

BOOKS and AUTHORS.

A LITERARY CAUSERIE FOR COLONIAL BOOKBUYERS AND BORROWERS.

BOOKS marked thus (*) have arrived in the colony, and could at the time of writing be purchased in the principal colonial bookshops, and borrowed at the libraries.

For the convenience of country cousins who find difficulty in procuring the latest books and new editions, the 'BOOKMAN' will send to any New Zealand address any book which can be obtained. No notice will, of course, be taken of requests unaccompanied by remittance to cover postage as well as published price of book.

It is requested that only those who find it impossible to procure books through the ordinary channels, should take advantage of this offer.

The labour involved will be heavy and entirely unremunerative, no fee or commission being taken.

Queries and Correspondence on Literary Matters Invited.

All Communications and Commissions must be addressed

THE BOOKMAN, Graphic Office, Auckland.

* 'The Story of Maurice LeStrange.' Those who would like to get clear, vivid pictures of social life and manners among the gentry in Scotland in the year 1765, had better apply themselves to the *Story of Maurice LeStrange*.

There they will find such pictures interestingly woven into the material of a fairly exciting plot, which ends happily in the escape of the heroine—a young lady of birth and beauty—from the inconvenience of being hanged for murder, and in her subsequent union with the husband of her choice. There is a *raisemblance* about many of the scenes the author has depicted that goes far to convince us that they have got historical truth for their foundation, but some of them we confess we cannot help finding—well, not a little amazing, notably, the one describing the party at Luckie Middlemass' in the Cowgate of Edinburgh. Mr Omond introduces us in a not unskillful fashion to various of the minor people of note—literary and legal of the period. The book is written in a clever and sprightly style, and we feel on laying it down that the Scotland of a period not much written about has been brought really quite close to us during the reading.

* 'For Freedom's Sake.' John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave, but his soul goes marching on.' How many people outside America have joined in that rousing chorus without the remotest conception of whom it referred to! There are so many John Browns—we have it on the authority of the directories of all the towns and cities of the big British Empire. But this particular John Brown had nothing to do with the British Empire. He was a citizen of America, and managed, before they hanged him in Charlestown, to give America cause to be eternally proud to own him as her citizen. He it was who, defiant of consequences, took the strong initiative that finally led to the overthrow of slavery throughout the United States. John Brown figures largely in *For Freedom's Sake*, and the hero of the story, Robert Holdenough, is the friend and follower of John Brown. The plot is connected with the struggle in Kansas in 1856, between the Free State men and the upholders of slavery, and we get a great deal of interesting information about the state of things in Kansas in that year. It was not a pleasant state of things. It gets rectified before the story closes, however, and there is a particularly plucky and charming heroine, who makes the hero happy in the end.

* 'The Peasantry.' These three novels do not belong to the best of Balsac's work, yet each have much in them that is of his best. In *The Peasantry* the conscientiously drawn pictures of Burgundian peasants and their ways of living, and thinking, and doing are almost too effectively done. The grim, wicked, repulsiveness of their lives and characters is enough to make the reader wish that he could console himself with the thought that the pictures are over-drawn. *The Country Parson* is in a large measure a companion study to 'The Country Doctor,' and the Abbe Bonnet is every whit as lovable and admirable a character as the good Dr. Benassis. *Beatriz* gets a special interest attached to it from the fact that the heroine, who does not fill the title rôle, Felicie des Louches, is a not unflattering study of 'Georges Sand,' the gifted French authoress. It is also said that Thackeray, in his marvellously drawn portrait of his own heroine Castlewood, allowed himself to cull some suggestions from Balsac's *Beatriz*.

* 'The Story of Maurice LeStrange,' by G. W. T. Omond: Macmillan and Co. (Wildman and Lyell.)

* 'For Freedom's Sake,' by Arthur Paterson: Macmillan and Co. (Wildman and Lyell.)

* 'The Peasantry,' 'The Country Parson,' 'Beatriz,' by H. de Balzac: Macmillan and Co. (Wildman and Lyell.)



THE many friends of the Greenwood family in Auckland are looking forward to their appearance on the stage again. Mrs Greenwood has taken the City Hall for Easter week, and her talented daughters, with able assistance, will provide exceptionally good entertainments for the various evenings. Since these clever young ladies left Auckland they have had special advantages for improvement in all ways, and have profited greatly by their Australian experiences. The various stage accessories, scenery, dresses, etc., are being arranged in a very rich and artistic manner, and bumper houses are expected.

Mlle. Rachel Hoffman, the pianist who will be heard in America this winter, is a graduate of the Conservatory in Brussels, and is the first woman who ever received the gold medal there.

Mrs Oakes, the leading soprano at St. Mary of the Angels Church, Wellington, and Mr Oakes, conductor at the same, played a conspicuous part in the singing at St. Patrick's Church, Napier, on Sunday. Mozart's 'Seventh Mass' was the work presented by the choir in a really admirable manner. The soloists were Mrs Oakes and Mrs Allen, Miss St. Clair, and Messrs Oakes and Allen. An 'Angelus,' composed by Mr Oakes and sung by Mrs Oakes as an offertory piece, was splendid. Mass was celebrated by the Rev. Father Grogan. At Vespers Mr and Mrs Oakes sang two duets, 'Ecce Panis' (Meyer) and 'Beata Nobis Gaudia' (Bonfichi). Miss St. Clair accompanied on the organ, and Mr Madigan conducted.

Stainer's beautiful work, 'The Crucifixion,' given in St. Matthew's Church, Hastings, on Sunday night, was a genuine success, the church was crowded in every part by an appreciative congregation. It was sung by the choir, assisted by a capable orchestra, and the conductor was Mr H. H. Hunt.

At Porangahau, Hawke's Bay, on Friday a very enjoyable concert was given in aid of the church funds. Miss Tanner gave 'Il Bacio,' in admirable style. She was next heard in 'What am I Love Without Thee?' Both were deservedly encored. The popular little catchy song, 'I Don't Want to Play in Your Yard,' sang in costume by Misses Arrow and Pemberton, brought down the house. The remainder of the programme consisted of selections both sentimental and comic by Misses Simcox (two), Macarbie, Hington, Cropp, Mesking, and Messrs St. Hill, Ormond, Rudman, Hunter, etc. Mrs St. Hill and Mrs Rudman presided at the piano. A most enjoyable evening was brought to a close by a dance.

The periodical union of the amalgamated choirs of the Presbyterian churches from Napier, The Port, Havelock, Waipukurau, and Hastings, took place in the Theatre, Hastings on Wednesday. The Rev. Mr Conner took the chair. The combined choirs, under the baton of Mr Renaud, numbered close upon a hundred, opening with the hymn, 'When Morning Gilds the Skies' followed by 'Hark, Hark My Soul,' etc. Three anthems were given in very good style—'Lift up Your Heads,' 'Who Are These?' 'Arise, Shine.' During the evening Mr Renaud addressed the meeting, regretting the indifference of church people with regard to music and singing, and urging them to take more interest in the future. The Rev. Mr Fraser closed the meeting. It is decided to hold these concerts at different centres, and the next will most likely be at Waipukurau.

One of the finest accomplishments for a woman to master is the acquisition of a low, well-modulated voice. It must be clear and distinct; it should have individuality. It should not distract the attention and worry the nerves. Children would often obey quicker if they were not rasped and irritated by the harsh, excited command that gives but of great lack of self-control in the one issuing the order.

With reference to the revival of 'Don Giovanni' in Paris, the journal *Gil Blas* publishes a letter addressed by Napoleon I. to his brother Joseph, in which politics and music are curiously associated. The date is October 4th, 1805, the Emperor being then, apparently, in Munich—'My Brother, I start to-night. Events will become every day more interesting. It will suffice if you state in the *Moniteur* that the Emperor is in good health, that he was still, on the 12th, at Ludwigsburg, and that the junction of the army with the Bavarians is effected. I heard yesterday at the Court Theatre here the opera of 'Don Juan.' I suppose that the music of this opera is the same as that of the opera which was given in Paris. It seems to be very good.—NAPOLÉON.' The work must have made a great impression upon the Emperor for him to speak of it thus at such a time.

Plays and Players

THE American Dramatists' Club declines to admit women to membership, but it gave a reception the other night to women whose plays had been acted. Among those invited were Frances Hodgson, Burnett, Margaret Merrington, Martha Morton, Madeline Lucette Ryley, Alice E. Ives, Mary E. Stone, Lillian Lewis, and Ada Lee Bascom.

Fanny Cerito, the ballet dancer, the last survivor of the famous *pas de quatre* of 1845 under Lumley's management at London, the other members of which were Tagliani, Fanny Elstler and Carlotta Grial, was one of the persons who turned out to see the Czar when he was in Paris. She is only 75 years of age. Lumley stopped the fight for precedence in that quartet by saying that the oldest should begin.

Charles Arnold is going to tour the colonies with a play which he is writing in collaboration with David Christie Murray.

Williamson and Musgrove are now engaging fresh English talent for their New Opera Company.

Aucklanders are looking forward to the appearance of George Rignold on the 20th inst. The opening piece of the season is Henry V., and it is said to be a very fine production. Shakespearean drama is not over popular in the colonies either with managers or the public, but according to all accounts Mr Rignold's Henry V. has been a brilliant exception.

The Pollards have had bumper houses in Auckland, 'Boccaccio' holding the stage for a week. On Wednesday 'Nell Gwynne' was produced, and on Monday last 'Rip Van Winkle' was staged. 'Falka' was billed for Saturday, but ten minutes before the curtain rose Miss Marion Mitchell was taken ill, and Tom Pollard had to put on another opera. He gave the audience their choice, and in a quarter of an hour after they had decided on 'The Gondoliers' the house was listening to the well-known music of Sullivan.

Carl Hertz opens in Christchurch on the 5th of next month.

Frohman's American Dramatic Company leaves 'Frisco on the 1st of next month for Australia under engagement to Messrs Williamson and Musgrove.

It is said that 'The Derby Winner,' Bland Holt's great production, cost £2,000 to put on in Sydney.

Little Ellaline Terry, a niece of Ellen Terry, was to have made her *debut* in London the other day, but she was prevented by the authorities, as she was under the age at which children are allowed to act in England.

A travelling journalist who saw Miss Ellen Terry at Monte Carlo has confided to his readers that he saw the charming actress having a little flutter at the tables, where also he found Mlle. Christine Nilsson 'more intent upon the game than upon purely philosophical speculation.' When a certain dignitary of the church was asked what was the duty of an archdeacon he answered that he didn't quite know, but he thought probably it was to fulfill archidiaconal functions. Maybe the duty of a public writer is to give as much publicity as possible to public people. But their little weaknesses—well, really—

Ibsen, says Mr Sherard in a recent article in the *Humanitarian*, is a pessimist by theory and a misanthrope in practice.—'During six weeks I saw him almost every day, for he paid two daily visits at fixed hours to the hotel at which I was staying, and on no single occasion did I ever see him in any company. He was always alone, whether sitting behind his glass in the little inner room at the Grand Hotel reading the Norwegian papers, or perambulating the Karl Johann's Gade with his hands behind his back. And as he is out of doors, so is he also in his house in the Victoria Terrasse, a solitary man, manifesting a real dislike for family life. He never visits his one son, Dr. Sigurd Ibsen, who is almost as great a recluse as his father. Indeed, when the son married one of the daughters of Bjornstjerne Bjornson, Ibsen kept away from the wedding. This sadness, this want of sociability on his part, struck me as so abnormal on the part of a Norwegian—for the Norwegians are in the main jovial and fond of society—that I could not help expressing my surprise on the subject to Bjornson, whose neighbourhood at table I was at a dinner. "But, Ibsen," cried Bjornson, "is not a Norwegian at all. He comes of a Scotch family, and that explains his Calvinism, his despairing views on life and on men. It is indeed a grievance to the Norwegians that this export trade of pessimism in Christianity should have been founded by a foreigner." I should describe him as a typical misanthrope by natural tendency. His domestic life has not been a happy one, and woman has woven but few celestial roses into his life. In his "Master Builder" he expressed what were his ambitious as a young man—ambitions which he has scarcely been able to realise.'