

Topics of the Week.

SOCIETY'S SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

A RATHER amusing wedding ceremony took place the other day at a Wesleyan Church not a hundred miles from New Plymouth. The officiating minister was a stranger to the district, having had to drive a matter of ten miles to unite the happy pair. The church was well filled with interested observers, but their patience was severely tried, for the wedding party was late in coming. At length (contrary to the usual custom) three pretty bridesmaids made their appearance *alone*. Then followed the brothers of the bride, and then the bridegroom and the parson. These all stood at the rails waiting for the appearance of the principal figure of the pageant, the bride. But as I said before, the parson was a stranger to the contracting parties, and to the horror of the spectators he opened his prayer-book and proceeded to marry the bridegroom to the *first bridesmaid*. Everybody was so bewildered and taken aback by the turn events had taken that ne'er a one had the presence of mind to set things straight, and the marriage service had proceeded quite a long way before the parson became aware, by the hardly suppressed giggles, that something was seriously wrong. Then the brother of the bride gallantly rushed to the rescue and informed the minister of his mistake, so he sat down and the bridegroom sat down and then the bridesmaids sat down, and all tried to look as if everything were *comme il faut* and according to rule. They had regained their usual equanimity when the bride and her father arrived, and the service proceeded with due decorum. The bride wore a pretty frock of shrimp pink figured pongee silk with wreath and veil, and the bridesmaids white muslin with heliotrope spray, and small lace bonnets. On leaving the church they were all greeted with rice and rose leaves galore.

THE Choral Hall, Auckland, was, as usual, filled to overflowing upon the occasion of the Society's second concert of their season. 'St. Paul' was the work performed, the solos being divided between Miss Harper (soprano), Mrs C. Burgess (alto), Mr Ferriday (tenor), and Mr Percy Dufaur (bass), the latter scoring the largest amount of success. The night was rather unpleasant, and therefore the majority of the audience appeared to have donned their dowdiest gowns, many even wearing heavy tweeds, and hats to correspond.

THE bad habit many of the honorary members of the Society are falling into of attending the concerts in gowns which they would even consider not sufficiently dressy for afternoon wear at home is to be deplored, for if performing members go to the trouble of dressing suitably I think honorary members might do likewise. Of course it is not necessary, nor may it be convenient for all ladies to wear light or evening dress, but with the addition of flowers, or a bit of lace or chiffon, a dark dress would look both smart and pretty; and certainly except in the case of elderly ladies, bonnets or hats should be removed. The men, too, might surely take the trouble to come in the 'war paint' of modern civilised life. But if anything, they are more lazy and slovenly than the weaker sex.

THE Wellington Harmonic Society are now busily engaged rehearsing 'The Crusaders' and portions of 'Loreley,' which are to form the programme for their next concert. Neither have been performed in Wellington before.

ON Wednesday afternoon Mrs Denniston invited a number of her friends to meet her at the Christchurch Art Gallery. Tea was served in the side room, and with some excellent music and the beautiful pictures to look at, every one wished the time had been twice as long. The Misses Wynn-Williams played a duet for piano and violin, which was much appreciated; Mrs Burns sang one of her lovely Italian songs; the Misses Helmore, Mrs L. Harper, and Mrs Haslam also sang in the soft Southern language; Mr W. Day giving an English song. Our dear old Bishop Harper was there, and Mr and Mrs John Olivier, who are not often seen now at functions of the kind. Among others were Mrs Turrell, Mrs Hoare, Mrs Macdonald, Mrs M. Campbell, Mrs Wilding, Mrs Pitman, Mrs Stack, Mrs

Wason, Mrs Blakiston, the Misses Batgate, Burns, Stack, Campbell, and Kimbell. Of the pictures it would take too long to go into details. 'Autumn,' by Spratt, is a beautiful scene, and those by Mr and Miss Hodgkins are good. Miss Stoddart and Miss Dora Meeson have also been very successful in their efforts.

TENNYSON has almost been interviewed by a London reporter on his new play. The Laureate is sojourning at Farringford, in the Isle of Wight, and an enterprising journalist who attempted to draw him, while he knew that he was hard to approach, was unaware that he had become a perfect monomaniac. The journalist waited recently for Tennyson outside the grounds, and when his Lordship started on his daily walk he approached him, hat in hand. 'I see your Lordship's play has been successfully produced at Daly's Theatre in New York.' The Laureate walked on without deigning to look. 'The cable despatches state that the play is the best thing your Lordship has ever written,' added the reporter, keeping pace with the poet. There was no response. 'Mr Irving says that there will be an assured run for a year if your Lordship will let him produce the play at the Lyceum. What are your Lordship's plans?' His Lordship continued to stare straight ahead of him and the reporter was finally stopped by the Hon. Hallam Tennyson, who apologized for his father's apparent rudeness, saying that the old man never spoke to strangers.

MR GRUBB began his mission in Blenheim last week in the Church of the Nativity, which was crowded night after night. One of my correspondents says that his style has aroused a



REV. G. C. GRUBB.

good deal of comment, and criticises personally in this strain:—'He is a fine preacher, but a very large number of his hearers wished that he would remember that a church is not the place in which to make jokes, and intentionally to make the whole congregation laugh, as he constantly did, but I suppose he is so used to holding his missions in theatres and other unconsecrated buildings, that when he does get into a church he forgets where he is. He is decidedly witty, but sacrifices reverence and dignity to his wit, which is a great pity, as by so doing he detracts greatly from the good he undoubtedly does. Although one may not approve of the way in which he conducts his services, which are more like Salvation Army meetings or old-fashioned Methodist revivals than a Church of England mission, yet one cannot help admiring the earnestness of the man, whose heart and soul are evidently in his life's work.'

ONE of the best concerts a Christchurch audience has had the pleasure of listening to was given by the Amateur Orchestral Society on Thursday evening in the Oddfellows' Hall, which was packed. I am glad to be able to say, by the way, that hats and bonnets were in a decided minority. Many were surprised that the singing created so little enthusiasm. Hitherto these concerts have been rather a weariness to many, and the vocal items the most enjoyable part, but on this occasion the orchestra took the palm, and when Mr F. M. Wallace gave Mendelssohn's concerto for violin with orchestral accompaniment, the audience were roused to a warmth of admiration only, as a rule, indulged in by foreigners. Mr Wallace played the solo without a note of music, giving evidence of his wonderful memory. Another excellent item was Taubert's 'Liebesliedchen.' This is taken from the music to Shakespeare's play, 'The Tempest.' The introduction is a pizzicato movement, leading into an oboe solo, which was well played by Mr G. H. Bonnington, and ends with the pizzicato movement again. The audience listened in almost breathless silence, and then insisted upon an encore. Mrs W. Wilson sang two songs, the first, 'Lovely Spring,' suiting her particularly well, her fine contralto voice ringing out full and clear. She looked very nice in black lace evening gown, with black chiffon frills on the satin bodice. Mr W. A. Day sang two songs, his second, 'I Would I Were a King,' being his best.

A CAPITAL concert has just taken place at the Tinakori Schoolroom, Wellington, in aid of St. Paul's choir funds, under the direction of Mr Robert Parker. There was a large and very appreciative audience, and quite a new feature was the singing of Mr W. P. Besley, who is visiting New Zealand for the benefit of his health, and who possesses a fine tenor voice. He sang 'Dear Heart' and 'The Evening Song' exceedingly well. He was also heard to advantage in the duet 'Maying' with Miss Gora. Mr Whittall sang 'The Yeoman's Wedding Morn,' and 'From Rock to Rock,' the latter being very good. Miss Campbell gave 'Robin Adair' very well, and Miss Gore sang Kjerulf's 'Last Night.'

THE pianoforte music was excellent, the Misses Hammetton playing two duets, and Miss M. Gore playing a solo. Two chorists—Masters Widdop and Burnett—sang, 'The Autumn Song' very sweetly, and the chorists of St. Paul's contributed two glees. Miss Campbell wore a black lace evening dress; Miss Gore wore black with white chiffon, and her sister sapphire velvet; the Misses Hammetton wore white veiling trimmed with lace. Mr Parker played the accompaniments. Amongst the audience were Mr and Mrs Parfitt, Mrs George Beetham, Mrs and the Misses Izard, Mrs C. Izard, Miss Hadfield, Mrs Parker, Mrs Gore, Miss Cooper, Miss Pysent, Mrs Whittall, Mrs and Miss Turnbull, the Misses Menzies, Miss Swainson, Miss Burnett, etc.

THE Christchurch Catholics have been tempting the unwary to part with their money all the week at the Tuam-street Hall, where they have been holding high carnival in the shape of an Oriental Bazaar. Some of the spectacular displays were very pretty, the 'Crowning of Queen Esther' and the 'Winter Garden' especially. During the evenings some good musical items have been given, Mrs J. P. Kelly singing several times, and other friends.

THE Art Gallery, Christchurch, has been well patronised this season, especially in the evenings, when music added to the attraction. The Misses Wynn-Williams, Miss Hut-ton, Miss Lily Wood, Mr and Miss Gardner, Mr W. Day, and others have assisted. Mrs Chynoweth gave two recitations, which were, as usual, excellent. The Sixpenny Clothing Club had an afternoon and evening for their own fund.

THE Hon. Mrs E. W. Parker gave a thoroughly enjoyable dance on Wednesday evening at Orwell (Christchurch). The house is most suitable for a dance. The drawing-room opens with folding doors out into a very large room built for a ballroom. Chaperones, when there are any, can therefore smile on the young men and maidens at intervals, and still enjoy themselves in their own way without fear of draughts and general weariness they are so often subject to. On this occasion I think Mrs Kimbell was the only one beside young people present. Miss Lily Kimbell made her *début* that evening. She wore a very pretty dress of white Russian net with large spots, and white corded silk bodice; Mrs Parker looked exceedingly well in a pale pink silk with lace and chiffon trimming, and lovely diamond star in her hair. The supper tables were most beautifully decorated with