

Misses Kempthorne, white silks with ecru lace; Miss Mary Wright, sage green trimmed with silver beads; Mrs Percy Dufaur, black silk skirt, shot silk blouse, black hat with plumes; Mrs McConnell, cream silk trimmed with lettuce green Liberty silk; Mrs Edward Isaacs; Misses Walcott, (2), white cashmeres; Mrs Leslie Hunt, black; Mrs Cheeseman, grey and black striped silk, black hat with different shades of pink ribbon; Mrs Keesing, black silk with beads; Mrs Keesing, black silk skirt, black net bodice with bands of ecru lace insertion, and her sister wore a fawn and blue combination costume; Mrs Denniston, green plaid with black braid, cream vest, green hat profusely trimmed with carnation; Mrs McArthur, black silk skirt, green plaid silk blouse; Mrs Bullen, black silk profusely trimmed with net and bead passementerie; Mrs Gavin (Wellington), black silk, black bonnet with lavender flowers in bonnet; Mrs Hay, black, relieved with purple; Mrs Napier, black broche with black bead passementerie, violet trimmed black hat; Miss Nichol (Scotland), green coat and skirt, cream vest, black velvet hat; Miss O'Neill, black silk, white sailor hat; Mrs Goodhue, iron grey satin; Mrs Colegrove, fawn tailor-made gown; cream striped vest, green ribbon toque; Miss Binks, navy serge, white vest, red hat; Mrs May, silver grey silk; Mrs Segner, violet and green tartan; Mrs Isidor Alexander, heliotrope and bronze green figured costume; Miss Stella Alexander, white skirt, blue blouse, white hat; Mrs (Dr.) Lindsay, black silk with white satin revers; Mrs Edwards, navy blue with cream vest; Miss Fanny Johnstone, pale grey cashmere; Miss Moss, cream, and her sister white; Canons MacMurray, Nelson, Judge Monro, Messrs Edwards, Tewstey, Leslie Hunt, Wright, Jackson Palmer, Arnold, Rathbone, Gould, Walker, Rev. FitzGerald.

WRIGHT-DYE.

The wedding of Miss Maggie Dye, daughter of Mr F. Dye, of Kaukapapa, to Mr George Wright, of Mercury Bay, took place recently at the residence of the bride's father, and was a very pretty affair. The bride looked winsome in fashionable bridal array of figured white silk, richly trimmed with pearls and beautiful lace. There were two bridesmaids—Misses Nellie Dye and Wright. Both were tastefully gowned in green and white, the green predominating in Miss Wright's costume, and the white in Miss Nellie Dye's.

At the very substantial wedding breakfast which followed the ceremony (performed by the Rev. Mr Richards) the health of the happy pair was drunk enthusiastically, and other toasts. Early in the afternoon the newly wedded couple left for Auckland, while the guests remained to enjoy a dance and supper, to which a very large number were invited. Everything passed off exceedingly well, and the wedding dance was greatly enjoyed by all.

BLACKMAN-YEATS.

At St. Peter's Church, Hamilton, on Wednesday last, Mr Frank Blackman, formerly of Kirikiriroa, now of Ponsonby, was married to Miss Margaret Annie Yeats, daughter of Mr C. Yeats of Kirikiriroa. The bride, who wore a pretty dress of blue shot silk, was attended by her younger sister Helen and Miss Ada Blackman, as bridesmaids, and was given away by her father. Mr Alfred Rayner, of Warkworth, acted as best man. After the ceremony a small party consisting only of the relatives and immediate friends of the family repaired to the Waikato Hotel, where the wedding breakfast was laid. Mr and Mrs Blackman left in the afternoon train for their future home in Ponsonby.

BANKS-CLARK.

Mr W. A. D. Banks, recently promoted from Wellington to the Magistrate's Court office, Auckland, was married on Thursday last in Christchurch to Miss Clark of that city.

The Communal authorities of Ghent have decided to provide the policemen on night duty with dogs capable of defending them in the event of attack. The experiment is an interesting one, and in towns where it has been tried it is said to have yielded excellent results.



For the future all correspondents are requested to address Society News, etc., to the editor.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

Dear Bee, March 3, 1899.

The breath of spring is beginning to entice us out into the open again, and the golden wealth of daffodils in the shops suggests walks in the park and field, but alas, the March of Fashion will, I fear, give its followers a very halting gait. Sleeves are to be tighter than ever, so are skirts—even of the walking gowns. In fact the long narrow skirts are to be so tight above the knees, as to threaten to split whenever the wearer puts her best foot foremost. At the ankles, however, they burst forth into a perfect whirlpool of billowy flounces. These skirts are generally trimmed either with stitched strappings of their own material, or with a similar kind of ornamentation in satin or silk, matching exactly in colour the original fabric. Sometimes these strappings are carried in a straight line from waist to hem, while at others they describe a series of curves and so simulate a double or a triple skirt. I hope that we shall not have to follow fashion blindly, but shall be able to induce a sweet reasonableness on the part of our dressmaker, otherwise I fear that the rational dress league will make a great many converts.

DRAWING ROOMS.

The two drawing-rooms that were held this week by Princess Christian have been rendered somewhat sombre by the death of Prince Alfred, which has obliged the Royal Princesses, Ladies and Maids of Honour to be attired in black, and those attending the drawing-rooms to wear half mourning, that is, white, black, the combination of the two, mauve, grey, and combinations of white or black with mauve or grey. The only gems allowed to be worn are diamonds and pearls. Of course the debutantes will not be affected by the mourning regulations, for their dresses, trains, trimmings and flowers are always white and simple. Pearls, are too, their most appropriate wear, although here and there a very plain diamond ornament sparkles forth. Those ladies, however, who looked forward to appearing in some of the brilliant gorgeous colours that are to be fashionable this season, must have been sadly disappointed, and if they had ordered their costumes betimes must have been sadly inconvenienced by the necessity of ordering a gown of staid and serious hue. However, the more brilliant costumes will come in for the May drawing-rooms, which the Queen herself is likely to hold. I doubt if many dresses had been ordered for the drawing-rooms before the mourning regulations were promulgated. As a rule, my dears, these matters are left till the last moment. The costumiere and lingere are rushed by their customers all at once, and it is only by supreme patience and perseverance, by working day and night, defying the factory inspectors, who are on the qui vive at this time, that many of the Court trains reach the houses of the wearers, when the carriages are at the door. You can imagine the fearful anxiety of the wearer, who has perhaps had her hair done over night by some fashionable coiffeur, lest she miss her train, and—the drawing-room. And when at last the ordeal is over, and the debutante has ordered her train and backed and curtsied in the most approved fashion, she has still to pose for the photographer and to smile and make herself agreeable to a crowd of admiring friends, who must be invited to christen the costume as it were. No wonder that at the end of the day many a debutante succumbs quite fagged out. Really I don't think the game is worth the candle, and I quite sympathise with those democratic Agents-General—too few, alas!—who with their wives

and daughters decline to offer themselves upon the shrine of a fetish fashion. An Agent-General has, of course, being a servant of the Crown, to appear in a Court uniform, which in the first place is repugnant to his democratic ideas, and in the second costs him some sixty guineas and will in all probability never be worn again. He cannot, like the United States ambassador, appear in a plain but dignified suit of black. Of course the Agent-General's wife and daughter must also pay pretty heavily if they wish to be presented, but then after all their costumes will be used again and again. Presentation dresses vary in price from forty to seventy guineas, but then the front and skirt make a smart evening or dinner dress, and out of the train comes another dress, and possibly if the train has been with a different material and in a different colour, even a third. Of course the debutante's dress does not cost so much. Seventeen or eighteen guineas is quite enough to pay, even if the train, some eight or nine yards long, be made of broad, satin moire, or velvet. Afterwards the dress can be converted into a ball dress or an evening gown. Mauve and white were the chief colours seen both in dresses and flowers. The bouquets indeed were remarkable for their artistic effect and lightness in the hand. The Goodyear bow, in which the blossoms were tied up in loops, each holding a distinctive flower, was very much in evidence. Cattleya and feathery asparagus, lilies of the valley and Neapolitan or dark blue English violets, pale Parma violets made up with broad black velvet ribbon, white roses and white tulips, mauve orchids and white lilies with grey or mauve ribbons seemed the favourite flowers. In fact simplicity and good taste rather than gorgeous brilliancy seemed to mark the costumes and accessories this week.

SOCIETY EXTRAVAGANZAS.

Have you seen the idiotic things they are doing in New York? The Bellamy Ball seems never to have taken place. It was so called because the guests were all supposed to be 'Looking Backward.' In order to accomplish this they were to have their clothes all reversed, so that a man would wear his dress-shirt on his back, and a woman's bodice would be so arranged as to display her shoulders in front. A mask was to be worn over the bank of the head, and of course a wig would cover one's real features. I daresay the effect would be screamingly funny—to the onlookers—but I can well imagine, can't you, that the invited guests would draw the line at playing the fool so atrociously, and that in consequence the idea was given up by its originator.

St. Valentine's Day, however, was celebrated by some funny freaks of entertainment. At Mme. Eames' Eames' dinner at the Hotel Marie Antoinette, just before dessert a waiter brought in what looked like a chocolate confection, in the shape of a tiny negro baby. Luckily none of the guests attempted to follow Alice's breach of etiquette in cutting the dish to which they'd been introduced, for the confection turned out to be a real 'little Alabamma coon,' for whose benefit M. Jean de Reszke sang a French lullaby. The poor little thing was then taken off to bed. Latter on it is to serve Mme. Eames' husband, Mr Julian Story the sculptor, as a model for Cupid. I do think it was really too bad to serve a human being so.

Mrs Stuyvesant Fish's entertainment on St. Valentine's night also had some peculiar features. The guests on their way to the ball-room passed through 'St. Valentine's Post-office,' a trellised arbour. Here two Cupids handed each guest a letter on parchment, sealed and daintily tied up with red ribbon, and containing some sentiment appropriate to the addressee. In the ball-room five professional dancers, dressed as Dresden china shepherdesses, garlanded with flowers and radiant with electric fairy lights, performed a graceful dance. One surprise was followed by another. 'The Sorrows of Satan' was a novel figure, the favourite being 'pitchforks and letters d'enfer.' Mr George Cavendish Bentinck was responsible for a figure which even the hostess did not expect. Little boys dressed as cats wheeled into the room barrows containing little be-ribboned kittens in boxes and wicker baskets, and white mice

in cages. The kittens were used as the favours, but must have proved somewhat inconvenient.

I haven't heard of any such original frolics in England. We are far too conventional and afraid to play the fool. Hence, no doubt, we often go to the other extreme, and our society gatherings become quite too stiff and formal. I did hear, however, the other day of a dinner at which a tiny satin shoe was produced, the ladies were invited to try it on, and the one whose foot fitted it was awarded as a prize a diamond ring. This looks rather like what Tom would call 'a put-up job' in favour of the most petite, but it is more creditable than another rumoured doing in society.

A lady, celebrated for her dainty little feet, and the variety and elegance of her foot gear, was staying at a country house, and when she went to dress for dinner she couldn't find a single shoe of any kind to put on. At last, after she had kicked up her heels on the edge of the bed for some time, a footman knocked at the door and told her they were all waiting dinner for her. She descended in her summiest evening dress and her prettiest stockings, only to behold the whole dinner table adorned with her shoes, decked with ribbons and flowers. Don't you think this fantasy taxes one's credulity a little too much?

By the way, talking of society, be careful how you word your invitations, and don't write as a girl I know once did to a friend of mine:—

'Dear Mr X.—If you have nothing on, we shall be so glad if you will come and dine with us this evening at 7.30. Don't dress, but come as you are.'

CLUBS.

Since I last wrote you, I have visited two clubs, the Empress and the Writers'. A friend who has been much in Russia and Paris, and who writes largely for art journals, kindly asked me to afternoon tea, and as we gossiped in one corner of the bright winter garden to two rather interesting men, the afternoon passed very quickly without my taking in very many of the details of the club. The room has a glass roof like a conservatory, and is decorated by palms and plants in handsome china jars. All the easy chairs were filled by very smartly dressed members and their friends, busily engaged with tea and chatter. From the winter garden you go out on to a gallery, from which steps lead into a very cosy little morning room, where you can retire and write your letters or indulge in a doleful far niente without fear of interruption. Between the winter garden and the hall is a little reception room, which is far too small for the large number of members. A very narrow staircase leads up to the drawing-room on one side and the dining-room on the other. These regions are barred to the mere man except when he is being taken into dinner. The dining-room is very simple but very smart, and looked attractive, but as only between 60 or 70 can sit down at once, you have often to wait half-an-hour before you can get a seat. The predominant colour of the drawing-room was gold, rather typical of the wealth of many of the members. It appeared to me indeed that the fittings and furniture were perhaps just a little too smart and new. The rooms didn't somehow look as if they were lived in. You felt that when you came to the Club you must put on your best frock and be on your best behaviour. A staircase as steep as a ladder takes you up to the bedrooms, which are much too few for the nearly 3,000 members of the Club. In the new premises which are going up next door, members are to have 52 bedrooms, an entire suite of library, dining, drawing and other rooms for members only, besides a reception hall, dining and drawing-rooms and lounge to which guests will be admitted.

And what did we talk about, I think I hear you say. Well for once, my dears, the conversation was singularly free of conventionalities. Mr Trevor-Battye, the naturalist and explorer in Arctic and Siberian regions, a tall well-groomed man, who from his accent and clothes might have spent all his life in London instead of in the wild regions of the world, and my artistic friend plunged into a discussion on the meaning of colours, the sensations and sounds represented by them and the connection between vio-