

St. Andrew's Hall, Symonds street, Auckland, appeared in festive garb on Monday evening last on the occasion of the first of a series of recitals being given this week by pupils of Mr W. H. Webbe and Miss Margaret Spooner (of the Webbe School of Music) as a fitting conclusion to the year's work. The programme opened with an artistic interpretation of Wagner's great overture to "Tannhauser" played as a piano quartette by Misses V. Henderson, L.A.R. I. Vuglar, A. Dawson, and Mrs Worthington, and organ obligato by Mr Webbe. "Nocturne" (Gurlitt), another piano quartette, was well played by juvenile pupils, Misses A. and M. Sibbald, D. Hale, and L. Cleave, as were Gubbaert's "A Toute Vapeur" from memory by Misses G. Ehrman, D. Hamilton, E. Carlaw, and M. Fox, and E. Pauer's "British Guards," Misses V. McEwain, L. Burns, H. Sturdon, and G. Gifford, with organ obligato, Miss A. Webbe. The duos for two pianos included Heusselt's "Romance," nicely played by Misses M. Fuller and Connie Buchanan, and "Valse Tyrolienne" (Raff-Smith), which was brilliantly played and from memory by Misses Dorothy Nicol and Dorothy Henderson. The "Andante" and "Allegro Molto" from Mozart's "Sonata in D," by Misses Maud Anderson, L.A.B., and Edith Spooner was a fine performance. Solo, the "Adagio" from the "Moonlight Sonata" was expressively played by Master Lewis Eady. Four other solos which are all memorised were Bachmannoff's "Prelude," artistically played by Miss Jessie Little, Godard's "Second Mazurka," played with good effect by Miss Dorothy Nicol. Miss Gertrude Spooner created a most favourable impression with a remarkable performance of a series of fifteen pieces from Schumann's "Carnival," a work rarely played except by virtuosos. This talented young pianist gave a musically interpretation of this great work. Miss Madeline Webb played a delightful little piece "At Evening," by L. Schytte, followed by a splendid performance of Rubinstein's exceedingly difficult "Concert Study," opus 23, No. 2. Miss Peggy Bain, A.T.C.L., a young violinist who has recently taken up her abode in this city, delighted the audience with her playing (from memory) of "Vorilbron Bild" (Jeno Hubay) and "Legende" (Carl Bohm), as did also Mr M. Hamilton-Hodges in his vocal selections "With in Those Sacred Towers" (Mozart) and "Devotion" by Nicholls and Johnson. The accompanists were Miss Madeline Webbe and Mr Webbe.



The new 1 cent stamp of Panama, of the permanent design, is bi-coloured, and resembles the current stamps of Chili. In the centre is a portrait in black of Vasco Nunez de Balboa, who established the first Spanish settlement on the continent of South America. The colour of this stamp is green and black.

The use of Natal official stamps except by the Government Railways has now, it is reported, ceased. The remainders were burnt in the furnaces at the back of the Colonial Office at Pietermaritzburg.

A threepence stamp, King Edward type, is reported as issued in Lagos. The colour is lilac and brown.

The annual report of the British Guiana Post Office shows that during the year the number of letters despatched was as follows:—Ordinary, 2,001,740, as against 2,114,996 the previous year; On Service, 248,820, as against 202,631 the previous year.

The price quoted by a London firm for a pair of red 1/- N.Z. stamps, surcharged "Aitutake," with no stop after the word "Tiringi," is no less than 20/-, and the 2d N.Z. overprinted O.P.S.O. (postally used), is quoted at 15/-.

Cayman Islands stamps, King Edward type, on single water mark paper, are rapidly rising in price. The one shilling orange is catalogued at 7/6 unused, and for the set, 1d, 1d, 2d, 6d, and 1/- dealers ask 12/3, a good rise on stamps of the face value of 1/10.

The new stamps to be issued this month for use in Bosnia and Herzegovina, are reported to be beautifully executed, showing picturesque views of the country. There are sixteen varieties. The highest value, 5 b., bears the picture of the Emperor Franz Joseph.

To the query, "what is there in collecting post cards?" the "Post Card and Stamp Collectors' Annual" (Adelaide), replies in the following paragraph, which it may be said applies equally to stamp collecting:—"To the leisure it affords a stimulating occupation, with a spice of competition; to the busy it yields the delight of a recreative change; to the studious, an inexhaustible scope for profitable research; to the traveller a means of corresponding with a large circle of friends at home, and more explanatory than the usual note 'arrived safely'; to the old, the sociability of a pursuit popular with old and young alike; to the young, a hobby prolific of novelty, and one, moreover, that harmonises with school studies in historical and geographical directions."

While the Tourist Bureau and the Exhibition at Christchurch are both in their way aiming at advertising this colony, there is a series of post cards that are being sent out of New Zealand which are not calculated to do much in the way of attracting people here. One has on it the following verse:—

"Things have come to a terrible pass, Crops are bad and there ain't no grass; Winter has come a month too soon, And trade is playing a very dull tune. I'm sorry I can't afford a good card, So please accept this as a good card."

The fact that last shipment of butter from Auckland was a record one, does not accord with the above rhyme, about "there ain't no grass."

"Too many of the so-called comic cards published lately have been either vulgar or nonsensical, often both." Thus comments a stamp journal. It is pleasing to note that in Adelaide recently a man was fined £15 and costs for having post cards that were worse than vulgar.

"There are indications that collectors will have a somewhat rough time in the future. A twentieth century revision of the authorised version of the New Testament has not long been published, and the eleventh verse of the ninth chapter of St. Matthew, which formerly read: "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" is changed to "Why eateth your Master with collectors and outcasts?" In future collectors are to be classed with outcasts. So far no large body of collectors has protested, but if the revisers would only alter it to tax collectors, as before, they might save a deputation."—"Post Card and Stamp Collectors' Journal."

It is taken for granted that the meal is to be prepared in one of the thousands of homes that exist everywhere, where every penny is of importance, but where the common ingredients in daily use are to hand.

Our housewife must be a thrifty one; the pantry shelf, no matter how small it be, must display a clean jar of clarified dripping and another of precious stock made from all the suitable scraps of bones and trimmings of meat and vegetables, etc.

Parsely and onions from the garden, or a pennyworth from the greengrocer's, will last some while if used with discretion, and the stalks of the former placed in fresh water.

Should the garden produce fruit of any kind, a tart should cost the merest trifle, and a simple savoury of cheese might be indulged in.

There is usually a dry piece of some kind on hand.

Have the potatoes carefully cooked; this is good economy. A pound of plain boiled potatoes looks meagre and commonplace, but with the expenditure of just a little more time and a small amount of some other ingredient, they can be done in some fancy style, and the dinner gains a touch of refinement and style that reflects credit both on mistress and cook.

Rabbit en Casserole.—Required: One wild rabbit, four ounces of bacon scraps, one carrot, one onion, one ounce of flour, one pint of stock or water, salt, pepper, nutmeg, four allspice. Wash the rabbit well in tepid salt water. Cut it into neat joints; chop the liver and heart very finely; trim the bacon, cut it in large dice, and fry it slightly in a frying pan. Next fry the pieces of rabbit and sliced onion also in the bacon fat. When browned, take out the rabbit and onion, and place them in a casserole, or, failing that, a stewing jar. Fry the flour carefully till a light brown. Pour on to it the stock, and stir this same over the fire till it boils and thickens. Pour this over the rabbit in the casserole, and the washed and scraped carrot cut in large dice, the allspice, and a little salt and pepper. Put the lid on the casserole, and place it in a moderately hot oven for one and a half hours. After that time, season it carefully, and serve on the casserole. Should the stewing jar be unsightly, the stew could be turned out on to a hot dish.

Potato Straws.—Required: One pound of potatoes, salt, fat for frying. Wash and scrub the potatoes and peel them carefully, cut them into thin slices, and then into straws as much as possible the size of matches. Have ready a pan of frying fat; when a bluish smoke rises from it, put in some of the straws and fry them a delicate brown. Drain them well on kitchen paper, dust them with a little salt, and served them piled up in a hot vegetable dish.

Grilled Tomatoes (when in season).—Required: One pound of cooking tomatoes, a small piece of dripping, salt, pepper, a teaspoonful of chopped parsley, if possible. Wipe and stalk the tomatoes. Cut them through in halves, cutting them round. Rub the gridiron with dripping, lay on the tomatoes, and grill them over or in front of a quick clear fire till they are tender. Probably they will not need about ten minutes. Serve in a hot vegetable dish, put a tiny bit of dripping on each, and dust with salt, pepper and parsley. If grilling is not a convenient method for any reason, put the tomatoes on a baking tin in the oven and bake them till cooked—they will be quite as excellent done in this way.

Feather Pudding.—Required: One egg, 2ozs. of beef dripping, 2ozs. of castor sugar, two ounces of flour, two tablespoonfuls of milk, one heaped teaspoonful of baking powder, nutmeg to taste. Beat the dripping and sugar till a soft cream. Separate the yolk and white of the egg. Add the yolk to the creamed dripping, and beat it well for about five minutes. Whip the white of the egg to a very stiff froth. Mix the flour and baking powder together and stir them very lightly into the dripping, etc. Next add the white of egg as gently as possible, and the nutmeg. Well grease a tin or basin, half fill the basin with the mixture, using a second one if there is too much mixture. Cover the top with a piece of greased paper, and steam the pudding gently for about three-quarters of an hour—or till, when tried with a skewer, the centre is quite set. Turn it out on to a hot dish, serve at once with jam or stewed fruit.



FLOWER SHOWS.
AUCKLAND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S FINE DISPLAY.

Flower gardens are now gay all over the colony, and flower shows are a feature in the doings of the month. In Auckland the local horticultural society are able to congratulate themselves on the largest and most effective display of early summer blooms ever gathered together in one show in the province. The quality of the flowers was as admirable as their amazing variety, and it may be safely said that no finer tables of sweet peas and carnations could have been seen at any show south of the line. Roses were scarcely so fine as usual. The spring was an unusually warm and early one, and brought the "Queen of Flowers" to their fullest perfection a full week or ten days since. There were, however, some very beautiful stands, and those well-known growers, Messrs Lippiatt and Sons, were once more to the front with gorgeous specimens. Mr Brett, of Takapuna, besides easily carrying off prizes for sweet peas and carnations exhibited—not for competition—a table of specimen carnations. There were upwards of 30 separate varieties, and the blooms were of the largest kind and in the utmost profusion, dozens of each being shown. Mrs Mackay had a notable exhibit, and so did Messrs D. Hay and Son and Mr MacDonald. The children's sections were really wonderfully good, both in bouquets, cut flowers, and arranged flower baskets, the taste and ingenuity displayed being wonderful. Several pictures of the show will be found amongst our illustrated pages.

Eighteenpenny Dinners.

MENU No. I.
RABBIT EN CASSEROLE.
POTATO STRAWS, GRILLED TOMATOES, FEATHER PUDDING.

The need is often felt for suggestions for very inexpensive, yet recherche dinners that can be easily prepared by the average plain cook. With the hope, therefore, of supplying this want, I propose for a week or two to insert a few menus, the cost of which shall not exceed about one shilling and sixpence for four persons: I shall aim also at giving recipes as free from trouble as is possible, with the usual demands of good cooking and serving.

Do not imagine that the following menus can be carried out if every ingredient has to be specially purchased.