

"Well, well, mother, I don't care a snuff if you were a Sesayder or even a Tommykite—"

"A Tommykite?" cried Coristine, anxious to extend his knowledge and increase his vocabulary.

"It's a man called Thomas," answered the interrupted husband, "that made a new sect out our way, and they call his following Tommykites; I dunno if he's a relation of the captain or not. Give a dog a bad name, they say, and you might as well hang him; but the Tommykites are living, in spite of their name."

"Henry Cooke, your remarks are very unnecessary and irrelevant," said his wife, falling into bad English over a long adjective.

"I was just going to say, mother, that I wanted you to try and keep these gentlemen from going beyond our house to-night, because you can put it so much better than I can."

The old lady, thereupon, so judiciously blended coaxing with the apology of disparagement, that the only alternative left the pedestrians was that of remaining; for to go on would have been to treat the disparagement as real, and a sufficient cause for their seeking other shelter. The house they entered was small but neat. It consisted almost altogether of one room, called a living room, which answered all the purposes of eating, sleeping and sitting. Outside were a summer kitchen and a dairy or milk-house, and, a short distance off, were the barn and the stable, the sole occupant of the latter at the time being a cow that spent most of its leisure out of doors. Supper did not take long preparing, and the travellers did ample justice to a very enjoyable meal. The dominie engaged the hostess in conversation about German cookery, Sauer Kraut, Nudeln and various kinds of Eierkuchen, which she described with evident satisfaction.

"Mrs. Hill and Wilkinson are regular Deipnosophists," remarked Coristine to the host.

"That's too deep for me," he whispered back. "But tell it to the mistress now; she's that fond of jawbreakers she'll never forget it."

"We were remarking, Mrs. Hill, that you and Wilkinson are a pair of Deipnosophists."

The old man looked quizzically at his wife, and she glanced in a questioning way at the dominie.

"My friend is trying to show off his learning at our expense," the latter remarked. "One Athenæus, who lived in the second century, wrote a book with that name, containing conversations, like those in 'Wilson's Noctes Ambrosianæ,' but upon gastronomy."

"I was not aware," said the hostess, "that they had gas so far back as that."

Wilkinson bit his lip, but dared not explain, and the lawyer looked sheepish at the turn affairs were taking.

"It'saisy remembered, mother," put in the quondam schoolmaster.

"Think of astronomy, and that'll give you gastronomy; and a gastronomer is a deipnosophist. That's two new words in 'one day and both meaning the same thing.'"

The hostess turned to the dominie, with a little shrug of impatience at her husband, and remarked: "The life of a deipnosophist in gastronomical works must be a very trying one, from the impure air and the soft coal dust; do you not think so, Mr. Wilkinson?"

That gentleman thought it must, and the lawyer first chewed his moustache, and then blew his nose severely and long. Fortunately, the meal was over, the host returned thanks, and the party left the table. The old man took a pail and went to water the stock, which seemed to consist of the cow, while the wife put away the supper things, and prepared for the evening's milking.

The pedestrians, being told there was nothing they could do, strolled out into the neighbouring pasture, and pretended to look among the weeds and stones, at the end of the fence farthest away from the stock-waterer for botanical and geological specimens; but, in reality, they were having a battle royal.

"Corry, you ass, whatever put it into your stupid head to make a fool of that kind little woman?"

"Sauer Kraut and Speck Noodle, what did you begin with your abominable Dutch dishes for?"

"I had a perfect right to talk German and of German things with Mrs. Hill. I did not insult her, like an ungrateful cur, I know."

"I never insulted her, you blackguard, wouldn't do such a thing for my life. I had a perfect right, too, to talk Greek to the old man, and it was you put your ugly foot in it with your diabolical gastronomy. I wonder you don't pray the ground to open up and swallow you."

"I consider, sir, an apology from you to our host and hostess absolutely necessary, and to be made without any delay."

"I'll apologize, Wilks, for the deipnosophist part of it, but I'll be jiggered if I'll be responsible for your nasty gastronomy."

"That means that you are going to put all the onus of this hideous and cruel misunderstanding on my shoulders, when I explained your expression in charity to all parties, and to help you out."

"Help me out, is it? I think it was helping me into the ditch and yourself, too."

"Will you or will you not accept the responsibility of this whole unfortunate business? Here is my ultimatum: Decline to accept it, and I return to Collingwood this very night."

"Wilks, my boy, that would never do. It's dead tired you'd be, and I'd hear of you laid up with fever and chills

from the night air, or perhaps murdered by tramps for the sake of your watch and purse."

"It matters nothing. Right must be done. *Fiat justitia, ruat coelum*. Every law of gratitude for hospitality cries aloud: 'Make restitution ere the sun goes down.' I understand, sir, that you refuse." So saying, the offended dominie moved rapidly towards the house to resume his knapsack and staff.

"Wilks, if you don't stop I'll stone you to death with fossils," cried the repentant lawyer, throwing a series of trilobites from his tobacco-less pocket at his retreating friend. The friend stopped and said curtly: "What is it to be?"

"Wilks, you remind me of an old darkey woman that had a mistress who was troubled with sneezing fits. The mistress said: 'Chloe, whenever I sneeze in public, you, as a faithful servant, should take out your handkerchief, and pretend that it was you; you should take it upon yourself, Chloe.' So, one day in church, the old lady made a big tis-haw, when Chloe jumped up and cried out: 'I'll take dat sneeze my ole missus snoze on myself,' waving her handkerchief all around."

"I did not delay my journey to listen to negro stories, Mr. Coristine."

"It has a moral," answered the lawyer; "it means that I am going to take all this trouble on myself, and hinder you making a bigger ass of yours. I'll apologize to the pair of them for me and you."

"That being the case, in spite of the objectionable words, 'bigger ass,' which you will live to repent, I shall stay."

(To be continued.)

AUSTRALIAN LETTER.

IN my far corner of the world, in the city of Adelaide, in the Province of South Australia, the work of your compatriot Mr. O. A. Howland struck a chord in unison with what I have felt about the Empire, and the duties devolving upon its subjects. The "New Empire" having been originally noticed in the columns of the Toronto WEEK, it appears to be a fitting channel through which to pour any helpful or warning words from our Sunny South. The Australian colonies, including New Zealand, contain more people and infinitely more wealth than the thirteen American colonies at the time of the Revolution. They have not been overshadowed, as the Dominion of Canada has been, by a mighty republic like the United States. They have on the whole been very well treated by the parent State, and their development has been in some ways different from yours. We are all alive and steadily growing.

South Australia was the first province founded in Australia quite free from the convict element. Victoria and Queensland were originally portions of New South Wales, the original convict settlement, and Tasmania, under the old name of Van Dieman's Land, was still more emphatically a dépôt for the criminals of Great Britain and Ireland. The convict taint is, however, wearing itself out. All the colonies have long had the advantages of excellent education in State schools, but the cost is borne differently from that of England, America and Canada. In all except New Zealand public education is a charge on the general revenue, and in New Zealand the local provinces bear a small proportion of the cost and take more share in the management, in consequence, this is a survival of the original provincial origin of New Zealand. In England the general revenue has shared the expense, but the rating powers for School Boards raise a large amount. Across the Atlantic, in the United States and in Canada, local rating does it all. I have heard that the Province of Ontario has carried local self-government to the highest perfection. On the other hand, the province in which I live, which at present has but 320,000 souls in a central territory extending from the north to the south coast, is the most centralized and socialistic in its organization of all the Australian colonies. Not only has it State-built and State-managed railways like the others, and State-managed telegraph lines—the line connecting us all with the rest of the world passing through her territory and constructed at her expense—not only are our schools all on one system and directed by one head, not only are our city waterworks and our irrigation works the charge of the general revenue, but charity itself in South Australia is a Government responsibility. It is the only one of the colonies which has adopted the most socialistic principle of the English poor-law, that absolute destitution should have legal relief. It is not that the other Australian revenues do not give more money, in proportion to population, for the relief of the poor, but they give it indirectly through voluntary societies and charitable workers, and are not, as in South Australia, directly responsible for its distribution.

The Destitute Board of unpaid members, with a paid Chairman and auxiliary Boards in the country, distribute out-door and in-door relief according to recognized rules, and comparisons show that through help being given to keep poor families together, the number of old people and of children altogether thrown on public and private charity is less than in the other colonies. It may be well for the most centralized and the least centralized of the British provinces to exchange notes. South Australia was the first to adopt the simplification of land titles by registration. Torrens' Act has been copied all over Aus-

tralia and is held up for imitation. South Australia is at present the only community where the principle of land taxation preached by Mr. Henry George has been initiated. For over six years a tax of a halfpenny in the pound of assessed value of land, irrespective of improvements, has been levied on all land, whether it is city block of an eighth of an acre, or a vast estate. I think Henry George would have made much greater progress with this principle if he had not mixed it up inextricably with free trade. There is a vast number of people who can see that this method of raising revenue has two good effects—it encourages improvements on the land and discourages speculative holding; who, nevertheless, are not desirous that land should bear the whole burden of national expenditure. When Mr. George was here, he was surprised to find that many of his supporters were protectionists. We did not want to be merely growers of wool and wheat and wine and oil; we desired a more varied development, and infant industries need protection. People point warningly to America where industries no longer in their infancy clamour for increased protection as in the McKinley Bill, but I have some hopes that our manufacturers and monopolists will not be so powerful as in America. The fact that they own neither railroads nor telegraph lines, and that all over the colonies efforts are constantly being made to check large holdings in land, will make it easier for a people's parliament to reduce or abolish protective duties if they press too hard on industry. In Australia, too, the eight hours' day for most industries capable of such limitation and the example of the Government, the largest employer of labour, tends to restrain the greed of private employers.

At a test election for a city of Adelaide constituency recently, the programme of the conservative or capitalist candidate was of the most liberal character. He approved of the halfpenny land tax, and was favourable to its being doubled. He was willing to make it optional for municipalities to render their rates on unimproved land values. He approved of the eight hours day; only he disapproved of the action of the Trade Unions who have it in their power to paralyze all the producing industries of Australasia by forbidding dock-labourers and seamen from handling wool shorn by other than union men. This liberal capitalist was beaten by a working man—chiefly by the temperance vote—which went solid for one who supported Sunday closing. I think that a shearer's union should content itself with working on fair conditions for itself, good pay, good food and decent housing, but it is an avocation which does not last more than a few months of the year, and to forbid non-union men to shear is an unjust exercise of power.

The shipping strike two years ago was one more far-reaching than any ever before known, and it has led to stronger organization on the part of the capitalist and producing classes. The strikers feel that the battle must be fought at the polls, and the return of three labour members for the South Australian Upper House, and of more than thirty for the Assembly in New South Wales, has emphasized the position. New South Wales and Queensland have the Upper House nominated; in Victoria and South Australia the members are elected in larger districts, and the elector must have a small property qualification. If the South Australia Legislative Council had not voted themselves the £200 a year which they had opposed on principle for the Assembly, they would not have had their hall invaded by the horny-handed. In South Australia and in New Zealand there is "one man, one vote." In the other three colonies, which were originally parts of the mother colony of New South Wales, there has always been plural voting. A man holding property out of the district in which he lives could vote for it, and often exercised many votes. The last Victorian Ministry went in on this question, and carried "one man, one vote" through the Assembly, but it was lost in the Council, the Ministerial members themselves voting against it. The Council offered as an amendment to give a dual vote—one for person and one for property, freehold or leasehold, or even for thrift, saved money in any way—to be exercised whether the elector lived on his property or held it elsewhere. By the dual vote the capitalist party hope to enlist the small farmers and selectors on their side, and by means of majorities in smaller county constituencies to neutralize the majorities of labour candidates in large town and city districts. To my mind, to pit capital and labour against each other as enemies in every constituency of Australia is even worse than pitting Republicans and Democrats against each other in America. The cry for one member constituencies, which both parties have set up, is only that the fight may be closer and the duel more bitter. What Australia and Canada and the United States want most of all is the grouping of several constituencies together to be represented by the single transferable vote. Mr. Hare adapted this perfect instrument to too vast a field, and retarded the progress of the idea by taking the United Kingdom as a single constituency. Districts grouped so as to return from six to ten members would enable any considerable minority to be represented, and, what is still more important, it would paralyze the party tactics that fasten on a wavering and indifferent or a corruptible fringe of voters, who turn the elections under the present exclusively majority representation. The indirect benefits would far outweigh the direct. Would the "Spoils" system or the monstrous pension lists in the United States last a session under that equal representation which I call Effective Voting? These are party