told me (in the strictest confidence) of those things which produced that exclamation of surprise and wonderment to be found in the opening lines of this plaintive narrative.

"You see, Mr Snyder, I don't think nature has quite done what it might have done in many things, or we shouldn't have been compelled to resort to art. Not that I complain, you know, because art's good for trade in my department. Now, you see what lots o' hair boys have got on their heads just at a time they don't care two pins about it, and their mothers are always complaining at the expense of oil, and the cost o' cutting every three weeks or a month; besides, if boys' mothers ain't particularly particular, and boys are never particular themselves, there's a great danger attending too much hair. In fact, boys don't want and would a great deal sooner be without it, because they suffer greatly at times in getting it combed. Well, just what they don't want, and when they don't want it, nature goes a piling it on to them thicker and thicker until they get advanced in years, when nature gets fatigued doing its duty, and then the hair drops away and turns to an off colour just at the very time an old man wants to go courting a young girl. Now, if nature was to begin with wrinkles and the smallest possible amount of hair, and going as years rolled away to redoing the wrinkles, and increasing the amount of hair, it would please the old 'uns much better, and I think nature ought to give the old 'uns more consideration than a lot of boys. Nature, acting in the manner it does, leads to deception; that's just what Nature does, Mr Snyder, and it's me that knows it. You see one of my customers walking down the street. He looks rather under than over forty, and my belief is that fifty-nine will know him no more on this side of the equator of life. Who produced those beautiful whiskers and lovely moustache? Who gave it him, I ask, nature or me? I say me, and the charge is seven-and-six, which 's cheap, because nature ain't to be caught hold of by tipping him or her, as the case may be, with any number of half-crowns. But, and it's telling you and you only, Mr Snyder, having your hair dyed once is like telling a first lie. To bolster up that lie you've got to tell ever so many lies to make it appear a fact. So it is when a man once gets his hair dyed, he's got to go on ever after dyeing away, or he would precious soon be bowled out. I often say to some old one, 'Your hair, sir, would be improved in a manner wonderful to look down upon if you would only let me dye it a dark chesnut brown or a deep black.' Then the old 'un will think a bit, and he says 'What will be the damage?' and I says, 'I'll do it for nothing.' There's where I have him, you see. He takes the bait right off, and I dyes his hair for him and don't charge; and ain't he proud of himself just a little—that's all. Then in a fortnight he comes with as seedy a looking crop as you could well look upon, and he says, 'Mr Snips, I wish I hadn't had my hair dyed now, because I see it must be kept up;' and I say, 'Of course it must, it would never do otherwise not to keep it up.' And so I clear seven-and-sixpence upon that transaction, and that man's good to me to the tune of six pounds ten or seven pounds a-year, until he marries, or becomes bald, or is buried. Because, you see, these old gentlemen don't care going about from one establishment to another to get dyed, as they like to keep the thing a secret. But it ain't always the old fellows who want to get the better of nature. Young 'uns are sometimes as bad. Nature has said to 'em, your moustache will do for bristles of a very light Windsor soap colour, and this don't suit a chap that's fond of admiration. I don't do much in the moustache line, but I do some. It's a dangerous game is a false moustache, because, you see, if a lover goes to kiss his girl, and she thinks it her dooty, for appearance sake, to show fight, the moustache is apt to come off, and it causes a little awkwardness to the feelings, besides temporarily spoiling facial beauty. What I gets most out of young men is what they spend to make the hair grow long and thick, or make it curly, or cause it to part as smooth and as straight as a