

The tall veil was held in place by a crescent of pearls and diamonds given by the bridegroom, and the bouquet had some real orange blossoms in it, a rarity at this season of the year. Her fan was of white ostrich feathers, and was the gift of Colonel and Mrs. Carre. The bridesmaids were in green, beginning with a darkish shade in the leading pair, and graduated down to a faint tint in the last. Miss Black and Miss George came first, their green skirts and corsage bodices having pleated aqua yokes of amber silk. Next were Miss Lewis and Miss Wylde-Brown, in paler green frocks with yokes of the darker shade in silk. Lastly, Mrs. Power's and Miss Walker's little girls in very pale green frocks falling full and straight from yokes of coral pink silk. The hats of all six were perfect poems, the lace of which they were composed looking as if plaited by fairy fingers, they were so light and graceful. Each had a large bow of ribbon to suit the costume. The four grown up maidens had gold bangles given by the bridegroom, the two little girls gold brooches. The former carried cascade bouquets of yellow and green, the latter baskets of flowers. After the ceremony which was performed by the Rev. Mr. Preston, we all went to Mrs. Bloomfield's house, 'Womona,' and there inspected the presents, congratulated the 'happy pair,' ate cake, ices, and many other good things, and drank champagne, tea and coffee. Amongst the presents were many useful and pretty silver things for the table. Conspicuous amongst them was a silver tray from Mr. Coates, and a case of salt-cellers from Mr. Bloomfield's yachting friends. There were spoons of all kinds for afternoon tea, jam, fruit, etc., several china ornaments and elaborate photograph frames. Of all the presents perhaps the one that took my fancy most was a travelling bag given to the bride by one of her brothers-in-law. It was fitted with all one could possibly want, and the handles of the brushes and other things were of ebony, on which dark ground the silver monogram showed with good effect, and which is a change from the everlasting ivory or silver. At five we all assembled in the verandah to see the young couple drive away, and were much amused in observing that Mr. Coates was quite unable to drop his usual role of best man, and was doing all this functionary's work, putting Gladstone bags into the carriage, and so on. The best man (whose pardon I must beg for not having mentioned him sooner) Mr. O'Neil, found his billet by this time quite a sinecure. There was a second-best man too, Mr. Stegall. We had no specifying and no toasts, for which we were thankful. Mrs. Bloomfield's going-away dress was a light summer tweed with panel, vest, etc., of white ostrich silk, and a hat which seemed a mass of white curled plumes. Before they left the white reins were changed for dark ones, they, poor things, imagining that by this piece of artfulness they would deceive the public as to their identity, as if new clothes and travelling gear was not quite enough to mark them as bride and bridegroom, to say nothing of their young and radiant faces. As I began by describing the costumes of some of the guests I will finish with a few more, though I could not say as I will I cannot possibly remember all. Mrs. O'Brien was in black lace, with one of those elegant long lace mantles, embroidered in gold and silver about the shoulders and collar; her daughter, Mrs. Collins, from Wanganui, wore a grey corduroy cloth gown and fancy straw hat (a very pretty costume). Mrs. Ward looked very well in bright heliotrope colour; Mrs. Seymour George was also in grey with a touch of scarlet in her black bonnet; Miss Lizzie Barton looked very well in silver grey silk and a black bonnet (I see by the Home papers black headgear is the fashion just now); her sister, too, was in black and grey; Mrs. Goodhue wore pale grey, and a pretty bonnet of black and gold; Mrs. Nelson, brown silk trimmed with white lace, and bonnet to match. I don't think I told you, by-the-by, that the newly-married people have gone to the Lakes for their honeymoon, and meditate a trip Home shortly, with which item of intelligence I will sign myself yours affectionately,

GRUFFANUVE.

WELLINGTON.

DEAR BEE,

JANUARY 13.

There has been hardly anything going on since you heard from me, but we always expect a dull month after Christmas, and generally get it. So many people are away that it would be difficult to get up anything in the social world. The Stanleys have caused some pleasurable excitement by their recent arrival, and Mr. Stanley has succeeded in interesting his large audiences at the Opera House, where he has given a series of lectures on Africa. In the way of entertainments this has been absolutely the only thing with which to beguile an evening last week. The first two evenings the building was crowded, but lately the audience has been falling off. I fancy the charges are rather high for this time of the year, and therefore wouler, considering how much of one's income is spent in travelling at Christmas time, that he had so many listeners.

Lately we have been more fortunate, as we have had a splendid concert by Madame Bahusson and troupe. Madame Bahusson was most cordially welcomed back amongst us, for she is an old favourite of ours. She brought with her another old friend in the person of Miss Katherine Hardy, who left Wellington some time ago in order to join Madame Bahusson. Fraulein Von Hoyer is also of the company, and is quite new to us.

Mrs. (Dr.) Collins has returned from Dunedin, and has brought with her Miss Gibson, of Dunedin, for a visit to Wellington. The Misses Williams have returned from Christchurch. Miss Chiffenel, a young lady lately from home, is staying with Mrs. Izard.

On New Year's day Mrs. Charles Izard chaperoned a picnic party to Khandallah, but the weather was horrid, the rain making everything miserable, and causing the party to break up and return to town much earlier than was intended.

The treti trip to the Sounds was very pleasant. The party, which was chaperoned by Miss Holmes, have now returned, and included Miss Izard, Miss Chiffenel, Miss Hodgkins (Dunedin), and Messrs Field, Symons, Jackson, Vogel, Seed, etc.

Miss Menzies has returned from Invercargill, and her sister is visiting in Blenheim. Mrs. H. D. Bell and family have gone to their summer residence in Lowry Bay. Miss Cooper is visiting her sister, Mrs. Pratt, at Palmerston North.

Mr. Robert Parker has taken the residence of the late Sir William Fitzherbert at the Hut, and a few days ago Mr. and Mrs. Parker gave the first of a series of garden parties,

a delightful amusement being music in the open air. The weather did not behave quite as it should have, but it is to be hoped it will be better next time.

Mr. and Mrs. F. Buckley gave a large garden party in honour of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley and Mrs. Tennant, who is travelling with them. Their lovely place at the Hut is admirably suited for this sort of thing, and although the threatening weather was very annoying on such an occasion, everyone seemed to spend a delightful afternoon. The delicious afternoon tea, cakes, fruit, sweets, etc., were done ample justice to, and the lawn tennis ground was occupied the whole time. Mrs. Buckley received in a handsome black gown and large black hat, being still in mourning for her father. Mrs. Stanley is a fine-looking tall lady, and looked remarkably well in a handsome blue gown figured with flowers. Amongst others—and there were a great number—were Mrs. E. Richardson, Mrs. Cooper, Sir James Hector, Miss Hector, Mrs. Kemp, Mrs. and the Misses Grace, Mrs. Tolhurst, Mrs. Fitzherbert, Mrs. Reddiford, and the Misses Dransfield, Wilford, Brandon, etc. A capital band played during the afternoon in the garden, and the afternoon tea was served in a marquee erected in the grounds. With such an admirable host and hostess you can well imagine that everything was perfectly appointed and arranged. Many rested in the drawing room, and even there found plenty of amusement. What a pretty room it is and so artistically decorated, the long room being partially separated into two by an arch draped with curtains, and at the extreme end of the inner room a large mirror is placed with a border of plush, on which are shewn up all sorts of rare china with very good effect, and wherever the eye rests it will see flowers, ferns, or palms in gracefully draped pots. It is a homely room, too, and every chair, though beautiful, looks as though it were meant for use as well as ornament. You must know what I mean. Some otherwise beautiful rooms are so stiff, and always look as though they had never been used except on state occasions. But, dear me, I am digressing, and before closing would like to tell you about the only concert I have heard of Madame Bahusson's. After hearing this one I should like very much to go again, and hope she will prolong her short season. Madame Bahusson sang 'Dove Sono' exquisitely, and also gave her now famous interpretation of 'The Carnival of Venice,' besides several others, but I think I enjoyed the duet 'Mira Norma' more than anything, sung by Madame Bahusson and Miss Katherine Hardy, which was given with true artistic skill. Miss K. Hardy chose 'Ask me no more' and 'Ihr die ihr Trieb.' Both these ladies were encored for everything. Mr. G. A. Pearson sang two songs, but was not heard to advantage in either. Fraulein Von Hoyer, the pianist played two pieces very brilliantly, and Mr. F. A. King played two violin solos extremely well. He is one of our most promising violinists. Miss Hardy, sister of Miss K. Hardy, played the accompaniments.

By the Ionian we have had several distinguished visitors—the Earl and Countess of Meath, General Shipley, of Her Majesty's service, and Colonel Wethered, of the Buckinghamshire Volunteers. The Earl and Countess have come for the benefit of the Countess's health, the English winter being too severe for her. They intend visiting the hot lakes almost immediately. General Shipley and Colonel Wethered are on a pleasure trip, and hope to see the West Coast Sounds before completing their short tour in New Zealand for they intend travelling back to London by the Ionian in about three weeks. It is forty years since General Shipley was in New Zealand, so it must be very interesting indeed, to him to see the changes.

RUBY.

CHRISTCHURCH.

DEAR BEE,

JANUARY 12.

Once more we are trying to settle down after our more than usual number of holidays to take farewell of the old year and welcome the new. We are a progressive race here, especially in holidays, and for housekeepers and heads of families generally these Christmas holidays have not altogether been a joyous time, for in addition to the cook (the prop of the household in a family gathering) wanting a week just then when the house is full of relations from near and far, the butcher says he will not be round for three days, and the baker on Wednesday says 'he will not call again till Tuesday.' This is rather perplexing, considering the temperature we have to endure about this time. However, all's well that ends well, and the poor mothers have been saved something, for we have had remarkably cool weather, with frequent showers, which have kept the dust down, but not in any way interfered with pleasure parties, and I only hope that next year our tradespeople will not say the day before Christmas 'we shall not be round till the first week in January.'

Most of the gatherings have been family ones through the week, and now half the town seems to have taken itself off to ruralize somewhere only the Cinderellas being left.

The Regatta on New Year's Day was the most popular outing, about eleven thousand people visiting Lyttelton. The Ecclefechan was the flagship, and Captain Dow had about five hundred visitors. Captain Bourke, of H.M.S. Ringarooma, entertained a party of ladies and gentlemen, and also threw open a large part of his vessel to the general public. In addition to the races there was a submarine explosion by electricity, which was watched with much interest. Fireworks on the water at night, and the procession of boats burning coloured lights, was really a beautiful sight. Then later on the search light of the Ringarooma was turned on, and surprised a good many with its wonderful power, and some who much preferred the darkness.

At Lancaster Park several thousand people went to see the great bicycle race between Busst, Rawlinshaw, and Wilnot. The former having such a reputation, much interest was taken by our local cyclists. However, Rawlinshaw won.

The Merivale Temperance Guild had a picnic out at the Tai Tapu on Mr. White's property, the members of the committee and the Rev. C. J. Merton and Mrs. Merton accompanying them. Mr. and Mrs. White were most kind, boiling water and helping in every way to make the day a pleasant one for the large company. Sunner and New Brighton each received its hundreds of patrons.

On New Year's Eve Mrs. Leonard Harper gave a small dance at Ham. Miss Hutton was there, Miss Maude, Miss Bowen, Miss Robinson, Miss Lean, Miss Campbell, and a few others.

At Mrs. John Mason's, Springfield, a party of young people danced in the New Year merrily enough, with a song occasionally between the dances, while the elder members of their numerous relations spent a most enjoyable evening at Dr. Thomas's.

A delightful picnic was held at Governor's Bay, where Mr. and Mrs. John Anderson and Mr. and Mrs. Lewin and families are spending their holiday. About thirty journeyed from town and joined them, making a most pleasant party.

At the close of the old year Mr. G. Clifford, of Flaxbourne, was married to Miss Dennis in Harwarden Catholic Chapel, the Rev. Father Ginity performing the rite. The bride was given away by Mr. J. D. Lance, and the little church was filled with spectators, both being well-known in the district.

Another wedding of rather a novel character took place the beginning of the year. You may have heard of 'green field' church, and this really took place there, for the marriage ceremony was performed on the lawn in front of the residence of Mr. Harris, whose youngest daughter, Alice, was married to Mr. A. W. Blanchard, of Wellington. The Rev. W. Morley officiated, assisted by the Rev. J. N. Buttle, brother-in-law of the bride. The bride's dress was of cream silk lustre with train, long veil and wreath of orange blossoms, and lovely bouquet of white flowers and maiden hair fern. She wore a gold bracelet set with diamonds and sapphires, the gift of the bridegroom. The bridesmaids—Miss Craddock and Miss Morely wore cream dresses, and hats to match, and Miss Buttle (niece of the bride) a pink dress, and carried bouquets of cream roses. They each wore a plain gold bracelet, the gift of the bridegroom. Refreshments were served in a marquee on the lawn, after which the happy pair drove off in a good, or rather cruel, shower of rice.

A party of young ladies have taken a cottage at Governor's Bay, and are having the jolliest time. The Misses Beswick, Helmore, and Millar, are amongst them. There are eight altogether, I believe.

Another party of young men are camping out at Akaroa, amongst them Professor Bickerton's five sons. Theirs is a large party, about twenty, and they combine the useful with pleasure. One is a self-constituted engineer-in-chief, and they are making great irrigation works so many hours in each day for the benefit of a neighbour who has some nice daughters and an orchard.

Mrs. Rhodes, Elnwood, with a large party have been spending a week at Akaroa. The Hon. Mrs. Parker and family have gone to Dunedin for a month or two. Mr. and Mrs. Alan Scott are on the West Coast. Professor and Mrs. Haslam, accompanied by Mr. and Miss Mitchell Clark, have gone to the Southern Lakes. Miss Cowlishaw and Miss Hennab are visiting Sir John and Lady Hall, Hororata. Mr. and Mrs. Wilder have also gone to the West Coast. Mrs. Acton-Adams leaves for England in the Coptic, taking her daughter and one of her sons.

Miss Greenwood has returned from her long visit to Hawke's Bay. Talking of that district reminds me of an engagement—that of Mr. Anderson, of Napier, to Miss Myrie Aikman, of Christchurch. I have also heard of another—Miss Frankish and Mr. Heywood, a nephew of Mr. J. M. Heywood.

All Dr. Frankish's friends were pleased to welcome him back, and to see him looking all the better after his trip.

We have quite a number of Wellington visitors here. Mr. and Mrs. Symonds are staying with Miss Heywood; Miss Hamerton is spending a few weeks with Mrs. Geo. Roberts; and Miss M. Kreeft with Mrs. A. H. Turnbull, who has only just returned with her husband from a trip to England. Mrs. Wright and Mrs. F. Barraud are visiting Mrs. J. W. N. Marchant.

The many friends of Mrs. J. R. Johnson will regret to notice her death, which occurred at Fielding only a few days ago. She had been failing in health for some time, and when they left Christchurch for their new home at Fielding it was hoped the change would be beneficial.

DOLLY VALE.

DUNEDIN.

DEAR BEE,

JANUARY 13.

Again I am sorry to say that I have a most uninteresting letter for you, but unless I indulge in romances I cannot tell you of parties, because there have been none—not one. The town is growing emptier and emptier, while at Portobello, Broad Bay, and other seaside resorts they are having concerts and all sorts of fun, for everybody is out of town and getting snubbed and altogether rustic.

At the theatre the Walter Bentley Company are still drawing good houses. Walter Bentley himself is superb; one never gets tired of him. He seems perfect in every character he takes, but above all others I think I liked him best as Shylock in the 'Merchant of Venice.' You have a treat in store.

For a few days the town was all alive with the Tarawera's excursionists bound for the West Coast Sounds. A big crowd went to see the first boat load away, and everything aboard looked as inviting as ever. The deck was prepared for the dances, and down below the dear little theatre was all fitted up with its stage and drop scene, footlights, carpets, and all complete. There was every prospect of a good time. It is scarcely strange the fascination these trips have, for come to the magnificent scenery, and all the charm that the unspeakable grandeur has, in the social life, and as many pleasures are crowded into those few short days as are usually spread over a month or two. After once going there is an unsatiable desire to go again. The Rhodes, of Christchurch, went this trip—Mr. and Mrs. G. E. Rhodes, Miss Amy and Miss Emily, Mr. T. A. Maitland (Dunedin) and Miss M. A. Maitland, Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Joseph (Sydney) Mr. R. W. Kane (Adelaide), Mr. J. Peele, artist (Melbourne), Mr. Perrett, artist (Dunedin), Mr. Perry (Timaru), Mr. F. A. Pitt (Timaru), Mr. and Mrs. Pendel Steel (Sydney), Mr. J. Smith (Melbourne), Miss Studholme (Christchurch), Dr. W. Hielop (Palmerston), Mr. and Miss Hay (Temuka), Miss A. and Miss M. Harrison (Ashburton), Mr. J. G. Findlay, Mr. D. M. Findlay, and Dr. Fleming (Balclutha), seven of the Crespios (Melbourne), Miss Allan from the Taieri, and others nearer home. Mr. F. Young has again been given the management of the concerts and stage, etc., and under his management the evenings are sure to be a success. Mr. Timson presides over the musical department, and a quartette party also go.