

CHRISTCHURCH.

Stamp Collecting.

Dear Bee, March 28.

A most enjoyable afternoon was given by Mrs Michael Campbell last week at her residence, Avonside, to enable a few of her musical friends to hear Miss Eva Champion sing, a young New Zealander who under Ada Crossley's advice and the auspices of the well-known Girls' Resma Guild, leaves for England early next year to begin in real earnest the study of singing.

Mrs Haslam gave a very pleasant afternoon at her residence, Riccarton, last week to meet Mr and Mrs Laird (England). Some of those present were Mrs Vernon, Mrs and Miss Neave, the Rev. and Miss Moreland, Mrs Wigram, Mrs and Miss Helmore, Mrs and the Misses Cook, Mrs Geo. Harper, Mrs Izard, Mrs R. J. Scott, Mrs and Miss Matthias, Miss Tripp.

Mrs Elworthy had a christening party at "Inglewood" last week for her little granddaughter, the infant daughter of Mr and Mrs Sydney Williamson, of Gisborne. All the guests attended the ceremony, which was performed by Archdeacon Harper, of Timaru, at St. Mary's, Merivale, and then adjourned to "Inglewood." Mrs Elworthy wore a becoming gown of black glace silk trimmed with velvet and chenille applique, and finished with lace, black and white bonnet; Mrs Williamson, pretty pale grey crepe de chine with lovely lace trimming, Tuscan hat with red roses and foliage; Mrs J. Bond, lawn cloth trimmed with green velvet and black braid and touches of white; Mrs P. Campbell, navy blue coat and skirt, black picture hat and feathers; Mrs Beals, blue four-ward with white spot and becoming toque; Mrs H. P. Hill, petunia crepoline, black mantle and bonnet; Mrs Reeves, black satin gown, hopsack coat appliqued with silk, black and white bonnet; Mrs Innan, cinnamon brown costume, black hat; Mrs H. Knight, black costume; Rev. and Mrs Gossett; Miss C. Gossett, white muslin skirt, silk blouse, and crimson sash; Miss R. Tabart, black and white muslin, black hat; Miss N. Reeves, cream voile; Miss Hill, pale blue skirt, white coat.

Since her arrival back in Christchurch Lady Plunket has again been busy in good work. On Saturday afternoon she opened Nurse Maude's "Home for Consumptive Women." On Monday Lady Plunket visited the Convalescent Cottage of the Ministering Children's League at New Brighton, and was received by Mrs Bowen, the ladies' committee, and the matron. After inspecting the cottage (which is always spotless) and speaking to the children, afternoon tea was partaken of, and Lady Plunket returned to town.

The law offices were closed last Thursday for the annual cricket match of all that profession, which took place at Hagley Park in beautiful weather. Among the onlookers were Mr and Mrs W. Cowlishaw, Mr and Mrs H. Cotterill, Mr and Mrs Stringer, Mrs and Miss Izard, Mrs and Miss Nanerrow, Mrs and Miss C. Kettle, Mr and Mrs Wigley, Mrs Wilding, Mrs Fisher, Mrs G. F. and the Misses Martin, Mr and the Misses Bloxam, Miss I. Martin, Mrs H. Rose, Mrs Geo. Harper, Mr and Mrs Nukler, Mr Eric Harper, Mr Beswick, Mrs Ronalds, Mrs and Miss Merton, the Misses Julius, Gossett, Thomson, Teddunter, Cotterill, Nicholls.

Mrs Wilding gave a small luncheon party at "Fowhope," Opawa, for Mrs Birman prior to her departure for England. Mrs G. G. Stoad, Mrs J. Craeoff, Wilson, Mrs Moorhouse, and Mrs Gower Burns were among those invited.

Miss Helen Macdonald gave a very pleasant little boating party up the river last week for her girl friends, amongst whom were the Misses Julius, Cook, Stead, Nanerrow, Mills, Anderson, Merton, Moore, Molyneux, and Burns.

Mrs Carey Hill gave a delightful picnic to "Te Kiteora," Clifton Hill, Summer, last week, when some of her guests were: Mrs Gilbert Anderson, Mrs Adair, Mrs de Lange and Miss Bullen (England), Misses Bullen (Kaikoara), Mrs F. Waymouth, Mrs P. Wood, Mrs de Vries, about twenty in all, spending a charming day there.

DOLLY VALK

An ardent stamp collector, Mr Edward H. Roebuck, of Madras, India, during his visit to Auckland added to the pleasure of his trip to the colony that of collecting scarce New Zealand stamps.

A prominent English stamp collector recently passed through Auckland, namely, Mr Leslie Hansberg, who has been deputed by the London Philatelic Society to visit the colonies and collect information regarding stamps issued in Australasia for a new work now being compiled under the auspices of that Society. Mr Hansberg only remained in Auckland a day or two.

The report submitted at the annual meeting of the Philatelic Society of New Zealand stated that during the session three hundred and thirty sheets, containing 11,880 stamps, valued at £1500 6/3, had been received for circulation, and out of these stamps valued at £362 4/3 had been selected. The receipts for the session amounted to £193 1/8 and the expenditure totaled £165 2/11 leaving a balance in hand of £27 18/9. The liabilities amount to £29 4/5, and the assets are valued at £84 7/2. Office-bearers for 1905 were elected as follows: Patron, His Excellency Lord Plunket; president, Sir Joseph Ward, Postmaster-General; vice-presidents, Messrs. A. T. Bate and E. G. Pileher; hon. secretary and treasurer, Mr L. A. Sanderson; exchange superintendent, Mr Thomas Adcock; committee, Messrs. J. H. W. Wardrop, C. T. Callis, P. B. Phipson, and A. Hamilton.

It is asserted that as high as £5000 was offered to the head of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in the United States once if he would issue half a dozen sheets of stamps with an error in the printing. Naturally the offer was declined, but history does not state whether the man who attempted to bribe an official was properly and thoroughly kicked. In fact, the whole story seems doubtful, because such a position is too valuable to be sacrificed even for a big bribe, added to which one would think that even a keen dealer or collector would hesitate before flying at such high game as the head of a department, more especially when it is remembered that an error which produces what is termed a freak stamp means the dismissal of the employee who are responsible for the mistake.

As far back as 1869 some errors were issued in the United States, which are very valuable stamps to-day, as they were very few in number. It was when a series of stamps was issued in colours. The series comprised denominations from 1 cent to 80 cents. The 15, 24, 20, and 90 cents were printed in two colours. On these the central picture was printed inverted, and the error was detected. To-day any of these freaks will bring from £100 to £200 each. The 2c. of the Pan-American series of stamps was also printed with the train upside down. A gentleman who purchased 10 wrote to the Department drawing attention to the error. It is needless to state he was not a collector. Had he been he would have tried to buy up the whole issue, and not tell anyone until he had secured the lot. Apparently the only error was in one sheet, and only six of these can now be traced, so that the stamp is a very scarce one. The Kansas "Star" also mentions several other errors, such as that of 1890, when a sheet of the ordinary 1-cent stamps with the word "Guam" printed across the face, slipped through with "Guam" upside down. Again in the seventies, when the Government used its own distinctive set of stamps for the several departments, an error was made by the bank-note company which then held the contract for making the stamps. The regular colour adopted by the Navy Department was blue. A sheet of the 2-cent denomination was printed in green, and the freak has now a market value of about £3 each. The genuine, in blue, is worth twenty times its face value.

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