

A Night Cruise on the Rainbow.

A "Nocturne" on the Hauraki Gulf.

The night was clear but dark when I stepped aboard the commodore's yacht to return to Auckland.

After the excitement of the race, the crews of the fleet had settled down to the no less important occupation of refreshing the inner man, jest and laughter resounded through the wide circle of the bay.

The riding lights of the boats shone bright against the blackness of the shore. The big hotel lights in double tier showing up the white outlines of the long pier with ghostly effect.

The night dews were heavy, the sky cloudless with a peculiar Italian softness—a "gentle black browed night," such a one invoked with such passionate abandon by the love-lorn daughter of the House of Capulet; or witness of the magnanimity of Lorenzo when "Jessica like a little shriv slandered her love and he forgave it her."

To no Italian sky does a fine night in the Hauraki gulf yield place. It is nine p.m., when mine host gives command to spread the wide wings of the Rainbow to woo the light S.W. airs that breathe over the high headland of Waiwera.

When we get under weigh it is almost windless, but as we slip out from the fleet it increases in strength, until the steady ripple from her bow and along her bends show that the lofty canvas is picking up the wind.

Sounds of voices from astern grow weaker as we lead our course, but the steadfast burning eye that, night by night, in weather fair or foul, warns the wandering mariner of danger to be avoided, or sheds a kindly glow of greeting to the stranger from other lands seeking in this beautiful island of the Southern seas a home and abiding place. To us Tiri light speaks of the dangerous roaged reefs of Whangaparaoa which have to be avoided—to-night they give out no sound of waves breaking on them—but the days and nights be when a veritable hell of waters swirl round the black, vicious rocks that jut out from the long promontory which faces the island of Tiri Tiri.

The breeze freshens, the lights die out astern, while ahead the lighthouse looms near. We open up the channel on our starboard hand, the multitudinous lights of Auckland throwing a wide luminous arc upon the dark sky. From the west a brilliant meteor shoots athwart the sky from N. to S., leaving a flaming trail which, like a gigantic sword blade, divides, momentarily, the heavens from zenith to horizon. We haul our wind, a willing crew rousing in the main sheet and flattening in the head sails, and head up for Rangitoto, the gloomy sentry of the glorious Waitemata.

As we clear the passage, we pick out from the lights ahead the Beacon winking at us in a confidential and wholly impudent manner at the uniform rate of one wink per six seconds.

The night grows cold, and the commodore and I go below, leaving the ship in charge of the younger generation of commodores. We are awakened up to have a drink of tea, and become acquainted with the fact that we are becalmed off the Narrow Neck, and the clock time stands at three-thirty.

The moon in the last quarter and riding high, when the pale fires light up the eastern sky; brighter grows the light, a faint pink merging into the green of ripening apples in shades of infinite delicacy. A rooster (immediately identified positively as a neighbour's) breaks the silence, his wide-lung challenge instantly taken up until the North Head echoes with the noise.

The waters, like rolled sheet lead, begin to pick up the faint colours of the sky, light airs coming down on us leave black bars across its smooth surface. Bean Rock lighthouse looks like a multi-legged spider with a red spot on its back, showing up against the pallid background, while all around are to be seen scows, "on their hooks," with their

head sails down and wet mainsails black in the morning light.

We catch the breeze and stand round the North Head, our great sail area enabling us to stem the tide with ease. A short board enables us to pick up our moorings, which done, and sails stowed, I can look around.

Auckland city and the Waitemata Harbour have been so often gushed over that it may appear mere presumption on my part to say anything about it, but, please, kind reader, remember that I write of it at the hour that finds most of these authors in bed. I write of it with all its beauty spread out before me, not by the flickering gaslight in the contaminated atmosphere of a closed room. The sun is just lifting a rim over Motokihi, casting a dazzling swathe of golden light across the calm water—the gold is not the dull, dead gold of coin, it is alive—glittering sinuous lines of dazzling light, ever changing, kaleidoscopic; the grim North Head is crowned with a halo of glory, the flood of light sweeping along the North Shore brings every twittering sparrow, every whistling starling out from chimney pots and caves, to sing the "lifting up of day." Orakei, in the shadow, shrouded in a film of soft white mist still sleeps, in contrast to the awakening wharves. Here and there over the city a white shaft of smoke betokens those early astir.

The rising sun lights up the picturesque villas on Point Resolution, their red tiles standing out in marked relief against the sombre green of the pines and macrocarpas, and bathes lovingly, with his caressing beams, the snowy towers of the dwelling place of the Father of Auckland.

The dominant note of peace and beauty is for a while disturbed by an incoming steamer, gross and brutal in her appearance, thrusting tons of water ahead of her bluff bows, emblematical of the spirit of sordid commercialism, as she grinds her irresistible way up the harbour, with her 5000 tons of coal under hatches.

We land, and as I take my way home along Devonport's water front, I try to call to mind harbours more beautiful—Sydney, certainly, Queenstown, also, when climate is counted out; but all points considered, Waitemata, with her lost of subsidiary ports along the confines of the Hauraki Gulf, must ever rank with the world's most perfect havens.

THE FLORAL FETE.

SUCCESS MARRED BY RAIN.

The heavy downpour of rain on Saturday afternoon effectually marred the success of the floral fete from a financial point of view, as it naturally prevented thousands from attending. Apart from the loss entailed where charity is concerned, the bad weather also spoiled what would have been a most effective procession of exhibits. Some of the decorated vehicles did form a procession past the grandstand, including the handsomely decorated carriage of the Mayor of Auckland, but, of course, such things as the beautiful poster march and the tastefully decorated go-carts, etc., could not be expected to go round in heavy rain. At 3.30 o'clock, notwithstanding a heavy downpour of rain, the boys of St. Stephen's Maori College assembled on the green in front of the grandstand, and faithfully performed their part of the day's programme by giving an excellent athletic display. The New Zealand Herald's exhibit was an appropriate one, being four young men attired in silks suited to their character of the herald of the days of chivalry.

The St. Barnabas Club's exhibit was a most tasteful one, a handsome summer-house being carried on a large two-horse

lorry. The laths were composed of white ribbons crossed, and the dome was entirely composed of yellow and white flowers. Ropes of blossoms, depending from the dome, were held by little girls suitably attired. The Remuera Children's Home made a fine display in a waggone, the principal decorations being in yellow and white daisies. The top was a beautiful floral bell. Miss C. Macklow showed a handsomely decorated motor-car, of which ivy was the background and yellow and white daisies the principal flowers used. The New Zealand Dairy Association's van was covered with white cloth, with lilies at each corner, the remainder being covered with white daisies. Seated on the van were a pair of little girls in white costume, each carrying a fan.

THE POSTERS.

A wonderful pageant of posters was hopelessly spoiled by the inclemency of the weather. The posters' march was intended to have been one of the most attractive features of the carnival. Instead those who had gone to the trouble of preparing for the procession, were compelled to seek cover the whole day long, and remain, like gorgeous birds, in fear of spoiling their plumage, under shelter wherever it could be found.

The costumes, both from an artistic and original standpoint, were finer than anything of the kind ever witnessed before in Auckland, and it will be learnt with general satisfaction that another opportunity will probably be provided for a public display, a monster entertainment in His Majesty's Theatre on December 23 being on the tapis, as elsewhere mentioned.

The poster to be finally selected by the judges (Messrs. W. Bloomfield and R. Stewart) for first prize, was that representative of the "Star" and "Graphic." The young lady costumed to represent these papers was Miss L. Rhodes, in a dress of white and green satin. A portrait of King Edward was prominent on the bodice. The skirt was printed with a late edition of the "Star," and there were also some excellently reproduced illustrations from the "Graphic." A cleverly designed costume was completed with a neatly painted sunshade, depicting motor-cars, representative of the leading papers in the "Dominion," racing for supremacy. The costume was designed entirely by Mrs. Shakespear, of W. H. Shakespear and Co.

Miss Ethel Bagnall, representing Messrs. Hill and Plummer, was quaintly and tastefully attired in wall paper skirt, court train of frieze, and palette hat, and was singled out by the judges for second prizes.

A really splendid exhibit was that of Brown, Barrett and Co., who to illustrate their butterfly teas, had a team of eight small boys and girls. The boys were dressed as cupids, and the girls as jannies, with the result that the effect was picturesque in the extreme. This exhibit was awarded third prize.

Professor Potter's gymnastic class was represented by Miss Olive Croubie, a charming blue-eyed flaxen-haired young lady clad in a dainty white short skirt and wearing a white leather jerkin. On her head a fencing helmet, carrying a foil in gauntleted hand, she looked a formidable ally in love or war.

The "Zealandia Shirts" were exhibited by Messrs. Olliphant and Chambre Dalzell, dressed in pyjamas.

Miss Miesop appeared in a very neat court costume of coloured silk, which was representative of the floral fete.

The Y.Y. Mineral Water Company was depicted by two quaintly dressed young ladies, Misses Trevithick and Slatter, who were dressed in muslin costumes of an old English period.

Two pretty little girls in pink Kate Greenaway costumes were the living pictures shown by C. J. Ellerbeck, photographer.

The Donno separator was represented by Miss Hamlin in a costume descriptive of Old English dress. The Tabular separator had a pretty little dairymaid for a champion in Miss Elsie Cooke.

A fashionable costume of blue silk was that worn by Miss Richards, as a poster for Miskande Bartolo, milliner. Her hat was a revelation of green silk, trimmed with violets and green flowers.

Pearson's sand soap was represented by Misses Lewis and Johnson, who wore red muslin and white hats.

Messrs. Brown, Parker and Co., were represented by Miss M. Haultain, attired in pink with red apron inscribed with names of agencies, etc. Mr. Frank Gardner, in a strikingly quaint costume of the Monsieur Beaucaire style, appeared (with lady) for Mr. R. Eggleton.

Miss M. Buckworth, attired in a sailor suit and fags, and carrying an appropriate banner represented Mr. E. Le Roy. The appearance of the many-hued standards proved most effective.

The merits of Sylvia Starch and Lani-wa Soap were posted on striking costumes worn by the Bromberger.

Mr. W. Crosher, electrician, had as his representative Miss L. Chudwick, who wore a tasteful blue muslin costume, and carried a staff covered with miniature electrical appliances.

Miss D. Haultain wore one of Messrs. Smith and Caughey's "ready-to-wear" dresses. Miss D. Buckworth was present on behalf of Mr. G. P. Jenkinson, photographer, and was attired in a chocolate coloured dress, and carried a large palette embellished with photographs.

Miss Chapman appeared as a very dainty flower girl. Messrs. Bycroft had for their representative Miss Sterling, who wore a white dress and hat covered with biscuits and topped with a biscuit tin, the design of the headgear being decidedly unique. The qualities of Cooper's sheep dip were emblazoned on a pinafors worn by Miss Mathias.

Miss Perrett appeared on behalf of Mr. W. L. Pritchard.

Miss Kenny, for Messrs. R. and W. Hellaby, was neatly attired as a hospital nurse, with cap and tray complete. The representative of the English and Foreign Piano Company was Miss Phillips, in a striking dark blue and white costume, inscribed with the names of the company's instruments. The merits of Cole's Springbok Heel were posted on a beautiful costume of green and pink, worn by Miss Ayling, while Cinderella Baking Powder was effectively advertised by Mr. Mackey and Miss Amy Dawson, each in appropriate costume.

Messrs. McCullagh and Gower's representative, Miss Morrow, was gowned in a beautiful black and white stripe silk, dress, with ostrich feather hat, and parasol to match. Miss Johnson was represented by the Misses Johnson (2), in empire gowns of light blue and pink. Messrs. Smith and Caughey, besides their other representatives, had appearing for them a much-belaboured globe-trotter in white suit; and a young lady, with a patent go-cart. Mr. George Tutt had commissioned a youth who was for the greater part hidden in an enormous hat.

Messrs. Wingate and Company were represented by Miss D. Cowan and Mr. Bagnall, who contributed an attractive display of samples of metal ceilings. Messrs. Hill and Plummer also exhibited a large globe, fitted on a man's shoulders, to advertise their paints. "Clarity" solicited for the good cause in the person of Miss Keogh, dressed as a Puritan.

The following posters were also worthy of special commendation:—Hallow Baking Powder, Miss Grimstone (in white); Mrs. Collins (Valenze); Miss L. Taylor (in red); Ambury, English and Co., Miss H. Nairn (in purple and striped muslin); Acorn Butter, Miss Keogh (in light green and white striped muslin); Coronation Boot Co., Miss Nicholson (in yellow silk, with blue and gold coronet); Mr. C. Schmidt, Miss Kilmington (in white and purple); Colonial Ammunition Co., Miss B. Smith (in tartan shooting costume); Frisco Framing Co., Miss Read (in red muslin); Cousins and Atkin, Miss Mathews (in white); Pure Milk Supply, Miss I. Alderton (in slate colour and white); "Tortoise" (Cooper), Miss Dickinson (in white muslin); Mr. W. Hamlin, Miss Keogh (in black and white). The following were also represented by posters, all of which gave evidence of careful and tasteful preparation:—Oliver Type-writer (Miss E. Shepherd), Mr. Mathewman (Miss L. Poulter), Mr. B. McKerras (Miss Haultain), Mr. W. Gilmore (Miss Woodhouse), Mr. Sexte (Miss H. Alderton), Mr. G. Kent (Miss Hutton), Mrs. Browning (the Misses Chapman), Mr. S. Barry (three children), Daisy Coffee (Miss H. Munro), Aunt Janet's Baking Powder (Miss R. White), and Rockett's Blue (Miss I. Lawson).

Mr. Richard Stewart, manager for one of Mr. J. C. Williamson's companies, who acted as one of the judges in the posters' competition, praised the display, as one of the finest he had ever seen, and he is qualified to give an opinion, having acted in a similar capacity in Sydney and Melbourne. Points were given for originality, artistic effect, and advertising value. No less than 20 competitors were within a point of the third prize.

PRIZE LIST.

The following awards appeared in the second edition last Saturday:—