

## New Zealand Society Gossip.

## CHRISTCHURCH.

MAY 29.

DEAR BEE,

At the beginning of this month some weather prophet gave it out we were going to have an 'Indian summer,' or second summer as they have there, but alas! it did not come, as many other prognostications are never fulfilled, and we are fairly launched into winter of the old-fashioned sort—cold sleety showers; then the clouds will all huddle themselves in a corner of the sky, the sun shine out so bright and warm, and you are sure it is all over, no more to follow, so you think you will have a good walk and get warm and cheerful again. You get about half an hour away from the house and the rain comes down. Engh! Tableau. Have you ever seen a folk walking in the rain? That describes everything.

There is one good thing about it gardeners can do their planting; they say they were waiting for this, and the hunt-men will find the ground soft enough to fall on. There were several meets last week, a bye day or two, and on Saturday a good meeting, in spite of the weather, at Mr F. Overton's, Leeson, who was most kind and hospitable, providing a splendid luncheon.

The 'Pack of Cards' which played whist so successfully under Mr O'Brien Hoare's guidance and the ten emergencies were entertained at a dance in Hobbs' buildings on Thursday night. Each girl sent the name of a gentleman under cover to Mr Hoare. Now I should have liked to have been in the secret and helped to open them. Well, it was a very jolly dance. The girls all wore their white dresses and the marshals theirs, which must have been rather uncomfortably tight for dancing. There was a little sore feeling amongst the gentlemen, caused by some of them not being what Dick in 'Little Lord Fauntleroy' called 'straight.' It was agreed not to have programmes, but all kinds of devices were resorted to by most of them to secure the partner they wished for, only about half-a-dozen keeping to the original arrangement, and they found themselves quite out of it, at which they were very angry, and justly so. I like people who are 'straight' myself.

Bishop Julius is still being 'welcomed.' Every parish is having a social meeting, where he and Mrs Julius are introduced to their parishioners, and songs and light refreshments, with a bouquet for Mrs Julius, are part of the entertainment. There is just one thing I don't understand about it, and when it comes to our parish I hope it will not happen, and that is charging eighteen-pence admission. The ladies give the light refreshments, so why charge and keep out the poor parishioner who has to study every sixpence? No doubt in 2000 this will all be rectified; they are going to manage things in a very different way. I have not seen yet how the Sun-lays are disposed of then, but there is no question of equality.

A wedding took place at St. Mark's, Opawa, last Thursday, which created great interest in the district, many going from town to see it. The bride was Miss Gertrude Mary Reeves, third daughter of the Hon. W. Reeves, of Rivington, and the bridegroom Mr James Stevens Thomson, of Plympton Park, Chesire, but at present living at the Waimoa Plains, Southland. Mr Bell and Mr Bunn acted as groomsmen; they are also from the Waimoa Plains. The bridesmaids were her sister (Miss Nellie Reeves), Miss Robison, and her little niece (daughter of Mr N. P. Reeves). The church was beautifully decorated with white chrysanthemums and variegated periwinkle and green leaves. The Ven. Archdeacon Cholmondeley performed the ceremony. There was full choral service, Mr L. Cane, the organist, presiding. The bride wore a very tasteful but unassuming costume of soft white silk, with handsome broche side panels and folds on the bodice, the dress being made without a train; a handsome Honiton lace veil fell over all, being fastened to her hair by a lovely pearl spray, a gift of the bridegroom. She carried a lovely bouquet with long ribbon streamers. The bridesmaids wore simply made creme serge dresses, with trimmings of turquoise blue, long moire sashes to match, crinoline boat-shaped hats with soft crowns of blue, and white feathers in front; white bouquets with long blue ribbons. The little girl looked sweet in pale pink. Mrs Reeves (mother of the bride) wore a soft silk of blue and crimson, bonnet to match, seal mantle, bouquet of white chrysanthemums and scarlet geraniums; Miss Reeves, a very becoming dark green costume, bonnet trimmed with buttercups, bouquet of yellow chrysanthemums; Mrs N. P. Reeves gown was of terra cotta and black, stylishly made, hat to match; Mrs Robison wore a brown and white cheek tress, sealette mantle, brownish bonnet with orange wing; Miss G. Robison, a red brown dress, hat trimmed to match; Mrs Greenwood, grey dress, black velvet bonnet with grey feathers; Mrs Harley, petunia velvet gown, bonnet to match; Miss Murray-Aynsley, a black dress and brown bonnet; Miss Murray-Aynsley, brown tweed dress, straw hat with vioux rose trimming of a dark shade; her sister, a green dress, felt hat to match with grey wings; Mrs A. Olivier, navy blue gown, small round hat with pale blue wing; also among the guests I saw Mrs T. W. Maude, Mrs T. M. Hassall and Mrs F. M. Robinson. Nearly all carried bouquets of chrysanthemums, and a number of the gentlemen wore wedding favours, so I suppose the old fashion is coming in again. The bride's travelling dress was brown cloth, with a lining of crimson silk showing here and there, brown silk vest, the revers of the crimson; altogether it was a very pretty combination; hat to match. The wedding presents were, some of them, very handsome, including several from the bridegroom.

The latest engagement is Mrs J. L. Custer and Mr Secretan. They evidently approve of the married state, as both have tried it before.

Milk and his Shak-perian company occupy the Theatre Royal for a three weeks' season. Our old friend Mr Collet Dobson is amongst them, and has made great strides in his art, I believe. I hope to see how he shines after five years.

DOLLY VALE.

## DUNEDIN.

MAY 27.

DEAR MAUDE,

Miss Alice Woodbridge's farewell benefit concert came off on Friday night in the Garrison Hall. 'Little Lord Fauntleroy' opening the same evening at the theatre materially affected the house, but not the concert, which was one of the best held in Dunedin for years. This is great praise considering the Exhibition series, including Santley's concerts, are included in the remark. Not only was Miss Woodbridge herself in magnificent voice, but she was supported by some of our best artists. Mr Bath was musical director, a position which he has so long filled in Dunedin to the great pleasure of all those who come within his range. His accompaniment is always so soft and expressive, and the soloists always hail his presence at the piano with delight. Mr Bath and Mr Timson opened the concert by playing a piano duet.

The ladies who assisted Miss Woodbridge were Mrs Murphy and Miss Rose Blaney. Mrs Murphy sang in her very best style, while Miss Blaney brought down the house with 'Nes.' This young lady has a grand musical future before her if she receives a professional education. She is only eighteen, but she has a glorious voice and sings as easily as a bird. There is no effort or facial contortions, and it will be a thousand pities if she is not able to use to the utmost her gift. A good voice is a great gift, yet some of those who possess it do not appreciate it as they should, especially among men. The folly of singers goes very much against the voice. But to return to the concert. The gentlemen vocalists were Messrs Den-em, Smith, Rennat, Young, and Umbers. Mr Young sang 'Queen of My Heart' splendidly, his deep rich voice showing to great advantage. The stage was prettily decorated with pot plants, and several bouquets were handed to the lady during the evening. She leaves by the Arawa next week for England.

The Savage Club had their first meeting last night. It was not a ladies' meeting; that will come later on.

'Little Lord Fauntleroy' has, of course, been drawing crowded houses. Perhaps it was bearing so much about it, but I did not care for it quite so much as I thought I should. The child calling its mother 'dearest' does not sound to me as sweet as 'mother,' but the authoress declares it was a way of the child's own. That dear old word, mother, will never be beaten. La grippe laid in for the company, and on Saturday night the leading lady was so hoarse as to be scarcely audible, and on Sunday the agent was running about looking for some one to take her part. No one, however, being forthcoming, the programme was the same, although Miss Winthrop was evidently suffering. Several others of the company are feeling the sickness, and a good many coughs interrupt the play.

The Horticultural Society's Autumn Show was held on Thursday. There was a splendid display of fruit, and the chrysanthemums were gorgeous in endless variety and shades. Most people love a flower show, and there are so few private entertainments just now that people are glad to go anywhere.

Mr Ritchie gave an entertainment one evening last week, at which there were private theatricals. With the exception of this there has been nothing at all socially. Nothing is heard here of the rink this winter. The craze for it seems quite to have died out, although I believe in England last winter it was all the rage. We generally follow the fashion that is set at home, but in this instance New Zealand has ventured to go its own way. What the girls will do for excitement during the winter I do not know; they will be reduced to keeping house.

The Hon. Mrs Reynolds takes a great interest in the Kindergarten, and has from time to time got up concerts. One takes place to-night, a number of ladies taking part in it. I shall have more to say about it in my next letter. The weather is cold and wintry, and 'not to be depended upon,' as the visitors used to say when they were here. There is every prospect of a wet winter, a fact that will be hailed with delight by farmers, who complained last season that it was far too dry.

Messrs Bath and Schacht have started a series of chamber concerts for Saturday evenings. The music is of a very good character, as it is sure to be if presided over by Mr Bath. He is a great favourite among musical people.

RUBY.

## WELLINGTON.

MAY 30.

DEAR JENNIE,

Government House no longer looks the deserted mansion that it has for the last few months, for Lord and Lady Onslow have now returned, and are comfortably settled down, I hear, for the winter. The Ladies Bonny and Gwenoline Onslow are at present living at Lowry Bay in a pretty little place across our harbour, where they have often visited before.

Lady Onslow held her first afternoon reception last Monday from four to half-past five o'clock. It turned out a very dull, cold day, but nevertheless a very large gathering assembled, and very brilliant indeed did the large and handsome drawing-room look, filled, as they were, with all the youth, beauty and fashion of Wellington. The rooms were prettily decorated with a number of hot-house plants in artistically-draped pots, and the lovely chrysanthemum about the room were much admired. The Countess looked exceptionally well in a rich dull black silk gown, very plainly made, and quite devoid of trimming of any kind, and her only ornaments were two magnificent diamond brooches fastened at the throat, and a number of jewelled rings.

Tea was served in the dining-room, which was well patronised during the afternoon, and altogether it was a very pleasant affair. The Governor and Mr Walwood also being there helping Lady Onslow to entertain her visitors.

Some of the dresses worn were very handsome, but I am sorry to say they were not seen to advantage, for although the gas was lit there was not a good light, and most of them were quite lost. I noticed Lady Buller and her daughter, who have just arrived from England, the former wearing a handsome black gown profusely trimmed with jet, and the latter a tight-fitting dark tailor-made dress, with a tiny flat strinless bonnet. Mrs Izard wore a rich-looking black costume, and her daughter wore an effective combination of sage green and fawn, with a small brown straw hat trimmed with shot ribbon. Miss Webb, of the Hutt, a recent arrival from Ireland, looked very stylish in a handsome fawn-coloured silk gown trimmed with braided lace, and a bonnet to match. Mrs W. H. Levin wore a long sea-kin jacket and a bonnet of checked ribbon, and Mrs Dr. Collins looked well in a plainly-made navy blue costume and blue tulle hat. Mrs Dr. Grace wore a hat with feathers to match her dark dress, and Mrs Biddiford Hutt was dressed in black plain and watered silk, with a large black hat with ostrich feathers. Miss Captain Russell wore a navy blue dress, and a pale grey belt-shaped hat trimmed with grey and white ribbon bows, and Mrs Cooper also wore a blue costume. Miss Willis wore a brown and plish jacket with beaver lapels, and Mrs McVillie wore a very pretty blue and grey wing bonnet with a blue and grey gown. Mrs Dr. Henry, brown trimmed with fawn and brown satin. Mrs G. Knight, a wine-coloured dress, and bonnet to match with feathers. Mrs J. S. M. Thompson, a handsome tight-fitting shawl pattern cloak, with long open sleeves falling to the hem. Mrs Dr. Gillon, a fawn costume, with cape and bonnet to match. Amongst others there were Mrs Tolhurst, Mrs Paritt, Mrs Gore, Mrs Cooper, Mrs Menteath, Mrs Tanner (Christchurch), Miss L. Krull, Wanganui, Miss Harding, the Misses Richardson, but I really could not see what they wore, or who else was there.

It is rumoured that there will be no Birthday ball, but that the Governor will give one in the beginning of the session. The young people are naturally very disappointed, especially as there are several young ladies who had quite made up their minds to make their debut on the Queen's Birthday. Another rumour says that one of our Minister's wives will shortly issue invitations for a large fancy dress ball. From what I have heard in various quarters I anticipate a very gay session for the young people, at any rate as I think most of the dances will be private and small. I have also heard of numbers of young ladies who intend visiting Wellington during the session, so I hope for their sakes that it will be more lively than last year.

Mr Coleridge gave a very pleasant afternoon tea last Saturday, which was largely attended. The hostess wore a black merrettex gown trimmed with jet, and Mrs Werry looked very well in a black satin gown slightly trained and trimmed with jet beads, and a small lace mantle, and a becoming pure white bonnet with feathers. Mrs R. Pharyzyn, Mrs Medley, and others were also there.

I must tell you something about Mrs Tolhurst's ball before I close, for it was one of the nicest we have had for a long time. It took place last night at Mrs Swanson's new schoolroom in Fitzherbert Terrace, which was beautifully decorated for the occasion, and Mrs Tolhurst proved an excellent hostess, so that the affair was most enjoyable. One or two of the dresses were lovely, the Misses Grace both looking well—one in pale pink and one in white. Miss Buller also looked well in a handsome black fancy net relieved with deep-crimson colour, and Miss Webb, Hutt and Miss Brandon both wore very striking gowns. Curiously enough they were almost exactly alike, made in Directoire fashion, of a lovely shade between pale blue and green, and pale pink, the combination being very effective, made as they were, with long bands of pink from the shoulder to the hem of the dress. Miss Captain Russell and Miss Izard also wore beautiful pure white gowns, and Miss Elsie William also wore white, made very prettily with large puffed sleeves. Miss Willis wore black, Miss Cooper pink, Miss Barron crimson, and Miss Elliott white net with large blue moire sash. The Misses Harding, Hart, Worzjan, Morrish, Mr Walwood, and many others were also present. Miss Tolhurst, who has lately come from England, wore a pretty creme dress with a bunch of roses and leaves up the shoulder; the Misses Tolhurst wore white dresses with pretty sashes.

RUBY.

## AUCKLAND.

MAY 30.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We were favoured with glorious weather for the Queen's Birthday, and also on the following Monday, which was observed as a close holiday. It is now rather late in the season for much out-door enjoyment, but nevertheless I noticed that the various excursion steamers were very well patronised. Lake Takapuna, North Shore, St. Helier's Bay, Northcote, and Birkenhead apparently being the favourite resorts for pleasure-seekers. The Winter Meeting of the Takapuna Jockey Club was the only amusement advertised for the day. The attendance was a large and fashionable one.

The Lamuena Social, Literary, and Musical Society held the first meeting of the season on Thursday evening, in the Mount Hobson Hall, and, as is usual with these enjoyable reunions, the building was crowded to its utmost capacity. The chair was occupied by Mr Justice Conolly, who in a few words introduced the various performers. Unfortunately, owing to a family bereavement, the prevalent complaint, 'La grippe,' and other causes, no less than nine apologies were received on Thursday by the secretary from friends who had promised their assistance for the opening entertainment. However, an excellent, almost impromptu, programme was gone through, members most willingly coming forward with