

Topics of the Week.

SOCIETY'S SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

HIS EXCELLENCY the Governor and Lady Glasgow, accompanied by Miss Wauchope and Mr Clayton A.D.C., leave Wellington for Hawke's Bay en route for Auckland. In Hawke's Bay they are to be the guests of Capt. and Mrs Russell, and are to remain with them during the race week. The vice-regal party are expected back in Wellington in about two months—that is to say, they will arrive in time to receive the Austrian heir-apparent when he visits Wellington. They are due in Auckland on the 18th.

LORD AND LADY HOPETOUN dined with Captain and Mrs Russell a few days since in Hastings. Lady Hopetoun looked exceedingly handsome in a stylish grey costume, smart little bonnet.

ON Monday afternoon Lord Hopetoun (Governor of Victoria) and Lady Hopetoun arrived in Auckland from Rotorua. They were accompanied by Lord Northesk, A.D.C., and Mr Ralston (private secretary). Colonel Pat Boyle, the Mayor (Mr Crowther), Town Clerk (Mr P. A. Phillips), and Colonel Goring met the distinguished travellers at the station. Colonel Pat Boyle presented the city representatives to their Excellencies, and the Mayor welcomed them to Auckland. A guard of honour, consisting of some of the Auckland Naval Artillery under Captain Parker, saluted the visitors, who rapidly crossed the platform and entering the Earl of Glasgow's carriage were driven to the Grand Hotel. They will probably remain until the 18th. Quite a number of citizens assembled to see the Earl and Countess. The latter looked very well in her ficelle travelling dress, made with open jacket, and pretty blouse vest of striped crimson and white, black hat with crimson and black feathers. Lord Hopetoun's tie harmonised with the brighter tints of the lady's costume. The Municipal Buildings and the Albert Park displayed bunting in honour of their arrival.

THE younger members of His Excellency the Governor's family had a very rough trip from Wellington to Onehunga, the Hiemoua pitching and rolling heavily. Those of the Vice-regal party at present in Government House, Auckland, are: Ladies Augusta, Alice, and Dorothy Boyle, the Hons. John and Allan Boyle, Miss Hallowes and Miss Holroyde, Colonel Pat Boyle (Private Secretary to His Excellency), and Captain Hunter-Blair, A.D.C. It is hoped by Aucklanders that the party will stay some time in the fair Northern city.

AUCKLAND, or at least a large part of it, is dissipating in politics just at present. Notwithstanding an opera company in Welleley Street, and distinguished visitors at Government House, politics is the talk of the town, and a political meeting attracts more powerfully than the wit of Gilbert, the melody of Sullivan, or the near prospect of basking in the sunshine of vice-regal 'At Homes.' No less than three political artists have, from the stage of the City Hall, acted the same old monodrama in which the argument, paraphrased, embellished, and elongated—for nothing is so elastic as politics—is always the same, and the moral intended to be drawn from it can always be condensed into half-a-dozen words: 'We did right; you did wrong.' Mr Rolleston and Sir Robert Stout, from neither of whom as politicians would even their enemies withhold the epithet of distinguished—especially as it is rather an equivocal adjective when applied in politics—have withdrawn. But the dust they raised as in turn they dragged their opponents at their victorious chariot wheels had hardly subsided when it was announced that Mr Bruce of Rangitikei would also speak. Who will be the next to entertain or instruct the Northern City, as the case may be, is not yet known, but those persons who fulfil the function of political barometers, predict much speech-making before the session begins. Honourable gentlemen, like stone-breakers and ditch-delvers, must 'keep their hands in,' and if Auckland is prepared to give them a welcome and patient hearing, to whatever party they may belong, why should they not speak? The dwellers by the Waitemata hear both sides of the question with equal courtesy. Perhaps they recognise that division into parties is not the most necessary arrangement in colonial politics; that in fact, if anything, parties are rather undesirable, being almost as much a hindrance in the supreme council of a colony as they are in a municipal board. Perhaps they are eager to extract wisdom from any and from all parties, and are as delighted to find it in

the party they stand aloof from, as in that they are inclined to favour. At all events, whether that is the case or not, no one can deny that the Aucklanders, as a body, listened to both the leader of the Opposition and the Ex-Premier with exemplary attention.

MR W. J. HARRIS, J.P. for Devon, Lord of the Manor of Halwell, and formerly Conservative Member in the House of Commons for Poole, Dorsetshire in 1884-5, and his daughter, Miss Marion J. Harris, are making a tour of the colony. The special object of Mr Harris's visit is to excite in the colonies and in England an interest in colonial reciprocity. Mr Harris proposes that England should impose a tax upon all products imported from foreign countries, which can be supplied by the colonies. He believes that while this policy would stimulate trade with the colonies, it would also assist the agricultural interests in England, which are now being almost ruined by foreign importations of grain. While at Wanganui, Mr Harris had a very interesting interview with the Premier, who expressed sympathy with his views. In an interview subsequently with a Press representative, Mr Harris expressed great regard for the Hon. Mr Ballance, and felt convinced that the New Zealand Premier is a statesman in the truest sense of the word. It is also pleasing to know in view of the unfavourable reports with regard to the Premier's health, that Mr Harris thought from what he saw of Mr Ballance, that he would be spared to do useful work for many years to come. Mr Harris expects to leave the Bluff for Melbourne, en route for England, towards the end of the present month.

MISS SARA SPILSBURY, of Auckland, who is locally known as the owner and breeder of fine St. Bernard dogs, has been nominated to the Grafton seat in the City Council, lately vacated by Mr Laver. At present there is only one other candidate for the vacant chair, and he, for he is a man and a gentleman, speaks of giving *place à la dame*. That he should do so is perhaps only proper, but it savours of a gallantry that is very difficult to associate with municipal affairs. Should he continue to be guided by his gentlemanly instincts, there is nothing to prevent Miss Spilisbury taking her seat in the Council. In one respect she would prove a valuable member. From her knowledge of the canine race she could exercise a salutary check on Mr Garrard, the city dog inspector, if he showed any dereliction of duty. But beyond this her presence in the Council would exalt that body to the proud position of being the first City Council in New Zealand to allow the soft and low voice of woman to be heard in its deliberations.

THE trial of Alexander James Scott, charged with the wilful murder of his friend, William Thompson, on the 31st of October last, was commenced at the Supreme Court, Auckland, on Tuesday last. The case, which is likely to rank among the *causes célèbres* of New Zealand, attracted a large number of persons. The lower part of the court open to the public was crowded, and not a few women were in the gallery watching the proceedings. The prisoner looked in good health and spirits.

IN Dunedin several pleasant little parties have taken place. Mrs Perston gave two, a *musical* and a large afternoon tea, about sixty ladies being present at the latter. Mrs Cutten gave a most delightful garden party at her residence, Anderson's Bay. Despite a shower, the visitors had a very pleasant time. A band played, and tennis was also indulged in. Delicious fruit, artistically arranged on the well-spread tea-tables, added to the flavour of the other dainties. The dresses at these parties must be held over until next week.

A SMART picnic was given in Dunedin by Mr Moesman, of Queensland. This gentleman drove his pretty little ponies and trap, two large drags conveying the rest of the guests. The hostess for the day was Mrs W. G. Neill. Most of the ladies were dressed in dark dresses. Unfortunately, the day was overcast and a high and biting wind blowing, the day being very unsuitable for a picnic. In spite, however, of the weather a very enjoyable time was spent. The party drove to Blueskin and lunched at the Saratoga Hotel and returned in the evening. The ladies were Mrs W. G. Neill, the Misses Reynolds, Wright, Sise, Gilkinson, Stephenson, K. Stephenson, Greenwood, G. Neill, Roberts, Lily Roberts, R. Reynolds and others. There were a larger number of gentlemen than ladies, among whom were several of the officers of the Katoomba.

A MEETING of ladies and gentlemen interested in choir matters, was held in the Anglican Sunday School, Picton, on Monday evening, when Mr C. C. Howard was unanimously re-installed in his former position as choir-master of Holy Trinity Church. The meeting was most enthusiastic, and twenty-five ladies and gentlemen volunteered at once to join the choir.

THE weather, unfortunately, was anything but pleasant on the occasion of the Swimming Sports at the Star Club Sheds, Wellington. However, it was not bad enough to put them off entirely, and a large number of people were present to witness them, who were afterwards entertained at afternoon tea by the members of the club. Among the visitors were the Misses Izard, Miss Blair, Miss Holmes, the Misses Johnston, the Misses Grace, the Misses Cooper, Miss Pownall, etc.

MRS SCHERFF, 'Glenalvon,' Auckland, gave a most charming and successful impromptu dance the other evening. The floor was just perfect, and the night was cool and pleasant. The hostess and her daughters really worked like Trojans to see that everybody enjoyed themselves. Great amusement was afforded by the dancing of the cotillon, especially the figures of choosing partners. During the evening one of the party sang an Italian song in a rich, clear, and cultivated voice, and of course was encored. He then sang a comic air. Another gentleman played the zither. Supper was everything that could be desired, flowers being arranged artistically about the table. The guests enjoyed themselves so much that they seemed loath to leave. Amongst those present were the officers of the German ship Buzzard, who always make a bedroom look gay with their bright gold lace.

A VERY jolly little supper was given by the Bohem Brothers at the Carlton Club Hotel, Hastings, after the concert in aid of the Brisbane Relief Fund. Songs and pieces were played and were much appreciated by the audience, which consisted of gentlemen who had taken part in the concert. A reel, danced by one of the guests, was a great feature of the evening's entertainment. A capital supper was provided, consisting of champagne and all sorts of delicacies, and one and all left for their homes agreeing that they would not mind how soon another concert took place, provided there was such another jolly supper party afterwards.

THE Queensland Relief Fund has still many supporters throughout the colony. The response to the need of help was spontaneous and hearty. My Hastings correspondent has the following remarks on this subject: 'As usual Hastings is well to the fore in a good cause. We have all subscribed liberally to the Brisbane Relief Fund, and have held a concert in aid of the same, which has certainly been the most successful ever given in Hastings. The Princess Theatre was filled with a most select and fashionable audience. Indeed the number of well-dressed women was a very pleasing picture. I do like to see men and women dress for an affair of the kind, it looks so very much nicer, and gets away from an ordinary every-day affair. If the women only knew how they were admired in evening dress, and the men also, they would always do it. The programme was a most excellent one, every item being good, and most of the songs were encored which made the concert rather longer, but not too long by any means. Miss Large came out from Napier and contributed two songs, which were, of course, encored; it is always a treat to listen to her. Miss Holroyd, a stranger in these parts, sang very well, her song being encored. She also sang a duet with Mr J. Loughnan.'

THE Native races do not seem to understand exactly how far the rights of the Pakehas extend. My Onehunga correspondent says: 'It is rumoured that the Maori Church at Mangere has been claimed by some of the Natives there, and that they are living in it and mean to cultivate the land round it.'

MR HENRY REDWOOD of turf celebrity had an experience on the opposing element last week, which he will remember for some time to come. He left Picton in the steam tug *Tainui*, with two men, on a trawling excursion to the Wairau Bar. Two miles outside Tory Channel the engine broke down, and the little vessel could neither be persuaded to move backwards nor forwards, charm the admiral never so wisely. The gale arose and the waves were mountains high, and the *Tainui* pitched and tossed in the same place, and moved neither backwards nor forwards. There were no oars aboard nor even a dingy, only a tiny sail thrown on board for a rug. The sail was rigged up, and away the adventurers went before the gale and never stopped till they reached the mouth of the Awatere river. Then the wind changed and blew them back again, and so the ball was thrown for two days and nights, and might be thrown for weeks to come for all they knew. Starvation stared them in the face, and visions of their own skeletons began to haunt them, when, oh joy! the *Waihi* coming over the bar espied a garment fluttering dependently on a pole and went to the rescue. Mr Redwood graphically describes the situation, and promises never to go to sea any more without a boat and plenty of provisions.