

Mrs WERRY has left Wellington for Christchurch, where she will stay with her daughter before proceeding Home to England.

Miss SEALBY, nurse at the Christchurch Hospital, left for a short holiday to Nelson on Saturday.

Mr HARRISON, solicitor, of Auckland, who has been away for the last two months, has returned.

Mr A. STANDISH has been re-elected president and Mr W. Bayly vice-president of the Taranaki Jockey Club.

Mr GEORGE M. GARNER, eldest son of Mr F. W. Garner, of Napier, has been promoted from third engineer of the s.s. 'Hsin Yu' to second engineer of the s.s. 'Irene,' another of the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company's boats.

Miss HAMLIN has returned to Napier after an enjoyable visit to Waipukurau.

Dr. SCOTT, of Onehunga, who has been very ill and is going a trip to England for his health, will take his eldest child with him. Mrs Scott will be unable to accompany her husband, who will be away for six months.

MESSRS J. D. RITCHIE and T. Kirk, of the Department of Agriculture, have been chosen to represent the Government at the Intercolonial Fruitgrowers' Conference in Brisbane, but it is feared that pressure of business will prevent Mr Ritchie's attending.

REV. F. G. EVANS conducted a memorial service in St. Mary's Church, New Plymouth, on Sunday, May 30th, the occasion being the fiftieth anniversary of the death of the Rev. Mr Bolland, the first minister of the Church of England stationed in Taranaki.

MRS AND THE MISSES W. JOHNSTON, who have been in Wellington for some time, return this week to their country residence in the Rangitikei district.

MRS JAMES MACLEAN, of the National Bank, Napier, has returned with her two little girls from a long visit into the country.

MR AND MRS C. RUSSELL and family of Christchurch, are passengers by the 'Buteshire' to England. Mrs Russell is a sister of Mrs A. Anderson, of Opawa.

MR JOHN PROUSE, of Wellington, is in Christchurch, and sang at an organ recital by Mr F. Tendall at the Cathedral.

MISS STUBBS (Timaru) is staying with Mrs Batham in Wellington.

MR HAROLD ANSON, the new curate of Hawera, who recently arrived from England by the 'Ionic' was very cordially received by the parishioners on his reaching Hawera. Mrs Anson and family accompanied the reverend gentleman.

NEWS has been received by Archdeacon Fancourt that Bishop and Mrs Wallis have arrived safely in England.

MRS JOHN BALLANCE, of Wanganni, has lately been spending some weeks in New Plymouth.

MR PICKERING, of Wellington, is paying a visit to Marlborough, where he is the guest of Mr and Mrs G. Watts, of Lansdowne.

MR JAMES HUDSON, the second son of Mr J. R. Hudson, of Hokitika, has been appointed, from forty applicants, inspector of mines for Western Australia, at a salary of £500 per year.

MR L. A. CUFF, who has been at the Thames during the past months, is at present in Auckland.

MRS PERCY BROWN, who has come out from England for a trip, is the guest of Mrs Harding in Wellington.

MR J. H. FOX, of the Railway Department, is in Picton relieving Mr Dobbie, who has gone to Wanganui for a week.

MR AND MRS C. DE VREE TRESCHMAKER are visiting Dunedin.

MR HERBERT CLARKE, Woodville, met with a nasty accident last week. His horse bolted and fell, and Mr Clarke is badly injured.

MISS MARION SPERD (Picton) leaves for Napier immediately to spend the winter there on account of her health.

MR AND MRS SPENCER, who have returned to their home in Napier, say they have greatly enjoyed their visit to Forest Gate, near Waipawa.

MRS OLDING, of Moowhango, has been staying in Napier for change of air. She is much better in health, and returns home with her brother, Mr Batley, shortly.

MR HAMILTON BAILLIE, Bank of New Zealand, Carterton, is spending his annual leave with his father and mother, Lieutenant and Mrs Baillie, in Picton.

MRS SQUIER (Sydney) has come to Nelson to see her son, Mr D. Squier, who is very far from well. They are both the guests of Mrs Heaps.

TO THE DEAF.—A gentleman who cured himself of Deafness and noises in the head after fourteen years' suffering will gladly send full particulars of the remedy post free.—Address, H. CLIFTON, Amberley House, Norfolk-street, Strand, London, England.—(ADVT.)

OBITUARY.

WE regret to record the death of Miss King, a very old settler in Taranaki, who passed away on Monday afternoon, May 31st, at the venerable age of 94. The deceased lady was highly respected and beloved by all who had the privilege of her acquaintance. She was one of the earliest settlers in New Plymouth, having come out with her brother in one of the first vessels to Taranaki from England.

The death of Mrs Rogan, wife of Judge Rogan, of Auckland, was not unexpected, though none the less sad. She died on Whit Sunday at her residence, New North Road. She had been ill for some time, suffering from consumption. Her husband took her over to New South Wales and Australia last year, and the complete change and rest proved very beneficial for a time. Mrs Rogan leaves seven children to mourn with their father their irreparable loss.

'MATSU' VAUDEVILLE COMPANY.

MESSRS WILLIAMSON AND MUSGROVE'S 'Mats' Vaudeville Company opened to a crowded house at the Opera House, Auckland, on Monday last, when the entertainment presented more than justified the anticipations formed with regard to it. The programme consisted of a happy combination of farce, song, dance, music, and novelty items. Miss Alice Leamar is always sure of a welcome in New Zealand, and she received a vociferous reception upon her first appearance in the opening farce, 'Fun in the Kitchen.' The fun of this piece turned upon Penelope's (Miss Leamar's) experiences with her numerous admirers—the butcher, baker, milkman, a soldier, and a policeman. In the end Penelope finds that her uninformed lovers are attracted more by the kitchen cupboard than by herself, and she marries 'Chalks.' Among the comicities introduced in the progress of the farce is a duet and dance, 'The Art of Love,' by Mr John Coleman and Miss Leamar, and bone specialties by Mr Frank Lawton. In the second part Mr Lawton's 'Canary Polk,' a whistling performance, and Mr Coleman's 'Scarecrow Dance' brought down the house. The mandoline dance by the Delvines and Winterton Sisters justified the description allotted to this item by the compiler of the programme, who sets it down as 'an interesting, eccentric, instrumental, Terpsichorean quintette.' It was all that, and a marvel in high-kicking besides. The 'Satanic Gambols' by the Delvines in the second part were a marvellous and uncanny exhibition of gymnastics. 'Little Gulliver' is a Lilliputian performer of considerable originality, and Mr Leone Clark, the 'Cat King,' shows what can be done with performing animals and birds. Mr Ernest Fitts, who possesses a good baritone voice, contributed two solos, 'I Love But There,' and 'Thou Art My Life.' Taken all in all, the 'Mats' Company is a good laughter-producing combination, and as it keeps the house in roars for nearly three hours, it may be expected to 'catch on.'

ON Thursday, 3rd June, the Original Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Club journeyed to the Avondale Asylum with the praiseworthy motive of giving the inmates a pleasant evening. The Club members were met by the Asylum staff, and on being conducted to the concert-hall, found an audience of over 200 assembled to enjoy the music. Most of these people were inmates of the asylum, and a good few settlers also took advantage of the opportunity. Under the conductorship of Herr Zimmermann, and the able leadership of Mr A. A. Partridge, the full Club gave several delightful selections, and the bursts of hearty applause by the audience and their joyful demonstrations of pleasure, were very encouraging to the performers. A quintette for mandolins and guitars by Misses Poseniakie, Erskine, Bolland, and Messrs Brockett and A. A. Partridge was splendidly given, and loudly applauded. Herr Zimmermann gave two violin solos, and Mr Partridge contributed a selection on the guitars. Misses Bell and Thomson each sang, and were encored. The members of the Club deserve great credit for their disinterested kindness in affording their unfortunate fellow creatures so much enjoyment.

THE St. John and Hayman Dramatic Company open at the Opera House on the 16th inst. with Sims and Pettitt's interesting drama, 'The Vagabond.' The company is exceptionally strong, and numbers among its members several old New Zealand favourites, viz. Dora Mostyn, Blanche Willmott, Madge Corcoran, Marie D'Alton (an Auckland lady), and others. The gentlemanly composer Messrs Bailey, John Bruce, Hayman, Owen, F. Donoghue, etc.

We have been asked to correct a slight misunderstanding that has arisen over our report of a recent concert. We referred to the givers as the Auckland Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Club, but it should have read 'The Original Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Club.'

BURNING WOMEN FOR PETTY TREASON.

(BY S. BARING-GOULD.)

[A note to his novel, 'Gladys: A Woman of Courage']

In 1769 Susannah Lot was burned for the murder of her husband at Canterbury, and Benjamin Buss, her paramour, was hanged for participation in the crime.

Catherine Hayes was burned alive in 1726. Her son, Billings, who had assisted her in the murder of her husband, was hanged. 'An iron chain was put round her body, with which she was fixed to a stake near the gallows.' On these occasions, when women were burned for petty treason, it was customary to strangle them, by means of a rope passed round the neck, and pulled by the executioner, so that they were dead before the flames reached the body. But this woman was literally burned alive; for the executioner, letting go the rope sooner than usual, in consequence of the flames reaching his hands, the fire burned fiercely round her, and the spectators beheld her pushing away the faggots, while she rent the air with her cries and lamentations. Other faggots were instantly thrown on her; but she survived amidst the flames for a considerable time, and her body was not reduced perfectly to ashes in less than three hours.—'Chronicles of Crime or the New Newgate Calendar,' G. C. Pelham, June, 1840.

A poor girl of fifteen was burnt at Heavitree, near Exeter, on June 29th, 1782, for poisoning her master, Richard Jarvis, with arsenic. A broadside ballad was circulated among the crowd who witnessed the execution, of which this is the last verse:—

'Whos to the fatal stake I come
And dissipate in flame,
Let all be warned by my sad doom,
To shun my sin and shame,
May I thou expiate my crime,
And whilst I undergo
The fiery trial here on earth
Escape the flames below.'

A woman was burnt at Winchester in 1783. A writer in *Notes and Queries*, June 1st, 1850, says:—'A gentleman lately deceased told me the circumstances (of a case in 1789) minutely. I think that he had been at the trial, but I know that he was at the execution, and saw the wretched woman fixed to the stake, fire put to the faggots, and her body burnt. But I know two persons still alive who were present at the execution, and I endeavoured, in 1848, to ascertain from one of them the date of the event. I made a note of his answer, which was to this effect:—"I can't recollect the year, but I remember the circumstance well. It was about 65 years ago. I was there along with the crowd. I sat on my father's shoulder, and saw them burn her. . . . They fixed her neck by a noose to the stake, and then set fire to the faggots and burned her."'

This woman was Christiana Murphy, *alias* Budman, convicted of coining. She was stood on a stool, and the stool was removed from under her just before the fire was put to the faggots.

A writer in *Notes and Queries*, August 10th, 1850, says: 'I will state a circumstance that occurred to myself about 1788. Passing in a hackney coach up to the Old Bailey to West Smithfield, I saw the unquenched embers of a fire opposite Newgate. On my alighting, I asked the coachman, "What was that fire in the Old Bailey over which the wheel of your coach passed?" "Oh, sir," he replied, "they have been burning a woman for murdering her husband."'

A full account of the execution is in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 13th March and 18th March, 1789. 'This is the execution at which I was present,' says another in *Notes and Queries*. 'Eight of the malefactors suffered on the scaffold, then known as the New Drop. After they were suspended, the woman in a white dress, was brought out of Newgate alone, and after some time spent in devotion, was hanged on the projecting arm of a low gibbet, fixed at a little distance from the scaffold. After the lapse of a sufficient time to extinguish life, faggots were piled around her, and over her head, so that the person was completely covered. Fire was then set to the pile, and the woman was consumed to ashes.'

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for June 21, 1786, is the account of the burning of Phoebe Harris for counterfeiting the coin of the realm.

In Harrison's *Derby and Nottingham Journal*, September 22, 1779, is an account of another such sentence. 'On Saturday, two persons were capitally convicted at the Old Bailey of High Treason, viz. Isabella Condon, for coining shillings in Coldbath Fields, and John Field, for coining shillings in Nag's Head Yard, Bishopsgate-street. They will receive sentence to be drawn on a hurdle to the place of execution; the woman to be burned, and the man to be hanged.'

The Shrewsbury case was, I believe, the last in England. On May 10th, 1790, Sir Benjamin Hammett, in the House of Commons, called attention to the then state of the law. He said that it had been his painful office and duty in the previous year to attend the burning of a female, he being at the time Sheriff of London; and he moved to bring in a bill to alter the law. He showed that the Sheriff who shrank from executing the sentence of burning alive was liable to a prosecution, but he thanked Heaven there was not a man in England who would carry such a sentence literally into execution. The executioner was allowed to strangle the women condemned to the stake, before flames were applied; but such an act of humanity was a violation of the law, subjecting executioner and Sheriff to penalties. The Act was passed 30 George III., c. 48.

It is a startling thought that in the time of our grandfathers such atrocities could have been permitted by law. We move so rapidly now, and the swing of the pendulum has been so greatly into the other extreme, that we forget that little over a century has elapsed since the last stake was kindled in England about the body of a wretched woman.

The new photograph of the heavens which is being prepared by London, Berlin, and Parisian astronomers shows sixty-eight million stars. Evidently Alexander is having plenty of other worlds to conquer.