

The following letters, from our correspondents, were delayed last week through the gales that prevailed:—

DUNEDIN.

DEAR BEE, JULY 6. This is just the season for afternoon tea, and nothing is pleasanter after a walk or drive through the cold sloppy streets than the well-warmed, well-furnished drawing-room, where, under the influence of the cup that cheers, in the half lights of the wintry afternoon, people get confidential. The shaded lights among the flowers and the dreamy music seem to have a charm that a garish summer day does not possess. Anyway, every afternoon almost sees crowds of ladies going to or returning from one of those mild festivities.

MRS HOYD'S KETTLEDUM. Mrs Hoyd had a huge tea at which among other good things, music was dispensed. Both Mrs Williams and Miss G. Roberts contributed solos. Mrs Finn sang that lovely song 'The Garden of Sleep,' Miss F. Cargill recited capably 'The Laird of Cockpen.'

MRS LYMOCK'S LUNCHEON. Mrs Lyموck had a large luncheon party, the table looking very very pretty decorated with large glowing bowls of holly. Among the guests were Mrs G. M. Loan, Mrs Williams, wearing thick blue trimmed with ostrich, Mrs A. Black, serge with trimmings of green velvet; Mrs A. W. Morris, brown cashmere and velvet; Mrs A. Morris, grey tweed; Miss Lyموck, stylish brown tweed. Others were Mesdames Hocken, Haggill, Hoskings, and Miss Le Cron.

SOCIAL REUNION took place at St. John's Hall, Roslyn. The hall was tastefully decorated, and arranged as a drawing-room. The Rev. W. A. Diggins, incumbent of St. John's, opened the proceedings by a short address, Miss Jennie Wood following with a solo. A little comedietta was rendered capably by the choir boys. A humorous reading by Mr D'Arcy Haggitt, songs by Miss Durston and Messrs A. and H. Martin, Durston, and Beattison, followed. The Rev. H. M. King, of St. Martin's, North East Valley, held a meeting of the congregation to bid them farewell. He leaves for England on account of Mrs King's health. The congregation regret his loss, for he, by his faithful labours, has made himself very much beloved.

CHRISTCHURCH.

DEAR BEE, JULY 8. A surprise party came off at Addington last week, and caused quite a buzz of excitement in that little suburb. It is usual to surprise the hostess. This time, from what I can learn, Mrs Felton surprised all her guests by inviting them suddenly to the schoolroom, which had been very prettily decorated, the stage especially so. Several musical items were given, a song from Mrs Russell being most admired. A tug-of-war was got up between married and single gentlemen, and later dancing began, and was kept up with great spirit until past midnight. The idea is, I suppose, to take people as they are, and not wait for evening dress, but some of the ladies were quite out of the emergency, the Misses Oyster (Halsewell) looking very pretty in white and pale blue; Miss Jackson, in pink, with waist belt and shoulder straps of black velvet; Mrs Russell wore black; Mrs Felton was in black richly trimmed with jet.

DRESSES AT THE MONTAGUE-TURNER OPERA COMPANY. I have seen among the very appreciative audience Mrs Beaumont, handsomely gowned in rich black moire and fawn cloak; Mrs England, dark dress and cardinal plush wrap; Mrs Stead, black evening dress and peacock plush cloak with grey fur; Miss Palmer, black dress, white cloak; Miss Toyne, white dress, pale pink wrap; Mrs F. M. Wallace; Mrs F. Thompson, black lace gown, pink velvet cloak with white fur; Mr and the Misses Cowlishaw, Mr and Miss Connel, Mrs M. Campbell and two daughters, Miss Franklin, black dress, pretty white cloak; Mrs F. Graham, dark dress, white cloak with pink silk hood and ribbons and white feather trimming; Miss Graham, blue silk dress, white cloak; Miss Spencey, pink dress, long white cloak with white fur; Mrs A. Spencey, pale green dress; Mrs H. D. Carter in handsome brown mervelleux with floral pattern; Mrs G. Roberts, Mrs Meares and others. Carl Herzog and his company have increased in popularity on this, their second appearance, last night filling the Tunn-street Hall to overflowing, and it is most funny to hear people say they 'know how it is done.' I wonder if the Maori has found out yet how the sovereign he held so tightly in a handkerchief got out of his hand into the potato. The session promises to be unusually gay this year, and quite an exodus of our girls has set in already. Miss Banks and family left Napier last week to return to Wellington for the summer of the festivities. The Misses Loughtan, Murray-Aynsley, Hargreaves and Heywood have gone, the Misses Burnes, Reeves, Molloy, Hall and Taylor to follow.

NAPIER.

DEAR BEE, JULY 8. The second of the Cinderellas has taken place, and was as great a success as the first, with the singing a grand deal. The room was well lighted, the floor was good, and the supper exceedingly nice. The music was capital also, and the extras were exceedingly well played. There was a great crowd of people, and it would take a very long time to tell you of all the gowns worn, so I will just tell you of those who looked particularly well. Miss Lascelles was there from Clive, looking very charming in a bright amber Liberty silk gown trimmed with amber chamois. Miss Lascelles and Heath made their debut and both looked very fresh and nice in pretty white gowns; Miss Tuohy wore a pale cream silk gown trimmed with quantities of chiffon; Miss Ida Hill looked very pretty in pink. There were a number of pale gowns worn. Miss Lucy Williams also wore pink, and looked exceedingly well; I have seldom seen Miss Rhodes look better than she did in a becoming white gown; Miss Milly Rhodes looked pretty in black; Miss Minnie Shaw wore a becoming black gown; Miss Shaw was conspicuous by her absence; Miss Weber looked nice in white; Mrs Arthur Fulton looked one of the best in the room, in a pretty cream gown; Miss Kennington, a visitor from Gisborne, looked very well in black; Miss Locke, in black also, and I admired Miss Birch very much, who wore a charming white gown; Mrs Gore, a handsome blue velvet dress and ribbons; Mrs Loan looked well in white; Mrs Kettle, handsome black gown; Mrs King (plumbeous), a charming gown. Altogether the ball was a great success, and everyone is looking forward to the next. I hear a rumour of a dance in honour of Mr Sanderson, who is leaving for England shortly. My girls are all very busy here, though I am glad to say many of the victims are recovering.

MARLBOROUGH.

DEAR BEE, JULY 7. The appeal of the Waitohi Football Club which was referred to the New Zealand Rugby Union, has been upheld, thus placing Picton ahead in the first round for the Cup. Two more 'holes were caught in Tory Channel, Picton, last week, which are expected to yield five or six tons of oil. Yet another firm to add to our fashionable excitements in Picton. A tinmith's shop was set on fire in the usual manner, and at the usual hour two or three o'clock in the morning, and, of course, was burned down before anybody could get to it. The Public Hall had a narrow escape, the walls being scorched. JEAN.

THIRD

CHRISTMAS STORY COMPETITION.

THE COMPETITION for the short stories for the last Christmas Number of the NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC was so entirely successful, resulting in the introduction to the editor of writers hitherto unknown to him, that it has been deemed advisable to follow an excellent precedent.

Therefore the editor, in offering prizes for a similar competition this year, trusts that many fresh writers will enter the field. (See rule 2.)

Owing to the immense labour involved in reading the competitions, designing the illustrations, and producing this

The stories must not be less than 4000, or more than 6500 words in length, suitable for use in the NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC. Each story must be accompanied by a short outline (about 500 words in length) of its plot.

SPECIAL NUMBER

New Zealand Graphic

it is imperative that the stories should be in the Editor's hands as per rule 5.

THREE PRIZES

will be given in the following order for the best selected tales:—

- FIRST PRIZE - £5 0 0
SECOND PRIZE - £3 0 0
THIRD PRIZE - £2 0 0

RULES.

- In writing, these conditions, must be observed:
1. The GRAPHIC is at liberty to publish any of the stories sent in other than the prize-takers.
2. Every reader of the NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC not being a member of the literary staff or the winner of a first prize in previous years, is eligible to enter the competition.
3. The Editor cannot undertake to answer inquiries having reference to the treatment of the stories in detail. The particulars given are sufficient for the purposes of the competition, and everything else is left to the judgment and discretion of the competitors. The award of the judges will be published as soon after the close of the Competition as possible, and no information respecting the award will be given to any competitor before this publication.
4. Each MSS. should be prepaid, and if left open at the ends will be cancelled at book post rates. It should be addressed to the Editor, NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC, Shortland-street, Auckland. A note instead of the writer's name must be written under the title of the story. The author's real name must be enclosed in an envelope addressed to the editor, bearing the motto and the words, 'Story Competition' on the top left corner. This envelope must not be placed in the MSS. packet, but must be posted separately. It must also contain a declaration that the work is original and entirely the sender's own.
5. All contributions must reach the office before August 16th.
6. The incidents and general features of the story must refer to life or adventure in New Zealand as typified in the cities, the country, on the gold fields or sun-fields, on a sheep run, in a wealthy home, or a struggling farm. The stories must be bright, original, and suitable for family reading. Purely imaginative stories are not of course inadmissible if the scene is laid in New Zealand.
7. Writing on one side of the paper only.

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BY W. L. AND LILY REES.

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