

## New Zealand Society Gossip.

## WELLINGTON.

JUNE 12.

DEAR BEE,

I think I told you in my last letter that the day after the Birthday celebration at Government House the Governor and Lady Onslow went over to Lowery Bay to spend some time with their children. They have been there now a week, and it has been nearly all the time most unpleasant weather—very cold southerly winds with heavy rain, and at times hail and sleet, so that I am afraid it has been rather an uncomfortable visit altogether, especially as most of the boys on that side of the harbour are exposed to the southerly winds. It must have been very severe on Saturday last, when we had an exceptionally strong S.E. gale with rain, and bitterly cold. The Governor has been shooting most of the time independent of the wet, but it must have only been on rare occasions that Lady Onslow and her daughters could venture out. The Governor returns, I believe, to-day.

We are drawing near the session, and there is an air of excitement and preparation in the vicinity of the Parliamentary and Government Buildings. The houses are being put in order, and arrangements generally made for those who usually assemble here during this time each year. It is expected that we are to have a very short session, so that we may not have so many ladies residing here with the members. The wives and daughters will hardly think it worth

Great preparations are being made for the next Harmonic Society concert, when the 'Golden Legend,' by Sir A. Sullivan, will be produced. The cast is as follows: Elsie, Miss K. Hardy; Ursula, Miss Porter; Prince Henry, Mr W. Izard of Christchurch; Lucifer, Mr Waters; Forester, Mr Gray. Miss Porter has not sung before at the Society's concerts; she has a very fine contralto voice. The three gentlemen mentioned took part in the piece at the festival in 1888, when it was first given here.

On Trinity Sunday, the services were of a more than usually festive character. At St. Paul's and St. Peter's full choral services were given both morning and evening, and the churches were beautifully decorated with flowers. At St. Paul's, for the first time, I believe, there was a choral celebration of the Holy Communion at mid-day. Mr Parker played at St. Paul's and Mr Trimmell at St. Peter's.

Major-General Tripe is now in Wellington. He came from India, and is travelling through New Zealand for his health. He is a great shell-collector, and as he goes from place to place he is gathering together specimens of all our New Zealand kinds.

We have had one very jolly little dance since I last wrote. It was given by Dr. and Mrs. Collins last Wednesday evening, and was all the more enjoyable for being small and early. The hostess wore a lovely gown of soft figured silk of a sky-blue colour, which suited her perfectly. The only other married ladies who were there were Madame Lostalot, Mrs. Dan Riddiford (who is visiting Wellington), and Mrs. Arthur Pearce—Mrs. Collins' sister. There were very few new dresses worn. Both Miss Russell and Miss Maud Grace wore

## CHRISTCHURCH.

JUNE 12.

DEAR BEE,

I have felt quite thawed and comfortable for the last two days; a nor-wester in the winter is the most comforting thing going, or 'blowing.' You smile and beam and regularly do a peacock strut until the next howling sou-wester. The holiday was fine, and everyone seemed to be aware it was the last of the season, so meant to make the most of it. To take Lancaster Park first, I don't think so many people had been there for many a day; some say nearly six thousand. In the morning the Sports Gala was held; then there were bicycle races, which are very difficult to understand. I never can tell who wins; they start from all sorts of places, and then get all mixed up, of I do. The Association football was the afternoon attraction, and we are proud of our boys' once more. All Christchurch seemed to be there, and yet I have heard of many expeditions on that day. Some very stylish winter costumes were worn, numbers of cheeks and plaids of various dimensions, and not all becoming; but to be in the fashion with some is everything. One elegant dress I noticed of dark blue, beautifully made, with trimming of tan applique; dark blue hat to match, with bird; another of the same colour, with vest and cuffs of the blue applique over red. A very handsome one was of dark terra cotta with sable fur. Long cloth cloaks are much worn, various shades of red being a favourite colour



DIGGING OUT THE TOHUNGA TOHUTU AT ROTORUA.—See pages 2 and 8.

while to come. If this is so we shall, in consequence, have a rather quiet time as regards entertainments, balls, afternoon teas, etc. Still, we must have some little extra excitement in the way of gaiety during the winter months. It does people good to stir them up in this way, even if it is only once in the year, both for young and old, provided always it is not overdone. The tendency is to crowd all this sort of excitement into too short a time, and then it is sometimes mischievous.

The Opera has gone, and a few evenings after we had entertainments in the same building of quite a different character, namely, addresses by the evangelist, Mr Henry Varley, who seems to have attracted large audiences. He is, I believe, a very earnest and powerful speaker, and I am sure is doing a great deal of good here. On Friday we are to have yet another change of programme at the same Opera House in the plays of Shakespeare by Mr G. C. Miln, who is very highly spoken of. I believe he brings a very good company with him. The first play is to be 'Julius Caesar.' This will be a startling change from the comic operas that we have had for so many nights lately, and a very agreeable change too, I think.

Mr Robert Parker gave on Thursday evening the first of a series of lectures on 'The Great Musical Composers.' The special subject was 'Mendelssohn.' It was most interesting and highly instructive to the young musical students, for whose special benefit the lecture was given. The lecture was illustrated vocally and instrumentally, those taking part being Mrs. Stuart, Miss Greig, the Misses Johnson, Miss Hamerton, Miss Quick, and Messrs. McDuff, Boyd, Kennedy, and Hamerton. A very enjoyable evening was spent.

beautiful white silk gowns, and Miss Cooper wore her pretty soft pink silk trimmed with feathers. Miss I. (not J.) as it always appears in print, Cooper wore cream-spotted muslin, and the Misses Brandon black, with flowers. Mrs. Captain Russell is to give a dance to-morrow evening, but I am afraid you must wait until next time to hear of it, for if I waited I would miss the mail. Then, for the week after, Mrs. Coleridge has issued a large number of invitations for an 'At Home,' and shortly after that the Thornlon Tennis Club's ball comes off, so you see we mean to be very gay during the next few weeks.

Last night the annual concert connected with the Girls' High School took place in their large hall in the centre of the building, which was beautifully decorated for the occasion by the girls themselves. Miss Susy Graham sang 'Jock o' Haseledean,' Miss Pownall 'Old and New,' Miss L. Johnson 'Whither Away,' and Mr Waters 'From Rock to Rock.' A pretty trio called 'The Flower Greeting' was sung by Miss Graham, Miss Henry, and Miss Parsons. The gem of the evening was Mr J. B. Conolly's exquisite rendering of Beethoven's Romance in F. Miss Henry also played a solo, and joined Mr Conolly in a duet for two violins. The rest of the programme consisted of glees and part-songs by the pupils, and also by male voices alone, one of the latter being particularly good—'Caldicot.' Where are you going to, my pretty maid? Mr Parker conducted, and the concert seemed to be thoroughly enjoyed by the large audience, many of whom were the parents of the pupils attending the school. The girls all looked so fresh and nice in their white dresses and colours.

Mrs J. P. Firth is wearing a very bright one with Medici collar, and showing a bordering of grey fur.

The hunt on Saturday was at Mr Neave's. That is a drive about sixteen miles. It kept some away, being so far out, but about a hundred were most hospitably entertained by Mr Neave, and those who attended had a capital day.

On the evening of the 24th a very pleasing event took place at Mr Hanson's, Upper Riccarton. It was the silver wedding of Mr and Mrs Hanson, very old and respected residents of the district, and a few of their friends presented them with a handsome silver tea and coffee service and silver tray suitably inscribed; also a choice handkerchief box made of New Zealand woods, and an elegant card tray. Their healths were drunk in bumpers with musical honours—that is the correct way to put it, I believe; at any rate, with music, songs and good wishes, a pleasant evening was spent.

The Miln Shakspearian season has come to an end. On the whole he has been fairly well liked, and moderately well patronised. They all consider it the right thing to read and rave Shakspeare's plays, so it must be my bad taste not to like it. Some of his orations were very fine, one speech in 'Julius Caesar' notably so. Miss Rose Seager, whom I told you of, acquitted herself most creditably as Lady Macbeth. In the sleep-walking scene she was excellent. On Tuesday Mr Collett Dobson was accorded a benefit. It was very gracious of Mr Miln to allow it the night before his own, but many of Mr Dobson's friends wished to give him one, and that was the only night available. I have seen Mr and Mrs G. Roberts there several times, Mr and Mrs C. R. Shanks, Miss Campbell, Mr and Mrs J. Aiken, Mr and Mrs Tyree, but no large houses on any night.

RUBY.