

# Topics of the Week.

## SOCIETY'S SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

AS so very few married ladies are invited to the delightful little dances at Government House, there is sometimes a little difficulty about chaperones. Lady Glasgow wishes it to be quite understood that she is chaperone, and in some cases she has invited some of her girl guests to come a little before the invited time, so that they need not feel nervous about entering the room.

A PRETTY little incident was noticed at the last Government House dance. One of the Ladies Boyle, leaning upon her young brother's arm, was seen to pass up the corridor and enter the drawing-room, where they shook hands with the Earl and Countess, who received them with much ceremony.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE dances often conclude with a waltz-galop, that is, half of one, and half the other. This creates quite a little excitement at the end, and everyone leaves the ballroom looking very pleased with themselves.

'TAKARA' is now generally played during the grand chain in the Lancers, and in some houses it is sung with much spirit.

SHORTLY after the session is over the Earl and Countess of Glasgow will leave for Auckland, and later on they mean to spend the Carnival week in Christchurch, there to be the guests of Mr and Mrs Alick Boyle, of Mastook Bank, Riccarton. Early next year Lord and Lady Glasgow hope to visit the Sounds, and will probably go in the Hinemoa and be accompanied by Lord and Lady Jersey, and Lord and Lady Hopetoun. They will not return to Wellington until the Christmas and New Year holidays, which will be spent with their family in Wellington.

MRS BALLANCE (Wellington) had arranged to give a children's fancy dress party on Friday night, but this was indefinitely postponed in consequence of the illness of Mr Ballance.

THE Premier has a most devoted nurse in Mrs Ballance, who during the sitting of Parliament never leaves the House until her husband is ready to return with her.

ON Thursday evening Mrs Honeyman gave another dance at her residence, Princes-street, which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone present. The ballroom and hall were prettily decorated with flowers and palms. The staircase was quite a fairy bower, being festooned with a profusion of evergreens and flowers. The musicians, who were in an alcove close by, performed delightful music during the evening. The supper was exceptionally good, and was laid out in the dining-room. The table decorations were perfect—pale pink net was entwined round lovely masses of pink hyacinths and maiden hair fern. The table was lighted with pink shaded fairy lamps, which threw a soft pale light over all.

SUB-LIEUT. BOCK, who is held in high esteem, leaves H. M. S. Ringarooma shortly to take up an appointment in the Victorian Navy. He entertained a number of his brother officers and ladies and gentlemen at a luncheon party on board last week. Amongst those present were Lieut. Baird, Mr and Mrs Waitney, Miss Forbes, Miss Rooke, etc. etc. When luncheon was over, the party inspected the ship, finally leaving by the 5 o'clock steamer.

DR COLLINS invited a few friends to luncheon and afternoon tea. There were only three ladies present—Mesdames Honeyman, Bloomfield, and Biddle. Amongst the gentlemen were Lieuts. Hunt and Stansfield, etc. Mrs Morrin was one of the ladies invited, but she was unfortunately unable to be present.

THE New Zealand Academy of Arts Exhibition is to be opened in Wellington on Saturday afternoon by His Excel-

lency the Governor. An attraction in the shape of afternoon tea is to be very kindly provided by Miss Matthew Holmes, who will be assisted by a number of girl friends.

ON the same afternoon Mrs R. Parrahan (Wellington) is to have an 'At Home' at The Lawn, Hobson street.

ONE morning last week a party of young ladies met to play tennis on the Parliamentary grounds, at the invitation of one of the members' daughters.

A NUMBER of ladies have visited the Legislative Council Chambers during the days when the Women's Franchise Bill was being read. It was a decided surprise to most people that it passed the second reading so readily.

A BALL in aid of the Convalescent Fund of the Wellington Hospital is being got up, and a very influential committee has been formed. A very large number of things, such as music, hall, etc., have been given free, so it is hoped it will be a triumphant success. However, the tickets do not seem to be going off as rapidly as was hoped. There is no doubt the fault lies in not giving the tickets to sufficient people for sale.

PROGRESSIVE enche parties are rapidly gaining in favour in Wellington. Mrs W. P. Reeves gave one the other night, then later on one was given by Miss Holmes, and two nights after that another party was given by Mrs (Dr.) Rawson. It is a pleasant and decidedly novel way of bringing people together, and has proved the greatest boon to those who do not care for musical evenings.

THE Vice-regal party spent some pleasant hours up country a few days ago. They left by special train at 10.15 a.m., and returned late in the evening. His Excellency and Lady Glasgow were of the party, and also Mrs Alick Boyle, of Christchurch, Miss Hallowes, the Ladies Augusta, Alice, and Dorothy Boyle, Capt. Hunter-Blair, and Mr Clayton. The day was decidedly unpleasant in town, being very windy and dusty, but from all accounts the weather was much better in Masterton, where they arrived about mid-day. The celebrated fish ponds and other sights were visited, the whole party thoroughly enjoying the outing, and being very favourably impressed with the beautiful scenery through which they passed. The week before the same party made an excursion to Lowry Bay, and were delighted with that pretty little spot across the harbour. They lunched there and returned home before dark. They all seem very fond indeed of riding, and some of them are to be met almost every day riding somewhere. Unfortunately there are but few rides within easy distance of the town. Both His Excellency and Mr Clayton are very fond of walking, and are frequently to be met walking over the hills out into the country. Lady Glasgow more often walks than drives, and both she and Lord Glasgow are nearly always accompanied by one of their children. Lady Glasgow has a pretty little phaeton carriage, painted a rich dark colour picked out with scarlet and scarlet wheels, and it is in this that she drives nearly everywhere.

As some one colloquially remarks: 'They certainly have been "going it" in Napier lately.' Another and most enjoyable production by the amateurs, 'Dream Faces,' played for the first time in Napier, and a little comedy drama, 'Alone,' have been very successful. Miss Hitchings and Miss Una Hitchings were the only two ladies acting in 'Dream Faces,' and their efforts were thoroughly appreciated by the audience, which was a most fashionable one. Miss Hitchings was Aunt Margaret. She looked very lovely in a handsome black silk gown. Miss Una was Lucy, and a very charming Lucy, too. Miss Charles Kennedy was Robert, a great villain; he played his part capitally, and Mr J. G. Swan made a very good Philip.

'ALONE' took all hearts by storm; it was pretty. As in the other piece, the Misses Hitchings were the only lady performers, and they surpassed themselves—Miss Hitchings as Maid Trevor, and Miss Una as the widow, Mrs Thornton. Mr C. D. Kennedy was the Doctor, and was great fun. Mr Jack Hughes made the most of Edward, and Mr W. P. Finch and Mr J. Macintosh both acted well; one as Stratton Strawless, the other as Captain Cameron. The 'Wedding March' is to be performed shortly.

ON the occasion of the Public Service Association of New Zealand giving their first social evening, Thomas' Hall, Wellington, was crowded to excess by ladies and gentlemen, who appeared to enjoy a pleasant evening. Tea and coffee were dispensed during the evening, and Mr Robinson, the chairman, made a short speech, after which a delightful musical programme was presented. Two instrumental quartettes were played by Messrs Spackman, McCardell, G. Kennedy and Ball, and two Orpheus glees were capitally sung by Messrs Hickson, Spackman, Plimmer and Widdop. Mr Spackman also contributed a violin solo, and was accompanied by Miss Dugdale. Mr Morris Fox was as amusing as ever in his comic song, and Mr Swift gave a recitation with a great deal of dramatic power. It is the first gathering of the kind that has ever taken place, so that its great success is looked upon as a good beginning for future gatherings.

OUR Wellington correspondent writes: 'Mrs W. Fitzherbert is giving a children's fancy dress ball at the Hutt, and Mrs (Dr.) Adams on the same night has a small dance, and the following Tuesday has been fixed for the ball in aid of the Hospital Convalescent Fund. Mrs Newman has been elected president of the affair, which is entirely got up by the ladies of Wellington; Miss E. Johnston is treasurer, and Mrs Cnapple secretary. An energetic committee of ladies are working hard for its success, and the tickets are going off even more rapidly than they were expected to. A great number of tradespeople are contributing towards the supper, and the Thomas Hall has been placed at the disposal of the ladies, so that a substantial sum should be gathered together, and, besides this, a splendid ball should be given. It is to be hoped that by these means many of the weary sufferers at the Hospital will be able to be sent into the country for a change during the summer months, and in time it is hoped that we may firmly establish a suburban residence, where patients can be sent for a change of air during their convalescence. The object is an excellent one, and the sympathies of everyone seem to have been given so far—and now that people have a chance of materially aiding the scheme, they have taken it up heart and soul, and the whole affair will probably be a grand success.'

AUCKLAND is not altogether given over to dances and musicals. In Ponsonby a few literary people have been pursuing the even tenor of their way all the winter, and holding pleasant evenings partaking of an instructive character at various private residences. One of these was devoted to Shakespeare, and took place at Mrs Cooke's house in Sarsfield Road. The following programme was successfully carried out:—Mr Parr (solicitor) delivered himself of Hamlet's soliloquy; Mr Baynham and Miss Main gave the scene between Prince Arthur and Hubert from King John; Mr Kitson, the funeral oration over Caesar, with difficulty suppressing a tendency to make puns on such a grave occasion; Mrs Kitson appeared as Portia, Mr Wells as the Prince of Morocco, Mr Robson as Prince of Arragon, Mr Kitson as Bassanio. These evenings form a pleasant relief from the usual style of dissipation. The Society proposes botanizing and picnicking expeditions for the summer.

RATIONAL dress for women was one of the most important subjects discussed at a recent meeting of the New Plymouth Mutual Improvement Society, which would, by the way, seem a most lively little club, and not a mutual admiration or back-biting association as these Improvement Societies usually are. On this occasion the programme had been arranged by ladies, and the *Act* had gone forth that only ladies were to take part, and that no man's voice was to be heard through the evening. Mrs Collis was voted to the chair, and opened the meeting, and then gave out the first item on the programme. Mr Siskiner here got up and asked very longingly whether the gentlemen might not express an opinion when they felt moved to do so. He was at once suppressed. Mr G. E. Duncan then arose and asked very meekly if the men might say 'Hear! hear!' when anything pleased them, and permission was granted. The programme was as follows:—Piano solo, Miss Annette Webster; recitation, 'Cowper's Address to his Mother's Portrait,' Mrs Devenish; paper on 'Rational Dress,' Mrs