

only aliens to this country, and when they have fleeced it they will leave it.' The long-promised banking legislation was brought down yesterday by the Premier and read a first time to an attentive House and galleries. Time for its consideration was promised before the second reading.

Great indignation prevails among members at the proposed continuation of the session after Christmas, the general opinion being that the Premier's threat will come to nought, but if so members will have to establish a record in disposing of the business on the order paper; and even then many of the Bills will have to be sacrificed.



and Drama.

Miss Large and Mr Maughan Barnett gave a very successful concert at the Theatre Royal, Napier, on Thursday night, when the former made her first appearance in Napier since her return from her recent visit to England, where she has been studying. There was a large audience, and Miss Large created a favourable impression by her first song, 'Angels Guard Thee,' a setting of Gadar's. Those which followed were still more successful, 'I'll Think of Thee' (Trauzzi), 'Lucia' (Luzzi), 'Damon' (Strang), 'The Swallows' (Owen), which were most enthusiastically received. Instrumental solos were forthcoming from Mr Barnett, who gave the 'Barcarola' (Tschaiakowski), 'Minuetto' (Schubert), the 'Prelude' and 'Polonaise' of Chopin, the Rubinstein 'Romance' and 'Polka,' as well as several others which were all played in excellent style.

The concerts given at the Working Men's Club, Napier, retain their popularity, to judge from the crowded audience on Tuesday night, when the programme was as follows:—Overture, 'La Couronne d'Or' (Herman), Club Orchestra; song, 'For One Night Only,' Mr H. Andrews; glee, 'The Red Cross Knight,' W.M.C. Glee Club; instrumental trio, (a) 'Roseleafs Waltz' (b) 'Serenade,' Messrs Fraser, M'Farlane and Wilkie; recitation, 'The Level Crossing,' Mr T. Parker; song, 'Monte Carlo,' Mr E. H. Ricketts; glee, 'The Patriot,' Glee Club; serenade, 'Stars of the Night' (Balfour), orchestra; glee (a) 'Vintage Song' (b) 'Banish, Oh Maiden,' Glee Club; song, 'The Showman,' Mr W. Bowman; euphonium solo, 'Bessonian Polka,' Mr W. Tremaine; song (in character), 'A Hard Working Snob,' Mr W. Reading; mandoline and guitar duet, (a) 'Di Pescatore Ignoble' (b) 'Lucretia Borgia,' (c) 'La Symphonie' valse, Messrs Fraser and M'Farlane; song, 'Nothing,' Mr H. Andrews. The accompaniments were played by Mr C. P. Clarke.

A successful concert was given on Wednesday, December 1st, by the Marist Brothers, Napier. It was organised by Mr T. Burney, the Secretary, and the Rev. Father Grogan presided. The music consisted chiefly of songs, piano duets, and solos: Trio, 'Martha,' Misses Condon, Murnane, Barry (encore); violin solo, Master J. Shanahan; duet, 'Comrades to Arms,' Messrs Madigan and Allen; song, 'Let Me Dream Again,' Mrs. Dodds; march, 'Remember St. Patrick's Day,' Mr P. Hay; duet, 'Chilperic,' Misses Stuart; recitation, 'The Young Orator,' Master Dowley; hornpipe, Mr Fisher; cornet solo, 'Home, Sweet Home,' Mr T. B. McConnel; song, Mrs Halpin; song, 'Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep,' Mr Mauey; duet, 'Tarentelle,' Misses Dolbel and Murnane; vocal duet, Messrs Baskerville and Dolbel; song, 'Dinah,' Mrs Yates; song, 'Sunshine Above,' Mr H. Bear; recitation, 'The Gambler's Wife,' Miss Wolf; song, 'The Blind Girl to Her Harp,' Miss Stuart; song, 'It's a Great Big Shame,' Mr Newbold; song, 'Only This,' Miss King; recitation, 'The Exile's Return,' Master J. Dowley; song, 'Remember Me No More,' Miss Connor; song, 'I Met Her in the Garden,' Mr M. Road; duet, 'The Irish Demands,' Misses Condon and Dolbel; recitation, 'The African Chieftan,' Master J. Shanahan.

Last week the Auckland Orchestral Union gave their fourth and last concert of the season. The programme was largely made up of pieces which have been performed by the Society at previous concerts; but this fact heightened rather than detracted from the pleasure given by the entertainment. For the pieces were those that had proved favourites with the audience on other occasions, and which they were glad to hear again; while the performers were able to do the

items every justice. Every item was well played and every item was well appreciated. Thanks in a very great measure to Mr Towsey and Mons. de Willinoff, the orchestra did its work in masterly style. Svendsen's 'Rhapsodie Norvegienne,' with which the concert opened, is not unfamiliar to Aucklanders, but when well executed, as it was on this occasion, one never fails to detect new beauties and surprises in its wild weird Norse music. Mendelssohn's 'Fingal's Cave' was another item in which the instrumentalists distinguished themselves. There is abundant scope in this wonderfully poetic composition for expressive playing. The first violins on this occasion deserve particular praise for their work. MacKenzie's 'Benedictus,' selections from Verdi's 'Il Trovatore,' the Nocturne from Germans, 'Romeo and Juliet,' and Gungl's 'Hydropaten' were all well received, but probably nothing pleased the popular ear more than Eilenberg's 'The Mill in the Black Forest,' so full of attractive, breezy music, which was most spiritedly performed. The instrumental items of the concert were varied by vocal contributions from Miss Ella Farrell and Mr Wilfred Manning. The former sang Mascaroni's 'Ave Maria,' with piano and organ accompaniment by Messrs A. and C. Towsey, and a violin obligato by Mons. de Willinoff. The number was deservedly encored. The lady also sang 'Chords of Life' (C. F. Lloyd) with equal success. 'Look Back' (Key) and 'No, My Courage' (from 'Maritana') were both capitably given by Mr Manning.

All the popular music that is being whistled in London and New York is embodied in 'The Girl From Paris.' Olga Nethersole says the London theatre-going public is the most appreciative in the world.

Sarah Bernhardt has changed her plans, and the Renaissance will open with Decourcelle's adaptation of 'Secret Service,' instead of with M. Porto Riche's 'Le Passe,' and after this comes 'Hamlet.' For the time being Sarah is down at the Fort des Poulains—the weird old castle that she has rendered habitable on the most surf-beaten point of the La Belle Isle en Marmel. She is credited with studying 'Hamlet' at midnight, in the dreary ruins of the fort, only a portion of which has ever been reclaimed by her from the decay and ruin of centuries.

Sarcey, the French writer, has decided to combine dramatic criticism with ostrich-farming. He declares that to any one who has once eaten an ostrich omelette life becomes an empty dream if you have not got them always handy, and he is convinced that the bird will increase and multiply and lay eggs by the dozen in France. Sarcey has decided to experiment in rearing ostriches at Nanterre—where the rosieres come from.

Francis Coppée, one of France's most successful dramatists, is a very sick man. To read the articles that he has written since his illness is a sad task. He apologises in every line for fear that his pen has lost some of its charm, and he tells you of his bandages and the sickening smell of the drugs that pervades his chamber.

Hall Caine, in certain quarters, is getting himself disliked, and on the part of those whose backs are up it is urged that in his latest production, 'The Christian'—novel and play—he has forgotten that, where Christian virtues are concerned, 'the greatest of these is charity,' and that he has altogether ignored that part of 'the Christian' duty which in dealing with our neighbours orders the avoidance of evil-speaking and slandering. His account of 'Glory's' goings on while engaged as a nurse, with a return to hospital at 3 o'clock in the morning, is regarded as a cruel libel upon a body of young ladies who claim to be not only hard-working but honourable. 'Bridiculous and absurd,' are the terms employed when Hall Caine's description of nurses and students is talked about.

It looks very much in Paris as though there would be a big boom in historical plays this season. The popular theatres are going in entirely for them, and the elder Dumas' 'La Jeunesse de Louis XIV.' is to be revived at a big house. This was the play over which Dumas won his celebrated bet of guaranteeing to write a five-act drama on any given subject in three days.

Verdi is said to be composing music for his own funeral.

MUSIC IN AUSTRALASIA.

We take the following from the 'Auckland Star' of last week:—

'The visit to New Zealand of Mr Samuel Aitken, honorary secretary to the Associated Board of the Royal Academy and Royal College of Music, should be of interest to musicians throughout the colony. Mr Aitken arrived in Auckland this week, after an extended visit to Australia, to arrange for the examinations which the Associated Board have decided to hold in New Zealand. In the course of a conversation with a "Star" reporter, Mr Aitken explained the object of his visit, and gave some very interesting particulars in reference to the important musical body he represents.

'The Associated Board,' said Mr Aitken, 'in extending its examinations to Australasia has done so by the invitation from many professors of music, who felt that they wanted the highest grade of examinations that the United Kingdom could provide. "The Board is composed of an equal number of members of the Royal Academy of Music and of the Royal College of Music. It is presided over by a Chairman who is a member of the Royal Academy, and by a Deputy-Chairman from the Royal College. Two leading members of the Board are Sir A. McKenzie, R.A.M., and Dr. Hubert Parry, Director of the Royal College of Music.

'The work of the Board,' continued Mr Aitken, 'is eminently educational. The Board has not entered upon this work for purposes of profit, but simply to advance the cause of musical art in the United Kingdom and in Greater Britain. Its object in extending the examinations to the colonies is that it may unify the scientific system of examinations which it has been pursuing for many years past in the United Kingdom, and that it may give the colonies a precisely similar examination in every respect to those held in Great Britain.'

'The syllabus of the Associated Board is prepared by specialists in every department, who have devoted their lives to the study and teaching of their particular instrument. The Board's list of examiners contains the names of every professor of music who has made his mark in the United Kingdom. When it is stated that they include Sir A. McKenzie, Sir W. Parrett, Sir Arthur Sullivan, Dr. Hubert Parry, Signor Randegger, Sir G. Grove, Sir Fredk. Bridge, Mr Beringer, and Dr. Ebenezer Prout, it will be seen that the cream of musical ability in the United Kingdom is included in the list of examiners and in the members of the Associated Board.

'In holding these examinations in Australasia this year the Board had nothing to guide it except the examinations which it had held in Cape Colony for the last five or six years, and consequently it framed a syllabus for this year (1897) on the standard of the Cape examinations. The honorary secretary and the Board's examiner (Mr C. Lee Williams) are very glad to find, and very pleased to acknowledge, that the attainments in musical education in Australasia are far in advance of the standard in Cape Colony. They found, therefore, that the syllabus which has been prepared for Australasia is not so high as it might have been. Next year, however, and thenceforward, the syllabus will be precisely the same as those held in the United Kingdom. A glance at the syllabus which has been prepared for 1898 will show that the examinations are of a higher grade than this year, and further that in place of two examinations, as this year, there will be next year no less than five distinct grades—two local centre and two school examinations, and one elementary school examination. In addition to this latter there will be a general school examination and a singing-class examination. It

is hoped that these will comprise everything which an examining body need interest itself in up to the point of leaving candidates with a university of music at which to complete their musical education and give them a musical degree.

'The Prince of Wales,' said Mr Aitken, 'has taken a deep interest in our work. He is our President and presides regularly at the annual meetings.' Mr Aitken has letters from the Prince to the chancellors of all colonial universities, and letters to the Governors from Mr Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary. It is hoped that by unifying their systems of examination throughout the Empire, the Board will be forging another link in the chain of federation.

'The examiner this year is Mr C. Lee Williams, a distinguished musician, and a man of very large and varied experience. Mr Williams is a distinguished all-round man and has given the greatest satisfaction as examiner throughout Australia by his ability and impartiality.

'The harmony examinations have already been held in Auckland,' concluded the hon. secretary, 'and the practical examinations will be held here about the end of next week, or the beginning of the following week. According to present arrangements, the examiner will arrive here from Sydney on December 4th, and from Auckland will proceed to Wellington and thence through the South Island. From there he proceeds to Vancouver on his way back to London.

'Professor Carl Schmitt, the honorary representative of the Board for New Zealand, has devoted considerable time and trouble to the work of the Board, and he will be happy to answer any question regarding the Board's examinations. His appointment has received the sanction of the Prince of Wales.'

Mr Wilson Barrett, the eminent English actor, passed through Auckland on Wednesday by the inward mail on his way to Australia. He was accompanied by his leading lady, Miss Maud Jeffreys, and her brother, Mr Norman Jeffreys. Miss Jeffreys has certainly had an experience that should be worth 'featuring,' as the players term it. Born in Arkansas, she went to England to be educated for the stage. Returning to America, without friends or influence, she called one day on Wilson Barrett, on the mere chance that he might want to engage her. She has not played in her own country since her engagement but her name ranks high in the list of favourite leading women in London, where as the heroine, Mercia, in 'The Sign of the Cross,' she shared in Mr Barrett's prolonged success. Mr Barrett has impersonated Marcus Superbus in that successful play more than 500 times.

Messrs Williamson and Musgrove's company that has been playing 'The Prisoner of Zenda,' 'A Royal Divorce,' and 'The Sign of the Cross' with such marked success in Australia opens its New Zealand season on Boxing Night in the Princess Theatre, Dunedin. The company will work north, being due in Christchurch on the 12th January.

It is one of the whims of fashion just now to wear an immense gold cross, suspended about the neck by a chain or ribbon. This is by no means considered a piece of full-dress ornamentation, for it is worn with that most commonplace of costumes, the shirt-waist and sailor hat. Sometimes the cross is of silver, sometimes of amber, and occasionally it is jewelled, but the plain gold cross is preferred as being most simple and effective. The cross hangs midway between throat and belt, for the girl who is up in such matters knows that it is distinctly bad form to dangle her cross too low or tie it about her neck too closely.

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