

WITH REFERENCE TO SARAH.

"WHAT are you writing?" said Jones to his wife, noticing what little progress she was evidently making, "you don't seem to know what you want to say, that's the third sheet you've torn up." "That's just what's the matter, I *don't* know what to write!" Sarah is leaving, you know, and she asked me to give her a 'character.' Now as I think I never had a more unsatisfactory servant, I don't know what to say! I hate to refuse her. In fact I daren't; she'd give me a fearful character if I refused to give her a good reference."

"Oh well! don't bother about it! Just say that she's honest, clean, attentive, and a good cook."

"Oh, Tom! How can I? why she—"

"Oh, that's all right! Put down honest—I'm sure she never even took a 'telling' from you—clean—*she's* clean enough—the house was awful dirty, no doubt—attentive—you needn't say who she was attentive to, it happened to be the policeman and looking-glass while she was here, but her taste might change. As for the cooking, you perhaps might alter that. Let me see! Put it, while she was with us we never had a badly cooked meal, that will fill the bill. I—"

"Why, you know I had to cook everything myself."

"Possibly. But they were well cooked, weren't they? Just you write the ordinary reference. It will probably turn out about as near the truth as the most they bring you. We never yet hired a girl who lived up to her 'character,' no one expects it!" *

COMMUNICATION WITH MARS.

MME. GUZMAN, an old lady who died lately in France, left a legacy of 100,000 francs to the Academy of Science to be given as a prize to the individual, of whatever nationality, "who shall discover, within ten years, a means of communication with a star (planet or otherwise), and of receiving a reply." This munificent offer has, of course, set the astronomers on the *qui vive*, and it is safe to assume that not a few individuals who know nothing of astronomy are hard at work on the problem. Up to this writing, however, the discovery has not been made. We mention this for the encouragement of any of our readers who may feel like going into the contest. We are too busy ourselves to devote any time to the matter—and, besides, we do not particularly care for the 100,000 francs, as it would be a lot of trouble getting them changed into Canadian currency—but, for the benefit of those who may care to go into the competition, we throw out one or two casual suggestions:

Take the planet Mars as one of our nearest, probably inhabited, neighbors. (There doesn't seem to be any use in experimenting on uninhabited planets. Let experimenters make a note of this). Now, the problem is, how to open up communication with Mars. Here are our pointers:

(1.) Signal them with a large bonfire, using for the purpose of the conflagration all the bad and useless novels that now cumber the earth, and all the treatises that have been written in support of Protection and other political humbugs. If this wouldn't make a blaze big enough to be seen across the blue empyrean, it may be concluded that the bonfire scheme is no good.

Other plans may be thought out in the shape of appeals to the eyes of the Mars people, such as flash-light signals, etc. If these all fail let us make an appeal to their ears, and to that end



BEHIND HIS USUAL RECORD.

MR. HOGG—"I'm losing my appetite somehow."

MRS. H.—"Too bad; I'm very sorry; and you've only eaten enough for three!"

(2.) Send Col. Denison up in a balloon to the highest possible point, and let him from that coign of vantage deliver one of his stentorian speeches on the old flag. There is reason to believe that the Marsians are not imbued as they should be with sentiments of profound attachment to the British Empire, and this would lend power to the Colonel's lungs. The rarity of the atmosphere between our upper regions and the planet Mars is so great—if, indeed, there is any intervening element at all—that every word would be distinctly heard, in all probability.

(3.) Another plan, slightly more expensive, however, would be to have some selections from Wagner played by a full orchestra upon the peak of Mount Stephen, N.W.T. This ought to fetch the Mars' people if they can hear anything.

(4.) The expensiveness of the project just suggested may render it impracticable. In that case, perhaps the same general effect could be produced simply by having Mr. Lem Felcher, attired in his holiday clothes, stand in that exalted attitude. We cannot think of anything that would be louder than this, and, in fact, we are inclined to think that the inhabitants of Mars would find some means of imploring us to stop the awful racket. But, as already stated, we are really too busy to go into this scientific business, fascinating as it unquestionably is. Our active sympathies are with the earnest experimenters, however, and we will be glad to chronicle the name and address of the winner of the prize. We have a premonition that he will turn out to be the same distinguished party who solves the problem of perpetual motion.

IT WASN'T BINDING.

FLIPJACK—"Ah there, Boozer, off again? Thought you made a resolution New Year's that you weren't going to drink any more."

BOOZER—"Sho I did, but itsh no good. I moved reshlution but it wasn't seconded, sho it fell through, Shee? Comelongantakesumthin'."

COULDN'T GO THE PACE.

FIRST BOARDER—"Can you pass the cheese, Flipjack?"

SECOND BOARDER—"I doubt it. I think it could get ahead of me."