clude by mentioning that they seem to have remembered, at the eleventh hour, that they had a midshipman to deal with, and that they then did what they could to gratify the Prince's sailor-like enthusiasm for the fair sex, by taking him to see the marriage of a beautiful young Jewess. Shortly afterwards, he appears to have been happily rescued from the civil and military Corporation; to have got back to his ship, and to have there re-assumed, let us hope, the natural position in which he had been placed by his parents, and from which the blundering local authorities had done their mischievous utmost to separate him.

Such exhibitions of ludicrous ostentation and wretched taste took place at Lisbon and at Malta—with this noticeable difference, however, that the reception at Lisbon was directed by a foreign sovereign, and was, on that very account, an excusable piece of folly. The King of Portugal might naturally enough fall into the mistake of supposing that he was bound out of common politeness (to say nothing of common regard for his own diplomatic interests) to take formal public notice of the Queen's son, as some return for the attention which he himself received from the court when he visited this country. The King of Portugal was not to be expected to feel with Englishmen on such a purely national question as that involved in the professional education of the Prince. For these reasons we can look composedly enough on the arrival of the Portuguese Royal Barge alongside of the Euryalus; and we can be well content to be merely amused by the reported astonishment of every body at the alacrity with which the Prince jumped into the barge—an astonishment arising, we presume, from a general idea that the descent of a Queen's son from a Queen's ship's side, could only be accomplished by a species of solemn procession, or by a stage-walk, or by any other means, except the means natural to a lively lad of fourteen who can make good use of his legs.

But the case is altered, when we get to Malta. Here, in an English possession, where the authorities had no excuse for awkwardly thwarting the Queen's intentions, and mischievously elevating her son above the free sea-training and the impartial sea-discipline which can alone make a sailor of him—here, the sickening servility of these receptions of the young Prince reached its climax. The governor, the council, the judges, the archbishop, the Protestant bishop, the clergy, the nobility, and all the other grandees in the island received the midshipman in solemn assembly on the steps of the palace. Whether they fell on their knees at his approach, or whether they walked backwards till they got in-doors, is not mentioned—but it is asserted, quite seriously, that a levée was held; and that, wherever the Prince went, there a procession persistently went with him, both before and behind. There was a ball, too (the midshipman's partners duly chronicled,) and an illumination, and there would have been more to do, if the Midshipman had not "greatly chagrined" the Maltese, by graciously condescending to allow his Captain to proceed on his cruise! But the crowning absurdity of all was accomplished by making the midshipman of the Euryalus publicly review the troops of the garrison. When we had arrived at this part of the newspaper narrative, nothing else that it might have contained would have astonished us. After reading of all the soldiers in Malta being reviewed by a sailor of the age of fourteen, we should not have felt the least surprised at being further informed of the governor boxing the compass, the judges holystoning the decks, or the Archbishop borrowing the boatswain's whistle, and piping all hands, out of compliment to the Prince, in the very pulpit itself.

What is to stop this fawning perversion of Prince Alfred from the plain professional purpose to which his parents have so wisely devoted him? Who is to prevent these abject authorities from doing their best to spoil a frank, straightforward natural lad, who is promising so well at the fair outset of his career? It is not easy to suggest an answer to these questions. How are people, who have no tact, no taste, no natural sense of what is appropriate and no instinctive terror of what is ridiculous—who seem to be influenced, partly by the childish pleasure of putting on fine clothes, with the adult folly superadded of feeling proud at publicly exhibiting them, and, partly by the imperious necessity of cringing and crawling which is the motive power that works in mean natures—how are such people as these to be reached by any ordinary process of remonstrance? Argument, entreaty, reproof, contempt, the pen of the writer, the tongue of the orator, are all shivered alike against the adamantine insensibility to every species of intellectual attack which distinguishes the genuine Flunkey nature.

The one idea which occurs to us, in connection with this very disheartening part of the subject—and which we beg leave in conclusion, to express with all possible respect—is, that the Queen herself might possibly come to the rescue of her son before it is too late to save him. Her Majesty has been pestered with tens of thousands of Addresses from her subjects. What if she were suddenly to turn the tables, and actually present her subjects with an Address from herself? May we hope to be excused, if following out this idea, we venture to lay the following few lines at the foot of the Throne, as a rough sketch of the new kind of Royal addresses which we are bold enough to suggest?

"ADDRESS FROM THE QUEEN TO CERTAIN OF HER SUBJECTS IN OFFICE.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR FLUNKEYSHIPS,—I, your much-wearied and much-persecuted Sovereign, do hereby beg and entreat that you will, for the future, allow my second son to pursue his profession in peace and quietness, unencumbered and unperverted by Receptions, which separate him from his messmates, among whom I wish him to mingle as one of themselves. Governors, Generals, Admirals, Archbishops, Authorities, civil and military, Corporations, of every degree of obesity,—be so good as to learn, once for all, from your Queen, that true loyalty is one of the forms of true politeness, in which the delicacies of restraint, and the graces of good-sense, count among the chiefest and the most necessary of courteous compliments. Understand, distinctly, that when I send my son to sea as a midshipman, it is a flat contradiction of my intentions for you to receive him as a prince. Reserve your spare gunpowder, therefore, for my enemies; keep your fine clothes and your processions for yourselves; and by no means consider it any part of your duty towards Midshipman Alfred to spoil a good sailor by reminding him, to no earthly purpose, that you are Flunkeys and that he is a Prince."

If some such pithy expostulation as this should ever happen, under an extraordinary stress of circumstances, to be prepared by direction of the Queen, there is no office within the gift of the Sovereign which it would give us half so much pleasure to receive as the useful, enviable, and patriotic office of presenting the Address.

Household Words.

FIRES IN AUSTRALIA.

(From the Melbourne Argus.)

The coincidence of numerous fires and of severe commercial depression in this city, is one of those phenomena which are more easily observed than explained. It would seem that, when times are bad, materials are much more inflammable, the neglect of servants greater, and the supervision exercised by employers less vigilant, the propensity of some articles to spontaneous combustion more actively exhibited, and the mystery which shrouds the origin of most fires is more impenetrable than under ordinary circumstances. Fortunately for the sufferers, the calamities do not ordinarily occur in premises which are uninsured, or the value of which, as well as of the commodities they contain, is only partially covered by the amount of the policy, and as the Insurance Offices usually act with a prompt liberality in the matter, instances have been known of individuals emerging from a disaster of this kind in considerably improved circumstances. Generally speaking, indeed, Insurance Companies display a precipitancy which, however commendable in the eyes of the insurers, is anything but beneficial to the public interests Promptitude in the payment of claims for losses sustained by fire is no doubt politic as a means of drawing business to an Office, but the insurers who would be most strongly attracted are precisely those who would be most likely to be burnt out during a commercial crisis. To be satisfied that every claim will be liquidated and no questions asked, is all that a fraudulent insurer requires. Honest men who insure their stock in trade or their premises as a matter of precaution, and not of provision, do not need any such inducement, as they never anticipate the occurrence of a fire under such circumstances as to inspire suspicions of its having arisen from other than accidental causes, and consequently never expect any difficulty or delay in the adjustment of their claims, should they have occasion to prefer them. But inasmuch as every Insurance Office, in calculating its risks and fixing its premiums, will take into consideration its liability to make good the losses sustained by fire on the premises of incendiary insurers (whose business it specially invites, and whose mal-practices it encourages, by the unquestioning satisfaction of their claims,) it follows that the honest insurer will be called upon to pay a higher per centage than he otherwise would, and is made to contribute *pro tanto* to the reimbursement of the dishonest insurer for his alleged losses.

The announcement by Dr. Youl of his determination to hold an inquest upon all fires of considerable magnitude and of a suspicious character, ought to be received with satisfaction both by Insurance Companies and the insured. Such inquiries cannot be instituted too promptly, or prosecuted too rigidly, both for the vindication of innocent persons from suspicion, and in order to ascertain to whom the crime of arson attaches, in every case in which it can be proved that the fire was the act of an incendiary.

WHO IS THE INSURANT?—It is reported that a very large sum was insured on the life of Mr. Henry Watson, of Limerick, who died a few weeks since; the following singular letter was sent to a London office in consequence of the notice of renewal having been addressed to the late Mr. Watson, instead of the party who effected the Insurance on his life:—"George Street, Limerick, Dec. 1, 1859. Dear Sir,—Will you be so kind as to inform me who has insured my life in the ——— Assurance Company, as I know of no one who has an interest in my life, and must pronounce it a swindling transaction. Yours very faithfully, HENRY WATSON."

FIRE INSURANCE IN FRANCE.—The fire offices of France, at the close of the year 1855, had insured property against fire to the amount of £1,720,000,000 The average cost, including all