

WELLINGTON.

DEAR BEE,

DECEMBER 27.

I went to see the final sets of the double tennis tournament at the Thorndon Courts one afternoon last week. The pair left were Mr Boddington and Miss Maude (Grace), and Mr H. Vogel and Mrs Hardy, the former couple winning after a capital game. It was a lovely day, and afternoon tea and other good things were provided by the lady members, consequently there was a large attendance, and great interest was taken in the tournament.

The Amateur Athletic Club gave a conversation at the Star Boating Rooms, when Mrs A. Stuart-Menteath presented the prizes to the successful competitors at the recent sports. The prizes—chiefly silver cups and medals—were very handsome, and the recipients, of course, were made much of during the evening. After the presentation we were entertained with music, and during the evening tea, coffee, and cakes were dispensed. Miss Lendall, wearing a plain grey tweed and a small toque filled with marguerites, played a piece, and Miss Pownall, in blue trimmed with white sandyked embroidery, sang a song. Miss Buller sang 'The Garden of Ely' very well, and wore a pretty white gown, the bodice entirely of embroidery, and large green sash. Mr H. Batger sang 'Answered,' Miss Cooper accompanying him, wearing a white gown, and Mr Fox was capital with his comic songs. Mr Pearson sang, and a novelty consisted of a trio for three banjos, played by Mr J. Hume, Mr J. Duncan, and Mr C. Pearce. I think that was all the music, but a very pleasant evening was spent by the guests. Mrs Stuart-Menteath wore a handsome gown of white satin veiled with black lace, and a violet flower bonnet softened with lace and tied with velvet strings. Miss Holmes had a handsome black satin gown, and Mrs Fulton a silver grey costume with large grey lace straw hat with ostrich feathers. One gown I admired, and which was worn by a stranger to me, was of crimson silk with the yoke and sleeves of velvet of a deeper shade. Miss C. Brandon, who played some of the accompaniments, had an uncommon-looking gown of pale fawn trimmed with mauve silk, and hat to match.

We have just enjoyed the great treat of hearing Madame Burton and her excellent little company, combined with the Harmonic Society, produce 'The Messiah.' I feel now that I have really heard Handel's grand and ever favourite oratorio as it was meant to be sung. We have often had it before, but never with such success, but with such soloists as Madame Burton, Miss Colbourne-Baber, and Mr Stockwell, and with a leader of the orchestra of Mr Horace Pousaard's fame, and also with Mr Bradley assisting, perhaps you will not be surprised to hear that we were pleased with the result. Unfortunately, for financial reasons, the usual prices for the dress circle were raised, but with no good result. Indeed, people, especially those with families, contented themselves with the stalls and family circle, consequently the dress circle on both occasions, particularly so on the second night, was decidedly empty. The audience, notwithstanding this, was a large one, every other part of the house being crowded. Madame Burton's artistic singing naturally was the feature of the evening, her rendering of 'He shall feed His flock,' being exquisite. Miss Baber shared the honours, her best efforts being 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' and 'Rejoice,' the latter revealing the pleasing flexibility of her sweet soprano voice. Miss Stockwell was perhaps heard to greatest advantage in 'Comfort ye.' Mr Pousaard undertook the bass solos, and we were all very glad to hear our local amateur get on so well among all the professionals. The accompanying was a feature in the evening. Whether the unusual excellence lay in the fact of having Mr Pousaard leading I know not, but there was a decided improvement. As to the choruses, I have never before heard the choir sing so well together, and with such expression. Mr Parker, as usual, conducted, and the choir took up their ordinary positions as at their own concerts, and wore the same uniforms.

The following night we again spent at the Opera House, for another concert by the same company was given. It was partly sacred, and Madame Burton charmed every one with 'O rest in the Lord' and 'Voi che sapete.' She also joined Miss Baber in a duet, and also Mr C. Hickson in Spohr's 'Children, Pray.' Miss Baber sang the 'Inflammatus' and 'Dear Heart.' Mr Stockwell chose 'Cujus Animam' and 'The Death of Nelson,' the latter, thought, suited him better than the former. Mr Pousaard that evening was undoubtedly the favourite, but his enthusiastic listeners could not get enough of him, and he was so wonderfully good about his encores, for the audience was most inconsiderate, I thought, in demanding, in some instances, a double encore. 'The Silent Land' was decidedly the best of the part-songs. Mr Ros-Marten conducted, and Mr Parker played the organ, while Miss Medley and Mr Bradley officiated at the piano.

Another Christmas has come and gone. The town, in consequence of the holidays, looks so deserted, and nearly everyone is away. The steamers were all crowded with excursionists on Christmas eve, and ever since the trains have been well patronised. Christmas Day was fine, but Boxing Day was hardly a success. To begin with, it turned out windy and disagreeable in the morning, and in the afternoon a heavy shower of rain completely spoilt all enjoyment of those who had ventured out for the day. I felt so sorry for the excursionists who had started out so merrily in the morning for their day's outing. The churches were prettily decorated, St. Peter's being more elaborately so than any of the others. I think, and although St. Paul's looked very well, I could not but remark the absence of colour in the floral part, which seemed to me to be more appropriate to Easter than Christmas, the flowers being all either white or yellow. The services in all the churches were fully choral, numbers of members belonging to choirs staying in town especially to take part in them.

The Rev. Charles Clarke was the great attraction in the evening, the Opera House being crowded to hear the clever lecturer on Christmas Carols. The previous night he lectured on 'Christmas in the Old Country,' and Mr Parker had a very good little body of male voices in attendance, so that the lecture might be varied by the introduction of Christmas carols, etc. We will be sorry to lose the rev. gentleman, who has provided so many interesting and instructive evening amusements for us during the past ten days or so.

RURV.

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We shall always be pleased to receive accounts of entertainments, dances, etc., from any place where we have no regular correspondent. All letters to be signed in full, not for publication but as a guarantee of accuracy.

AUCKLAND.

DEAR BEE,

DECEMBER 31.

We have enjoyed perfect weather for our holidays so far, Christmas Day being very pleasant, and the grand day for the Auckland Racing Club Summer Meeting all that could be desired. Notwithstanding the crowds—between six and seven thousand people—that streamed from all quarters towards Ellerslie, not a single accident, not even a *contretemps* of any description is recorded. Every available vehicle, from a gay four-in-hand to an express, might be seen laden with happy, merry faces, all vending their way to the race-course. Admiral de Presnail and a number of officers from the French warships now in port were present, and were entertained at luncheon by the Club. There was a goodly assemblage of fair dames, and it was remarked that previous Cup days were quite eclipsed by the beautiful dresses worn on this occasion. I think the colours chiefly favoured were heliotrope and white; the materials differed greatly. Mrs Carrington (Miss Achurch) wore a lovely gown of heliotrope delaine, very stylish, with hat and shawl to match. Another much admired costume was worn by Mrs Isidore Alexander. It consisted of a handsome grey silk broadie, elegantly made in the latest fashion. Mrs Levisohn, in white Liberty silk trimmed with bands of black velvet; Mrs (Major) George, in silver-grey merveilleux silk; Mrs Moss Davis, pale heliotrope; Mrs Thos. Morrin, black silk with pretty pompadour trimming; Mrs L. D. Nathan, very handsome sea-green broadie, costly black lace over-skirt; Mrs Male, pretty glove-fitting grey plaid, white faille leg-of-mutton sleeves; Miss Daveney, in a handsome grey satin, pale blue trimmings; Misses Kirkwood, tasteful black gowns; Miss Wilkins, pretty heliotrope gown; Miss E. Firth, French grey gown; Mrs J. F. Churton, lovely black silk gown, blue sunshade; Miss Percival, pale pink embroidered gown; her sister wore a pretty pale green costume; Mrs G. F. Brimblecombe, heliotrope delaine gown with band of ribbon velvet to match; Mrs (Dr.) Cremonini, stylish crushed strawberry gown, with black velvet sleeves and trimmings; Miss Buckland, fawn gown, brown trimmings; Mrs Ch. Kimberlain, rich black merveilleux gown; Mrs Laine, black silk, pretty grey bonnet; Mrs Cattinach, lovely pale pink delaine gown with cardinal velvet trimmings; Mrs (Colonel) Dawson, handsome fawn silk gown, crème trimmings; Miss Chambers, very pretty crème nun's veiling; Mrs Keyp, stylish grey delaine gown; Mrs Aitken Carrick, beautiful combination of black and white silk; Miss Whitaker, stylish crème Liberty silk gown; Mrs Ching, very rich bronze silk gown; Mrs James Philson, navy blue spotted silk; her sister, Miss Williamson, wore heliotrope delaine; Mrs Roche, pretty delaine gown; Mrs (Major) Mair, pale pink gown, fawn silk dust cloak; Miss Dunnett, grey embroidered cashmere; Mrs Joseph Hanna, very pretty grey gown, feather hat to match; Miss Worsp, lovely green delaine with merveilleux trimmings; Mrs (Dr.) Walker, bright blue satin gown; Mrs Webber, pretty green silk gown, black lace mantle; Miss Tottie Pearce, lovely crème gown, with maize trimmings; Mrs J. Odlum, brown satin gown; Mrs Hopkins, crème cashmere, with crème trimmings, cardinal sunshade; Mrs Tapper, pretty grey gown; Miss Freece, eau-de-nil nun's cloth, floral toque; Miss Henderson, mauve delaine, black lace hat; Miss Tonka, silver gown, floral toque; Mrs J. Armitage, pale pink costume, floral toque; Mrs Frankel (Sydney), white Liberty silk, floral toque; Miss M. Firth, black cashmere; Miss Eva Maxwell, electric flowered Liberty silk, Empire feathered hat (very chic). There were many others who looked very nice in pretty summer gowns, but I must hurry on with my letter. Our lovely harbour was crowded with ferry boats, steam launches, yachts, etc., all full of holiday folks. Here, also, nothing occurred to mar the day's enjoyment. I think everyone in Auckland went somewhere.

A very pleasant informal evening—a sort of surprise party, in fact—was lately spent at Ferndale. Mr Garlick, in his cheery, good-natured manner, told the young folks to do what they liked so long as they enjoyed themselves. Some of them at once took him *au fried en lettre*, and began to dance. A few rather strait-laced individuals objected to this innocent and impromptu entertainment. Mr and Mrs Garlick were the recipients of a handsome silver and silver and crest-stand in celebration of their silver wedding. Some very pretty songs were rendered by various guests, and altogether the numerous visitors much enjoyed themselves. Supper was provided by the surprise-party, and was dis-

ussed with great relish. Amongst the pretty gowns was a handsome brown costume worn by Mrs Garlick; Mrs Sellers, light grey check; Miss Sellers, blue check; Miss Milly Garlick, white bodice, and vieux rose cashmere skirt; Miss Laura Dixon, her bridesmaid's dress; Mrs McBride, dark brown silk; Miss Priestly, terra cotta; Miss Thomson, white open work relieved with embroidery; Misses Garlick, Chinese silk bodices, dark skirts.

Christmas week was marked by quite a round of attractions in the way of public amusements, the series being inaugurated with Mr Sydney Hoben's pianoforte recital in the Opera House. Mr Hoben's letters descriptive of 'Student Life at Leipzig' have rendered his name familiar to us, and many were interested in seeing the progress he had made. Considering the distractions peculiar to the Christmas season, he had a very fair attendance. The programme comprised the names of many leading amateurs. Mr Hoben's own contributions were Paderewski's 'Minuet in G Major,' Rheinberger's 'Romance' for the left hand only, Schumann's arrangement of Paganini's 'Bell Etude,' and Grieg's 'Norwegian Wedding March,' all of which were well encored. Miss Freda Marsden played a couple of violin solos sweetly, and was also encored. Vocal selections were rendered by Mrs Kilgour, Mrs J. M. Geddis, Mrs Hopkins, Miss Hilda Ruck, and Messrs Tapper and Maitland, and of these the best was undoubtedly 'In Old Madrid,' which Mrs Geddis sang most expressively. Mrs Kilgour likewise made a bit in the operatic aria, 'Robert toi que j'aime.' Nor must I forget the recital of 'Eugene Aram,' by Mr Herbert Fleming (a member of Miss Achurch's Company), who gave it in really first-class style. Mrs Kilgour wore a handsome evening dress of rich ruby plush, opening in front over a petticoat of pale pink silk, diamond ornaments; Mrs Hopkins wore a gown of cardinal Russian net, the bodice cut low and sleeveless, aigrette of cardinal feathers on the shoulder and in the hair; Mrs Geddis, trained gown of crème flowered Indian silk; Miss Ruck, pretty crème evening dress; Miss Marsden and Miss Ada Yates, who played the accompaniments, both wore white gowns.

I am sorry I cannot speak in enthusiastic terms of the Choral Society's performance of 'The Messiah.' On the contrary, it was inferior in point of merit to the performances of this favourite oratorio which we have had during many years past, and this fact was a matter of general comment. The number of performers was less than usual, but it was not with the choral portions of the work that the fault was found. It was with the soloists mainly. Mrs Charter's voice was too light for the part of first soprano, and Miss Handyside, a *débutante* at the Choral Society, was very unfortunate in her rendering of 'How beautiful are the feet.' It were an unthankful task to enter into further detail. Mrs Charter wore her wedding gown of white *moiré* silk; Mrs Archdale Taylor, pretty sky-blue silk gown; Mrs Burgess, lemon coloured broadie silk gown; and Miss Handyside, white gown relieved with pale blue ribbons. Amongst the audience were Mrs (Dr.) Lindsay, wearing a pretty white gown; Miss Upton stylish blue gown; Mrs Hardy and Miss Claudia Hardy both wore white gowns trimmed with embroidery; Miss M. Slaton, black evening dress, the shoulders and elbow sleeves of lace; Mrs Blair, black silk and lace gown; Miss Murray, bright pink gown; Miss Binney, pretty crème flowered costume; Mrs Haworth, black silk costume; Mrs Gorrie, black gown; Mrs (Dr.) Knight, pretty biscuit-coloured gown with steel embroidery; Miss Goodall, pretty fawn-coloured gown; Mrs Dawson, handsome black merveilleux gown; Mrs Bennett, black silk gown; Miss Pickmere, black evening dress.

You have all read so much of Miss Janet Achurch in the Southern letters that I have absolutely nothing fresh to say about her, except that we are all greatly delighted with her, and Auckland has given her an enthusiastic welcome. She opened in 'Forget-me-not,' and won all our hearts by her womanhood and grace. I will not attempt to criticise her acting. You have all seen and heard her, and have fallen under the magic spell of her beauty, of which her photographs give no correct idea. She is having delightful 'At Home's' on Wednesday afternoons. I saw her in a becoming lilac muslin gown with no high collar, but loosely made, and confined at the waist by a belt. Her manner is very ladylike and pleasing. She said that her relations had tried to keep her off the stage, but she had been drawn to it by an irresistible power. Fortunately for us that this was the case. Her beautiful gowns are described at length in the GRAPHIC, so that I will not attempt them, but will tell you something about the audience. I noticed Mrs Tewsley, Mrs Applin (Tasmania), Mrs and Miss Baume, Mrs J. Alexander, Mrs Levisten, Mrs R. Blair, Miss Murray, and numerous others.

Before concluding my letter last week I quite forgot to tell you about another interesting and fashionable wedding which had just taken place, the happy couple being Mr Maitland Nicol, of the South British Insurance Company, and Miss Rose Jahm. The ceremony was performed at Bishopscourt Church by Bishop Cowie in the presence of a large number of relatives and friends. The bride looked exceedingly pretty in a rich white silk gown, made with long train, wreath of orange blossoms and tulle veil, and carried a magnificent bouquet of choice flowers. She was attended by five bridesmaids—Misses Cowie, Connell (3), and Davey—all attired alike in tasteful white costumes, and each carrying a very pretty bouquet composed chiefly of white marguerites and ferns. At the conclusion of the ceremony the bridal party adjourned to the residence of the bride's parents, Symonds-street, where they were hospitably entertained. And now, dear Bee, I wish you and everyone a Happy New Year.

MUNEL.