

MUSIC.

PATTI says that a million francs have been offered her to make another 'farewell tour' in America, but she refused. It is well. We do not deny that the offer has been made, but the man who made it would certainly lose money if it were accepted. A reputation counts for a great deal in America. People with artistic tastes create the reputation to begin with, and it takes time for their opinion to make its way into the knowledge of the untaught millions who know only what they are told by those in authority. It takes about as long for the adverse decision to go down; yet when an American is distinctly bored he may not complain, but he will find some excuse for staying away. One of the values of a reputation was shown by a curious incident at the Metropolitan this winter. Maurel came on the stage and sang for fifteen minutes before he was recognised. When the audience at last realized that they had before them 'the first baritone in Europe,' they let him know that his reputation was worth something, even if his voice was not. But the general public is not going to hear Patti any more. It has found her out. She is still a favourite in conservative England, where they continue to admire a voice because their grandfathers did; but American taste is more restless. We are still trying to tell ourselves that Jean de Reszke's voice is as thrilling and beautiful as it ever was, but even that will not last for more than a few seasons longer.

Mr Plunkett Greene is again in America, singing his way into the hearts of his listeners. This phenomenally tall young Irishman, who trembles like an aspen when he sings, and who appears to place his large white hands where their vibrations will be more visible, is more original than the casual listener might suppose. Take up a sheet of one of his old ballads, and the music looks most unpromising. The whole effect is in his manner of singing it. He brought a collection of old German religious songs this year which are unique, and in some cases tenderly beautiful. But it is in 'Go and Call the Cattle Home' that the exquisite quality, not only of his voice, but of his interpretation, is most fully exhibited. In songs like this Mr Greene gains something of the personal feeling which goes out to a favourite actor in drama or opera. He creates a scene. His sea songs, and the familiar Irish ballad in which we are asked why 'all the gaiety' should 'go to the laity,' are full of humour, every point of which is brought out by the singer. Mr Greene is in great demand in the smaller cities. He is an artist who does not require an artistic audience to be thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed.

The author of 'Cheer, Boys, Cheer,' and 'Life on the Ocean Wave,' is still living, hale and hearty at the age of eighty-two. It is nearly forty years since Henry Russell, the best known of living balladists, was in this country, but the memory of his songs is still fresh. During his life he has composed and published over eight hundred songs. Amongst them was 'The Ivy Green,' which Charles Dickens wrote for him, and which was afterwards published in 'The Pickwick Papers.' Others no less famous were 'Woodman, Spare That Tree,' written by the old time American poet, George P. Morris; 'Old Dan Tucker,' 'Buffalo Girls,' and 'There's a Good Time Coming.' It was Epes Sargent, the versatile Boston journalist and *literateur*, who wrote the words of 'Life on the Ocean Wave.' The two men, who were friends, were strolling along the Battery when the idea came to Sargent. They immediately went up to a music store on lower Broadway. There the words were put on paper and Russell sat down at the piano and rapidly picked out the tune we know to-day. Mr Russell has a pleasant home in London. His son, the Rev. Lloyd Russell, is a clergyman of some prominence, and vicar of the Church of the Annunciation at Chiselhurst, in Kent.

Miss Regina Nagel, the young contralto who travelled through New Zealand with Madame Steinbauer Babuson, is captivating Sydney audiences as the unseen singer of 'Ben Bolt' in the 'Tribby' Company. The *Sydney Bulletin* is high in her praise. It says:—'She has not yet "arrived" in the true sense of the term, nor will she fully "arrive" even under the most advancing conditions for another two or three years. Then the world ought to hear much of her. Regina Nagel, who hails from the Lilydale (Vic.) district, and has a blind mother at home, owes her musical education, thus far, to the kindness of friends. She was a very unsophisticated rustic of about 10 when she started to take lessons in singing from Madame Steinbauer,—her present proficiency is the result of three years' work. As to the quality and promise of Miss Nagel's deep contralto notes there is only one opinion. She possesses a grand chest organ, and when this shall have been trained over the breach which divides it from her head voice Australia will take

credit for another songstress of renown. Meanwhile the "coming Crossley" will need to cultivate style and courage on the concert platform. She is as yet too nervous to do her very best before a large audience, and at Melbourne Town Hall, the other evening, her early diffidence was not less noticeable than the improved effect with which she finished her number—"Calvary." Behind the scenes at the Princess's Theatre the voice is not afraid to let itself go, thus Miss Nagel has managed to impress the general public sooner than was expected. The rendering of "Ben Bolt" by this invisible performer is the sweetest, richest side-dish on a capital bill of fare.'

A musical recital was given at St. John's Church (Wesleyan), Nelson, last Friday evening, and was thoroughly enjoyed by all present. Mr J. W. Hill, of Wellington, sang two solos, 'Be Thou Faithful Unto Death' ('St. Paul'), and 'If With All Your Hearts' ('Elijah'). Both were most artistically sung; his beautiful voice rang through the large building. It is seldom we have the pleasure of hearing such a finished singer, but when we hear them we do appreciate them. It was a great disappointment to all that Mrs Howie was unable to sing, but Mr Kidson very kindly sang a solo instead. He chose 'It is Enough' ('Elijah'), and his rich voice was heard to great advantage. Miss Bingley also sang, and the choir contributed two anthems. Miss Melhuish, the organist, besides tastefully accompanying all the soloists, played Mendelssohn's Sonata No. 6 and a Prelude by Bach.

The Government Insurance Literary and Social Club held their Reunion last Saturday evening in the Insurance Buildings. A short concert came first, in which items songs, violin solos, pianoforte solos, and recitations were given by the following gentlemen: Messrs Kennedy, Spackman, Morris Fox, Reid, Palmer, Lindsay, Traversi, Crombie, and G. Kennedy. The last named performer received great applause for his spirited rendering of a topical song written by Mr C. J. Alexander, and entitled 'Government Insurance Club.'

The Auckland Liedertafel's second concert of the season will be held in the City Hall on Friday, June 12. An excellent programme is in preparation. Several new pieces will be performed, and the Society will be assisted by Mrs Coates, Miss Ella Farrell, Mr Howard Chambers, Mr Henry Smith, Herr Zimmermann, and Messrs A. and C. Towsey.

An excellent concert takes place to-night (Wednesday) at Avondale. If half as good as the last, it deserves to be well attended.

Mrs Cheeseman, Orakei Road, Remuera, Auckland, gave a *musical* last week. Amongst the performers who contributed vocal or instrumental items were Mrs Kilgour, Mrs Goodson, Mrs Seid, Mrs Foster, Miss Hay, Messrs E. Morton, McKellar, etc.

An excellent musical programme was gone through at the Auckland Grammar School Old Boys' Social last week as follows:—Overture, 'Chant du Poet,' orchestra; vocal duet, 'The Moon Hath Rays,' Messrs W. J. and J. F. Cousins; gavotte, 'Une Fete a Trianon,' orchestra; recitation, 'The Widowers,' Mr H. A. Keesing; song, 'The Song of Hybris the Cretan,' Mr J. Sykes; ophycleidophone duet, Messrs H. A. and T. R. Keesing; waltz, 'Old Boys' Carnival,' orchestra; coxer song, 'Hullo Where are Yer Goin' Ter,' Mr M. Lewis; song, 'The Deathless Army,' Mr C. Kissling; selection, 'Dance Moresque,' orchestra; whistling solo, 'The Mocking Bird,' Mr M. Lewis; song, 'Of to Philadelphia,' Mr G. Warren; song, 'Umti Um' (from 'The Artist's Model'), Mr L. Lewis.

Miss Lily Large, of Napier, daughter of Mr J. S. Large, has been winning golden opinions in the Old Country for her efforts in the vocal line. Miss Large, who was taught singing in Napier formerly by Madame Cope, of Wellington and Napier, possesses a pure mezzo-soprano voice, with clear enunciation, and Napierites are proud to read that she has been so successful. All look forward to hearing Miss Large on her return, which I believe will not be for some time yet.

LAWNS & LINKS.

MRS EDWARD RIDDIFORD, of Wellington, has presented a medal to the Hutt Golf Club for competition among lady members. The rules under which it is won are the same as those for the Boyle medal of the Wellington Club—monthly competitions for a year. The first of these is to be played on Saturday, 23rd May.

The tennis players have returned to Wellington from their Sydney trip in good spirits, and very hopeful of future success.

The lady golfers had a very exciting day on Friday, when Mrs G. Gould's trophy was competed for and won by Mrs Vernon, Miss N. Reeves coming a good second, being only one behind the winner. The prize was a handsome silver buckle, designed with the letters C.L.G.C. Mrs Gould provided afternoon tea for players and friends, a large number being present.

Tennis has been very brisk at Cranmer Square courts all the week, and on Saturday presented an extremely lively appearance, all the courts being in full play from two o'clock till dark. Among the players were Mesdames Hurst, Seager, G. E. Way, Misses Van Asch (two), Marchant (two), C. Lean, Jones, Bullock, Aitken, Thomas, Harman, E. Cox, Messrs Wilding, H. Reeves, Perry, Hale, E. R. Webb, A. Appleby, H. Henderson, Bickerton, Ross, Rutherford, R. D. Harman, Laurie, Day, Seager, Styche, Croxton, Dr. Nedwill, etc.

HUNTING.

BY ONLOOKER.

LAST Wednesday the Pakuranga hounds met at the Monument, Otahuhu, near Auckland, where the sport for hunters was rather marred by an accident which happened to Miss Percival. Her horse turned a complete somersault over a wire fence, falling upon the rider, and rendering her unconscious for some time. The hounds with the huntsman had all the sport to themselves. All the followers, who, of course, are not numerous (about fifteen in number) on a Wednesday, stayed behind to see if they could be of any assistance.

Last Saturday the hounds met at Ihumata, about fifteen miles from Auckland. A few of the hospitable members provided an excellent luncheon for the Vice-regal party and hunters. It made such a charming picture to see the knot of horsemen and horsewomen, with vehicles in the centre, partaking of the provisions provided by Mrs O'Rourke, Mrs McLaughlin, Mrs Dawson, Mrs Thomas Morrin, Mrs Buckland, etc. A grassy knoll was chosen by the ladies for their picnic party. There were plenty of pussies, so we had some excellent sport. Our longest run was about three-quarters of an hour in duration, passing through creeks girth deep in mud, and over fences, ditches and walls at a rattling pace. Many were seen to doze to grief, but the gentler sex, of whom about a dozen were following, stuck womanfully to their pig-skins. Mr Caminer and steed made an acrobatic circle over some wire; Captain Fielden and Fly went a somersault over a stiff sapling jump, and an officer from one of the men-o'-war ships in harbour turned a complete circle in the air over a stone wall. Another man was seen to ride gallantly to a wall, the horse taking the jump in the neatest style possible, but the rider calmly preferred a complete revolution in the air, and landed in a sitting posture on mother earth. We had two kills, after which afternoon tea was partaken of. This brought the hunt to a finish, and many were the expressions of pleasure at the afternoon's outing.

The whole of these runs were witnessed by the on-lookers from Ihumata Mountain, a capital place for seeing. Amongst those *en voiture* were His Excellency the Governor, Lady Dorothy Boyle, Lady Helen Boyle, and Miss Williams; Mrs Dennis O'Rourke and Miss Shepherd; Mrs (Colonel) Dawson and Miss Elliot; Mrs McLaughlin, Mrs Buckland, Miss Phoebe Buckland, Miss Banks, Mrs Thomas Morrin, Miss Percival, and Miss Griffiths. Riding were Lady Augusta Boyle, attended by Captain Preston and Captain Fielden, Mrs Bloomfield, Mrs Buckland, Miss Dunnett (on a new steed, Opawa), Miss Buckland, Miss Percival (who had recovered from her fall sufficiently to be once more mounted), Misses Kerr-Taylor, Bull, Cornelius Taylor, Tribley, Eaton, Ware, Sellers, Tanner, Colonel Dawson (our master), Messrs Mills, Wallace, Bell, Ireland, Harrison, Tonks, Bloomfield, Kerr-Taylor, McLaughlin (two) Colson, Motion, Caminer, Nola, Isaacs, Gordon, etc.

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