

SYDNEY GOSSIP.

DEAR BEE,

JULY 3.

Talk about rain! New Zealanders who have heard so much of 'sunny New South Wales' would, I think, prefer their own beautiful weather to what we Sydneysites have been enjoying (?) for the last three weeks. After so many wet and grey days one wearies for a little sunshine, just to remember what it is really like.

There is at present a plenitude in the way of musical and artistic treats here. Of course, you have now heard Madame Patey, and formed your own opinion of (what we thought here) her lovely voice, which was heard to advantage in 'Elijah,' as well as at her chamber concerts, one of her best solos being decidedly Gounod's 'There is a Green Hill,' which was composed expressly for her.

You will regret to hear that Sir Charles and Lady Halle (Madame Norman-Neruda) have decided not to visit New Zealand. Their return to Sydney was thoroughly welcome, as shown by the enthusiastic reception accorded them at their first concert. The company is, indeed, strong, including, as it does, other now well-known artists, viz., Mdlle. Fillinger, an Austrian soprano of considerable reputation, who came out with the Halle's, and Madame Marian Barton, the English contralto, who is familiar to New Zealand audiences, and a great favourite with Sydney concert goers. Sir Charles' pianoforte-playing is a lesson. His rendering of Beethoven's Sonata in C Major was something to remember, as were all his solos. Lady Halle, gowned in cream brocaded with a pretty blue, the bodice in blue with chiffon, out Newmarket style, with short puffed sleeves, delighted her audience with her brilliant violin playing, which her husband accompanied, as only he can accompany. The second concert passed off quite as successfully as the first.

Coming to a lighter style of music, Gilbert and Sullivan's 'The Gondoliers,' which was staged at the Theatre Royal by Williamson, Garner and Co. at the beginning of the month, is still drawing large houses. It certainly ranks next to the 'Yeoman of the Guard' for brightness, and artistic dressing and dancing. The old favourites, William Elton and Howard Vernon, are still to the fore, but there are many changes in the personnel of the company which visited New Zealand some time ago. A new departure is made in this opera, that is, one or two of the principals do not get all the 'fat,' as in most. The solos are very well divided.

Brough and Boucicault have just terminated a most successful season at the Criterion with 'Jane,' a sparkling comedy, thoroughly well played and staged, Robert Brough, who is always good, doing the lion's share. 'Jane' was preceded by a small piece entitled, 'Hook and Eye,' written by Mr. Eille Norwood, who visited New Zealand with Frank Thornton's 'Sweet Lavender,' and who plays the young lover admirably. By the way, Mr. Norwood does a little in the whistling line, being engaged to give a solo at one of Lady Jersey's 'At Homes' at Government House. Among the other performers that evening was the young pianist, Ernest Hutchinson who had just finished a series of concerts, assisted by Miss Balser and others.

Lady Jersey has quite filled the gap occasioned by the departure of Lady Arington, and become a great favourite. The Government House 'At Homes,' a series of which are being given, are much enjoyed, music, dancing and games—the latter being a recent idea—forming the evening's amusement. The gowning, of course elaborate, would take pages to describe.

I do not think a stranger would admire the dressing, etc., of some of the Sydney girls one sees 'doing the block.' The style of hair-dressing, for instance, is, to say the least of it, a little exaggerated. As a local paper puts it, it is done 'a la pitchfork,' that is, very fluffy, very untidy, and supposed to be in imitation of an artistic Grecian knot. Quite a false idea, alas! Newmarket jackets are the thing, and one sees some very stylish costumes, in which red is the predominant colour, silk cord being an important item. Now that the weather is thinking of clearing there is a greater likelihood of one seeing new and seasonable fashions, which I shall be happy to send you a description of to the best of my ability.

I read a delightful book of Rudyard Kipling's lately, which appeared in *Longman's Magazine*, named 'The Light that Failed.' If you are an admirer of that author, and have read other works of his, 'Wee Willie Winkle,' 'In Black and White,' etc., and enjoyed them, you will be sure to like 'The Light that Failed.' Since re-reading many of Charles Kingsley's works I have been reading his 'Letters and Memories of his Life,' edited by his wife. Learning from these letters under what circumstances his different books were written, gives one, if possible, a deeper interest in them. His letters, too, are beautifully written, those to Mrs. Kingsley before their marriage being perfect word-pictures.

AROMA.

LONDON.

DEAR BEE,

MAY 27.

Your latest dissipation has been a 'Flower Ball in aid of the Home of Rest for Horses.' It is perfectly wonderful what trouble we are all willing to take to amuse ourselves under the veil of philanthropy. But it was a jolly ball, and very smart. Some of the dresses were lovely. Lady Yarborough had a most becoming gown of white satin with chiffon frills, trimmed with clusters of pale pink roses, and carried a spray of the same lovely flowers. Roses of the same tint were worn by Lady Griffin, but arranged more in the fashion of Miss Neilson's gown in 'the Dancing Girl,' hanging from the bodice in long trails to the hem of the dress which was of pale pink bengaline, and with it was worn a diamond tiara and ornaments; Lady Moloney represented a 'carnation,' in a dress of salmon-coloured moire trimmed with chiffon, caught up with carnations and a number of diamond ornaments. There was a charming gown of white *faux-herse* bordered with deep fringes of grass and white clover; Mrs. Charles Augustus Coutts represented 'spring' in an ivory white silk, with sprays of lilac on the bodice and skirt. I went as a 'snowdrop'—white cloth dress edged with tiny green scallops, the bodice pointed back and front of green velvet, snowdrops wreathed the skirt, bodice and the hair.

How foolish people are to call their little ones after a number of relations bearing the same Christian name! This is exemplified in the case of the name Louise in our own Royal Family and their connections. In fact, we outsiders are completely mixed up as to which Princess Louise is meant when the name is mentioned. Thus, not only have we Princess Louise, Marchioness of Lorne, Princess Louise, Duchess of Fife, and Princess Louise Christiana of Schleswig-Holstein, but in the summer of 1899 another Princess Louise of Schleswig-Holstein was married to Prince Frederick Leopold of Prussia, and now comes news of the betrothal of yet another Princess Louise of Schleswig-Holstein, daughter of the late Duke Frederick, to the Prince of Waldeck-Pyrmont father of the Duchess of Albany. The Princess is quite young and her *fiat* is sixty. But I imagine by the time you receive this cablegram announcing the marriage will have reached you. The Queen and Princess Beatrice are going to give the bride some valuable old lace, and the wedding-dress, I hear, is to be richly trimmed with it, I think, but certainly with antique lace of some sort.

Do you remember I sent you a quotation from an English paper about the christening of Lord Onslow's youngest son? I have stumbled upon another, which I think must be a joke. Do write and tell me, Bee, if you ever thought of such a capital name, and isn't it spelled wrong? Anyway here it is:—'Her Majesty has performed a kind and gracious act in consenting to stand godmother to Lord Onslow's little Australian-born son. This is a delicate compliment paid by the Queen to her colonial subjects as well as to the popular Governor of New Zealand, and is calculated to cement the strong ties of attachment which bind the colonies to the mother country. This baby's godparents are representatives of the Old World and the New. With Her Majesty for godmother he has Mr. C. Johnston, ex-Mayor of Wellington, New Zealand, for godfather. The child thus highly favoured rejoices in the name of 'Taikoa,' a word in the Maori language which means 'on slow' or 'slowly.' It is said that Lady Onslow chose the name, which is, of course, a play on that of the family. The family motto 'Festina lente,' is the same idea in Latin. It is to be hoped that little Taikoa, acting up to both names and motto, may, if he advances slowly, also advance very surely.' It was in a London society paper, Bee.

I am always so sorry for the Empress of Russia. I think she must envy her sister, our Princess of Wales. I hear it said that amidst all the daily anxieties and terrors of her life, the Empress retains her taste for dancing, which was such a source of delight to her as a girl that her sisters christened her 'La Cigale.' There is something a little pathetic in the fact that the favourite amusement of her girlhood should prove her principal relief in her anxious womanhood.

Lady Biddell-Countess must have been greatly gratified by the quaint token of friendship recently sent her by the Maharajah Holkar, who has evidently not forgotten the hospitality he received here during his visit at the time of the Queen's Jubilee. Dating his letter from the 'Indore Palace—a name which irresistibly suggests the playful humour of Mr. Burnand—the Maharajah forwards 'a few Pili seeds, which are to be tasted by the recipient on the occasion of the dawning of the Hindu New Year, the belief being that these mysterious seeds, when eaten, avail in some occult manner to strengthen the bonds of friendship. The notion is certainly worthy of the picturesque Oriental mind, with its overmastering love of mysticism and magic.

Golf, of course, is being much played just now. I went down to Blackheath to see the Ladies' Club play for their medal. It is amusing to watch them. I don't think ladies can expect to stand much chance at hockey when they play with men; it's rather too rough.

The ladies of Constantinople having of late 'degenerated' into perambulating the city in the 'latest' Paris fashion, the Sultan has grown indignant, and issued a decree, sternly prohibiting a costume which not only departs from Turkish tradition, but also the precepts of the Holy Koran.

The Royal Albert Hall was crowded on Monday evening from area to galleries on the occasion of Mr. Sims Reeves' farewell concert. No living artist can boast a longer hold on the sympathies of the British public than the veteran tenor, who then appeared for the last time on the concert platform, and the cheers and deafening applause that greeted him as the audience rose *en masse* to bid a lingering 'Adieu' to their old favourite, showed the depth of esteem and affection felt by young and old for this once unrivalled singer. Not only was every seat in the huge Kensington concert room occupied, but Mme. Christine Nilsson (the Countess Miranda) for once quitted her retirement and journeyed to our shores to sing for her old friend and fellow artist. The great Swedish songstress was in splendid voice, and showed that her high artistic gifts are still in perfection. Mr. Sims Reeves, besides singing many of the airs identified with his musical career, joined Mme. Nilsson in Verdi's duo, 'Ah morir,' and expressed, in a short speech, his grateful memory of the many kindnesses he had received.

Mr. Spurgeon has much of the old fire and pathos left in him still, and he must have been delighted at the enormous gathering—packing, seats, doorways, and pulpit stairs—which met to welcome him last week at Bloomsbury Chapel. He was preaching the annual sermon to Sunday-school teachers. 'What,' said the preacher, 'should we do without you?' 'I always feel like saying "reverence" to the men and "Right, Reverend" to the women. I don't do it, because I object to titles myself. The devoted work which I see you voluntary workers do makes me feel that I ought to take off my hat to you.'

I will conclude my letter with three lovely Court dresses. (1) Dress of eau de nil and palest pink striped grenadine, over pale pink bengaline; the corsage trimmed with pale pink chiffon, and bows of eau de nil beeb ribbon; petticoat bordered with frill of chiffon, and bows of bobé ribbon to match corsage; train from left shoulder of pale pink and eau de nil brocade, lined with pink and eau de nil shot surah. Headdress, plumes and veil; ornaments, diamonds. (2) Train and bodice *en pinceaux* of a rich shade of moss-green velvet, lined and turned back with shell pink silk, covered with exquisite point lace; petticoat and front of corsage of biscuit-yellow satin duchesse, bordered with Russian sable; bodice draped with biscuit chiffon over pink stomacher, with volants of lace to correspond. Head-dress, veil and feathers; ornaments, diamonds. (3) Dress of amber brocade, the front veiled with a rare specimen of antique lace; corsage and train to correspond, with diamond stomacher; train of andyke brown velvet, lined with amber satin embroidered with gold. Head-dress, plume; ornaments, diamonds.

A CITY MOUSE.

LADIES IN COUNCIL.

NEARLY 500 delegates, from about 180 Liberal Associations throughout the country (written our London correspondent) attended the Council Meeting of the Women's Liberal Federation at the Prince's Hall, Piccadilly. Mrs. Gladstone occupied the chair, and the assembly was addressed by such recognised upholders of ladies' rights as Lady Aberdeen, Lady Carlisle, Miss Cobden, and Miss Cons. On the previous evening there was a reception at Lady Hayter's. On the 27th the annual meeting of the Federation was held at



MISS CONS.

MISS COBDEN.

St. James's Hall, and on the 29th Miss M. Martin Leake, the secretary, read a paper on 'Organization' to a meeting of the Official Union of the Federation in the Conference Room of the National Liberal Club. Altogether the past week was fraught with moment for the ladies, business being nicely blended with amusement through the capital concert given by Miss Cons, on the 23rd, at the Royal Victoria Hall. I give portraits of Miss Cobden and Miss Cons, as typical representatives of the women's suffrage movement. They are martyrs to the paradoxical law which says that, though they may sit on the County Council, they may not speak or vote.

HER FIRST CARRIAGE RIDE.

A LADY tells the following anecdote of the simplicity of the peasantry of Oberammergau, where the Passion Play is performed:—

'On a lovely June Sunday last summer, as my sister and I were driving down the valley from the play, on our road to Partenkirchen, we overtook a party of peasants returning home after having viewed the holy spectacle. One of them was an old woman bent under her weight of years. We stopped our carriage to inquire whether her way lay with ours, and, finding that it did, insisted upon her getting in with us. When she had seated herself she looked at me and asked:

'Are you a princess?'
 'No, I am not a princess,' I answered.
 'But you have a carriage and a pair of horses.'
 'Yes; but I'm not a princess.'
 'I am eighty-four years old, and this is the first time that I have ever ridden in a carriage.'
 'She sat silent for a few moments, then looked at me again inquiringly, and said:
 "Did the dear Lord Christ tell you to take me into your carriage?"
 And I answered, reverently:
 "Yes, I think so."

PECULIAR FEMALE OCCUPATION.

American women are supposed to be, *par excellence*, the cleverest inventors of new occupations suitable to the female capacity, but the following advertisement, which appeared in *The Morning Post* recently, really, I think carries off the palm:

TO those who have not time to give their dogs sufficient exercise in London a Lady, experienced, would EXERCISE DOGS in the park. Terms: One hour daily, 5s a week; two hours, 7s 6d.—Address, B. L.

It would be rather interesting to know in what way the advertiser considers herself 'experienced.' Perhaps she has a special mesmeric influence over the canine race, which prevents them straying away from her, and also makes them otherwise obedient to her wishes. Do the terms insure the dear pets being exercised singly, or does 5s a week only provide for exercising in company with other, perhaps undesirable and plebeian dogs? I conclude, however, that the class of dogs catered for are mostly of the more aristocratic type, as the park is the chosen place of promenade.

JUST TOUCH THE BELL and ask Mary to get one of Aulsebrook's delicious Oswego Cakes for afternoon tea.—(ADVT.)

'ORB' CORRUGATED IRON is the best iron manufactured, it has no equal.—ADVT.

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 CASSELL STREET, CHRISTCHURCH,
 AND AT DUNEDIN AND LONDON.

Largest Stock and best variety in the colony to choose from sold in any quantities at wholesale prices. Special facilities for country orders and distant customers. Samples, prices, and full particulars on application.

B. HALLENSTEIN, E. C. BROWN,
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 The most moderate first-class Hotel in Australasia.
 Inclusive tariff per day 10s 6d.
 Ditto per week £3 3s 6d.
 THOMAS POPHAM,
 (Late Commander U.S.S.Co.) Proprietor.