

# Topics of the Week.

## SOCIETY'S SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

**S**OCIAL to right of us, social to left of us, subscription in front of us, is the cry of the dancing man just at present. The dancing season has opened with a vengeance, and if the subscription dance boom continues the season bids fair to be the gayest and most lively that New Zealand has experienced since the good old times when it was so delightfully easy to get a thumping overdraft. From all parts of the colony I hear of socials and subscription dances which have either eventuated with unheard of success, or which are going to be quite the most successful function of the season.

The Auckland Polo Club dance, which eventuates immoderately promises to be a very smart and cheery little function.

The first open afternoon or 'At Home' of the Christchurch Liederchranzchen was given on Wednesday from 3 to 5 at the Young Men's Christian Association Rooms, when about a hundred ladies, all more or less interested, were present by invitation. The class numbers about twenty, mostly young girls, who all acquitted themselves most creditably, especially considering the very short time of the Liederchranzchen's existence. The object and aim of the society was clearly stated in the interval by Mrs W. Wilson, their vice-president and hon. conductor, self-improvement being the most important. It is hoped to get up a scene from Shakespeare for one afternoon as well as some music. The duties of receiving were jointly undertaken by Miss Fairhurst (President), Mrs Wilson, and members of committee. Amongst those taking part were the Misses Matson, Miss L. Wood, the Misses M. Webb, M. Graham, Hawkins, Hargreaves, Robinson, M. Allan, the Misses Greenwood, F. Hale, E. Turner, Mrs J. Matson, and Mrs Chynoweth, the latter giving two recitations in a most telling manner.

The Bishop and Mrs Nevill gave a delightful dance at Bishop's Grove, when many fashionable Dunedin Society folk were present. The house is roomy, picturesque, (principally designed by the Bishop himself), and very prettily situated. The floor on this occasion was in good order, and the supper all that was necessary to recuperate the guests after their long drive and exertions in the ballroom. Altogether the affair was a pronounced success. Mrs Nevill has the happy knack of letting her guests enjoy themselves entirely in their own way. The visitors' names are given elsewhere.

The Picton Excelsior Society gave another of their enjoyable socials on Friday evening, and though the weather prevented many from attending, those who were fortunate enough to go enjoyed themselves amazingly. Singing, dancing, and games—not to mention a delicious supper—repaid all those who braved the elements and put in an appearance at the Borough School, where these fetes are always held. Amongst the young ladies present were the Misses Gilbert, Hay, Greensill, Allen, Fuller, Price, Lloyd, Jeffries, Falconer, Young, Philpotts, Fisk, Williams, White, and Howard, as well as a corresponding number of the opposite sex.

An enjoyable little dance has just been given in Wellington, as a farewell to Mrs Godfrey Knight by some of the bachelors who have been frequently entertained by her, Mr and Mrs Knight leave shortly for Australia, and during their long residence in Wellington have made many friends, most of whom assembled at the Masonic Hall, where the dance took place, and wished the family 'Good-bye.' The dance was managed and chiefly got up, I believe, by Mr (George St. Hill) and Mr Ernest Izard, their lady friends managing the supper arrangements for them. The hall and supper-table was prettily decorated, and the floor was almost dangerously slippery. Herr Norberg and Mr King supplied the music, Miss I. Cooper and Miss M. Gore playing a couple of extras at supper-time. Mrs Izard chaperoned the dance, and received for the

bachelors, wearing a handsome black silk and lace gown, trained, and lace cap. Both Mr and Mrs Knight were present, the latter wearing a handsome black moiré and lace gown, trained, with scarlet feathers and panel; Miss Knight wore a pretty white silk gown trimmed with buttercups, and Miss Daisy Knight wore tomato red veiling with embroidered red chiffon frills. Punctually at midnight (as it was Saturday night) 'Auld Lang Syne' was played, and then 'God Save the Queen,' after which all shook hands with the guests of the evening and dispersed.

The Ponsonby Social Union held their opening dance the other evening, and the gathering proved in every respect a great success. Mr W. J. Rees, as usual, fulfilled his duties as Master of Ceremonies with the utmost satisfaction to all, while the supper, music, and floors left nothing to be desired. Extra waltzes were kindly played by Mr Bartley, and Misses Upton and Owen. Many new and tasteful dresses were worn, details of which will be found in the ladies' letter.

The Mottet Society (Christchurch) gave a performance on Tuesday evening in the Oddfellows' Hall, and the previous evening at Sydenham. It was a new departure for them, the principal piece being 'Lalla Rookh,' illustrated by a series of *tableaux vivants*. The grouping of the figures was most artistically done, and when shown off by lime light, a really pretty entertainment. Mr Guise Brittan gave the connecting readings. The music of the evening was given in some very good songs by Mrs Jennings, Mrs C. M. Gray, and Miss Bonnington, Messrs H. Weir and Maitland Gardner, Mr Spensley's band contributing some pleasing items, and Miss Packer delighted the audience with her violin solos. Miss Wood and Miss Graham each contributed a piano solo with great taste (the former acts as pianiste to the Society), Miss Webb and Miss Alice Greenwood giving vocal solos, the latter's rendering of 'Che farò' being particularly acceptable. Mrs Wilson sang very pleasingly, 'The Land of Long Ago,' and Miss Fairhurst gave 'The Song and the Singer.' A sumptuous afternoon tea was dispensed in the interval, with delicious sweets to follow, which was truly adding sweets to the sweet, for the boy of pretty chorus girls not only charmed with music, but were most assiduous in looking after their numerous guests.

MR ERNEST YATES, of 'Eglinton,' Domain-street, has issued invitations for a dance to be held in the Victoria Hall, Eden Terrace, on Friday evening, June 3rd. Mrs Gorrie, Mrs Upton, and Mrs Hardie have consented to act as chaperones.

'We have,' writes a Marlborough correspondent, 'had plenty and to spare of wet weather, but the reports of accidents and wrecks have come to our sheltered nook with a shock of surprise. Two schooners belonging to Marlborough people have come to grief. Mr Duncan's Clematis had her decks swept in the Straits and two poor men washed overboard. She was in dire straits, indeed, when she struggled into Port Underwood. The other became a total wreck on the Wellington side, but fortunately no lives were lost. Whilst on the weather tack I may say that the poor miners at Cullensville and Duncan's Valley have been at a complete standstill for some months past. No sooner do they get the water out of their claims than down comes the rain, and there they are *in statu quo*. For all that our diggers never lose heart, and we hear of concerts and other amusements got up to pass away the time.'

VENUS the editor of a society paper is supposed to have an unlimited fund of general knowledge always at his disposal upon which he can freely draw for all sorts of information. Some interesting queries relating to marriage customs were addressed to the editor, and though properly speaking, they belong to the ladies' department, I could not forego the pleasure of replying to them myself. I may men-

tion that my answers are thoroughly reliable. The questions evidently betray a certain amount of disagreement between a pair of happy lovers. He says: 'This thing is fixed up thusly.' She says: 'No, dear, it is *always* arranged in the manner I have described.' In order to settle the dispute, the parties have appealed to me as to a man having a large experience in matters matrimonial.

QUERY No. 1 reads: 'At a marriage which is supposed to find the bridal cake, the bride or bridegroom?' It is sad to see the apple of discord in the shape of an unwholesome fruity confection thrown down before the contracting couples are united firmly enough to make it safe to risk a quarrel. In good society the bride's parents or her guardians, or the lady from whose house she is married provides the cake. (This concise answer 'takes the cake' over all replies to similar questions.) Query No. 2: 'Is the bridegroom supposed to give the bridesmaids a present, and does the groom find the bouquets and gloves?' Unluckily for the bridegroom, he has always to give the bridesmaids some little gift; luckily, he can please himself as to its value. The bouquets and gloves are sometimes provided by the bride, or the bridesmaids find their own paraphernalia of all kinds. Occasionally the bridegroom, if very well off, sends lovely bouquets for the bride and the attendant maids. Query No. 3: 'How do the bride and bridegroom leave the church? Is anybody else to go in the same carriage?' This question is quite the most delightfully innocent and ingenious of the lot. Just fancy having a third person in the carriage! No, fair maid (the band writing is a lady's); take a carriage all to yourself and your 'guid mon.' You'll find you will want it. Those few minutes in the carriage are, in our experience, quite the nicest part of the wedding ceremony, and the few minutes' quiet much prized before the fuss of congratulation sets in.

QUERY No. 4: 'Is the bridal carriage to be the same to take the happy couple to the station on their honeymoon trip as it was to go to the church?' Yes, the same carriage is usually considered quite good enough. It is pleasant to note in this last query that the lovers are reconciled and have quite decided to become a 'happy couple.' I must give them one word of warning. Search carefully the outside of your carriage for the lurking white shoe, which will betray your blissful state, and beware how you shake out your wraps in the railway train for fear of the treacherous rice which doth lie concealed in fold of shawl or rug.

MR AND MRS KETTLE gave a jolly little dance at Napier. It was quite an impromptu affair, but these dances, as we all know, are often the most enjoyable. The night was atrocious, but nobody seemed to mind that, judging by the goodly company assembled. The rain poured in torrents, which made the closed-in verandah rather damp. This, however, did not interfere with the fun. The 'Kitchen Lancers' were indulged in. Amongst those present were Mrs Logan, Mrs Tabuteau, and the Misses Fulton, Miller, Cotterill, Rhodes, Taylor, McGowan, and a number of others. Mrs Kettle, the pleasant hostess, looked well gowned in black.

A PRIVATE subscription Cinderella dance was held in the Ponsonby Hall on Friday evening, the gathering being promoted and carried out by a committee consisting of Mr and Mrs J. R. Hanna, Mr and Mrs E. Buchanan, Miss Devore, Miss Langsford, Messrs Cummings and Jackson Palmer. There was a large attendance, but unfortunately the ladies were largely in the majority. The supper provided by the ladies was excellent, the decorations pretty, and the floor and music capital.

A MELBOURNE correspondent sends me the following interesting information, showing that the commercial morality of the sister colony is considerably lower than that of this colony:—'Things seem to be on the mend here, and we think we have reached bed rock. On one matter we do not seem to have come to an end, that is, our frauds and embezzlements. We have quite got over the surprise state, and I believe that if some one in the highest position were to be mentioned in the *Argus* as having been arrested for falsifying the Financial Statement, people would only say, "Another case of living beyond his means." It is said that Pentridge is getting so full of high-toned swells that the common criminal is refused admittance, with a curt "house full, sir."'

THERE was quite a new departure for Picton—which is Conservative in politics—at a meeting of subscribers to the Literary Institute, which has been closed for more than a