

The many friends of Mr John Pllmner, Wellington, will be glad to hear that the "Father of Wellington," as he is familiarly styled there, has almost recovered from his recent severe illness, and is able to take outdoor exercise again.

Mr Joseph Macdonald, of Sutherland House, Egham Hill, J.P., a director of the Greyhound Point Elizabeth Railway and Coal Company (Limited), New Zealand, who died on July 27th last, aged sixty-four years, left personally of the net value of £83,164 8/9, and the whole of his estate has been valued at £119,758 14/1.

Mrs W. Barton, Fareham, was in Wellington this week, to wish her parents, Mr and Mrs Studholme, bon voyage there on their departure for England.

Mr Joseph Gilmore, Mt. Eden, Auckland, has been appointed census enumerator for the Manukau County. Applicants for the positions of sub-enumerators should communicate with him.

According to the musical papers, Miss Clara Butt and her husband, Mr Keaney Rumford, are to commence a tour in Canada in January next, and will go thence to the States and on to Australasia, where they will remain till June.

Mr and Mrs Arthur Rhodes, Christchurch, arrived from England in time for the jubilee festivities in Christchurch, and their many friends there are delighted to have them in their midst again. They have been very much missed socially during their nine months' absence.

Mr and Mrs Duncan have returned to Wellington from their trip to Christchurch.

The Leeds College of Music runs a "Quarterly News," and from this budget I learn that a new Australian singer, Miss Louie Morrell, has appeared in London, and bids fair to follow in the wake of Madame Melba and Madame Ada Crossley. 'Yes! They all do that, but how few reach the port of fame and cash which Melba and Ada have contrived to make?

Mr. and Mrs. C. G. Laurie (Parnell) returned from Melbourne this week. Mr. Laurie was a competitor in the Australian bowling championships held in Melbourne during the racing carnival week.

Messrs W. F. Fookes and D. Teed, of New Plymouth, head the list in the examination of the Pharmacy Board.

Viscount Kelburne, R.N., the eldest son of our former Governor, the Earl of Glasgow, is engaged to Miss Sybil Mure, the only daughter of Mr W. J. Mure, 48, Wilton Crescent, London. Lord Kelburne was very popular in New Zealand, when he paid a visit to his parents there as a midshipman on H.M.S. Curacao.

Mr and Mrs Nathan, Miss Bell, Miss Harcourt, Mr and Mrs Embling, Mrs and Miss Seddon, and the Misses Simpson have all returned to Wellington after the gay week in Christchurch.

Mr George E. Tolhurst, Inspector of the Union Bank of Australia, returned to Wellington by the Waikare from Sydney, having thoroughly enjoyed his trip to Europe. Mrs and Miss Tolhurst remained behind in Melbourne for Cup week.

M. August Wiegand, the distinguished organist, erstwhile of Sydney, is giving successful recitals in Germany, and appears at Cologne one day this month.

Mr R. H. McCallum arrived by the Moana from San Francisco, after an extended tour round the world. He left again for Australia by the Elingamite to witness the Melbourne Cup, and is now doing the Sounds in the South Island of New Zealand.

Mr and Mrs John Studholme, of Melvale, Christchurch, passed through Wellington last week, en route for Sydney, on their way home to England for some months' visit, and will spend a month at Cairo on the way, to escape the English winter.

There was nothing said at the annual meeting of the Gaiety Theatre Company on Tuesday ancient the talk of Australian tour. The Chairman indeed, after congratulating the lucky shareholders on their twenty per cent dividend, stated that the old house would not be closed till the new one was ready at Christmas 1901. He did not think it wise to state publicly the amount the County Council had given them for the old Gaiety, but he might say it would suffice to build them one of the handsomest theatres in London. "The Messenger Boy" was a great success, and confidently expected to run

till next Easter. From this I take it for granted that if Mr Edwards has a Colonial Company in preparation, it won't be the original article, but a mixture from his many provincial troupes, strengthened by a few stars.

The British and Continental Piano Co., who have lately removed into their handsome premises in the Strand Arcade, are showing a really magnificent selection of pianos and organs by best makers. We need only mention such names as Haake, Hanover, whose instruments command a very extensive and ever-increasing sale; E. Kaps, Dresden, whose pianos are famous; or Bechstein, Berlin, for all of which makers the British and Continental Piano Co. are sole agents in Auckland and districts, to convince the music loving people that when requiring a really first-class instrument at very reasonable prices this firm stands unsurpassed. They have lately added to their agencies the celebrated English "Strohmenager" pianos. These instruments have received the highest praise for their good qualities and durability, and amongst English pianos take a first place. A visit to the Company's show rooms will at all times be full of interest.

Mr F. W. Haybittle (Wellington), of the firm of George Thomas and Co., who has been spending some months holiday in England and on the Continent, returned to Wellington this week via Sydney, having an unusually rough passage across in the Waikare. Mr Haybittle was among the guests at the dinner at the Mansion House in London recently, and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was present, and before leaving the banquet-room made a tour round the tables, hailing to the guests en route. Acting on the impulse of the moment, Mr Haybittle conceived the idea of speaking to the Prince as he passed his chair, and as His Royal Highness passed he stepped forward, saying, "Your Royal Highness, I would esteem it a great favour if you would allow me, as a native of New Zealand, to shake you by the hand." The Prince was naturally quite non-plussed for the moment by such an extraordinary and unsuspected request, but with his well-known charming smile, held out his hand, after an instant's pause, saying as he did so, "With the greatest of pleasure, my dear sir, how do you do?" So that Mr Haybittle is probably the only man in New Zealand who has shaken hands with his future king.

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A PUBLIC NOTICE TO EVERY MAN AND WOMAN.

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Launceston, Tasmania, 23/2/99. Mr. Morris, the much-travelled agent, gives his opinion of Webber's Vitadatio as under, and at the same time hands us his photograph that there may be no mistake as to the gentleman referred to. He says: It was while we were playing in Melbourne I first heard of Vitadatio through Mr. Palmer, the agent, who assured me he had been cured of Hydatids and Bright's Disease of the Kidneys of 14 years standing by the use of this great remedy. I had been a great sufferer with Kidney and Liver Troubles, which gave me great inconvenience in my calling, and tried very many medicines to effect a cure, but all was of no avail. I then went in for a course of Vitadatio, and with such good results, it having cured me completely, and I am again in splendid condition, and the ill effects of my trouble I have disappeared; and moreover I cannot keep quiet on the subject. I give Vitadatio my strongest recommendation to all who complain of being in any way "off." I am told as a blood purifier Vitadatio has no known equal, and I quite believe it.

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*Society Gossip*

AUCKLAND.

Dear Bee, November 20.  
EVENING "AT HOME" AT THE AUCKLAND CLUB.

"Did you ever imagine such luxury and perfect comfort; no wonder they like their club, the wretches," laughingly remarked a radiant young matron at the splendid opening "At Home" given by the members of the Auckland Club on Friday evening, in honour of the opening of the reconstructed Club-house. There was truth in the remark, and I, for one, shall not be surprised if our men-kind stop in town "on business" more than ever now. "Sweet are the uses of adversity," sings Shakespeare, and verily in this instance the quotation fits. From the disastrous fire which gutted the entire front portion of the building, the new Auckland Club has arisen, Phoenix like, and incomparably superior to its old self. The exterior is little changed, it is true, but this is practically all that remains of the old building; everything else is new, almost every arrangement has been altered and improved, and those portions of the building left intact by the fire have been renovated and decorated out of knowledge. Wherever one turns, into whatever portion of the palatial building one goes, there are evident on every side the successful results of perfect taste, careful thought, and wonderful ingenuity. The credit for this really brilliant achievement belongs to Mr Ashley Hunter, C.E. Not only is he responsible for the structural alterations and improvements, but to him belongs the credit for the perfect scheme of internal decorations which are superior to anything I have seen in Auckland hitherto, and which would do honour to any club or mansion in the empire. Further than this, all the furniture is from special designs by Mr Hunter, and it is were possible to say that here he has even excelled the excellence of his work as an architect and decorative artist, I should do so, I think. I only wish Mr Hunter could turn out half the furniture in the houses in Auckland, and send us in substitutes from his own designs. The change from ugly conventional forms is most delightful. Now let me try and describe some of the rooms. The entrance hall is divided into two by large ground glass swing doors. The inner hall, which is very spacious, is used as a sort of lounge, and will be delightfully cool in summer. I imagine, indeed, it will be one of the favourite gossiping grounds in the Club. On the right, up a couple of steps or so, is the new smoking-room, and it makes one wish one were a man and smoked. It is most artistically finished, the wall paper being a faint neutral green in an Oriental design, and exceedingly effective. The chief beauty of the room is, however, the fireplace, with its high mantel in light chocolate enamel work and exquisite blue tiles. This was also specially designed by Mr Hunter, and is undoubtedly one of the best of his many successes. The ceilings are all very handsome in bold relief panels, and are the same throughout the hall, etc., etc. The furniture is in morocco leather and for solid comfort could not be

beaten. I greatly coveted, too, the little marble-topped tables in Oriental shape. Mr Hunter is to be congratulated on these again, and also on the lovely writing tables. He has evidently a perfect genius for designing useful and beautiful furniture. I have never seen designs I liked better. The staircase is very handsome, and the newels at the bottom are much admired. Upstairs the same taste is displayed, and similar care and attention to detail is observable. In short, it is just perfect, and I expect there will be a regular "club boom" on for some time to come, so we need not expect to see much of those of our men folk who belong to the Shortland-street establishment. No wonder some of them sometimes turn up their noses at their own humble homes, but why don't they give us the money to make our homes as luxurious? That's what I say. However, let me tell you of how we were entertained. First, there was a most excellent concert. Madame Chambers, who looked lovely, sang with that ease and brightness which always make her a favourite. Mr. Hamilton Hodges was in grand voice, and his solo from "Ernani" was splendid. The items by the Waikare Glee Club were delightful, and, in fact, we greatly enjoyed the entire performance. After the concert there was supper upstairs. It was done as "the Club," whether the Auckland or the Northern, always do everything in this way. That is to say, it was done regardless of expense, and therefore perfect as money could make it. The tables were decorated with sweet peas, and looked lovely. The orchestra, which played during supper, was a splendid one, and completely put into the shade the German and Italian "bands" which are so often hired to the exclusion of our own countrymen. This is a good example, and may well be followed by those giving parties this summer. Mr. Angus Gordon, the secretary of the Club, was simply indefatigable in his endeavours to see that everyone enjoyed the evening, and most certainly they did so. He worked like a Trojan, and seemed to be in half a dozen places at a time. I should certainly say that much of the success of the evening was due to him. Amongst those present I noticed:

Mrs Armitage wore a white and pink chine silk, tucked blouse, and a black satin skirt; Miss Graves Aickin looked graceful in black satin with black lace sleeves; Miss Alison wore a blue and white striped silk blouse and a black silk skirt; Mrs Read Bloomfield was richly gowned in black satin with jet and steel encrustations; Mrs Lucas Bloomfield wore a charming toilette of black satin with vieux rose silk corsage embroidered with jet, and a fold of rose panne across square décolletage; Mrs Wilfred Bruce was in dove grey silk, corsage enriched with Honiton lace and magenta silk fold edged with fringe over shoulder, and a spray of flowers of the same hue on the left shoulder and in coiffure; Mrs F. Baume was attired in an elegant French grey silk, which set off her graceful figure to perfection, the corsage having a white silk guimpe under embroidered chiffon; Mrs Thos. Buddie wore a rich black silk; Miss Ivy Buddie was much admired in white satin with silver embroidery on corsage and on vandyked elbow sleeves; Miss Batger wore black satin with cream lace berthe; Mrs C. Buddie was in white brocade with touches of carmine red; Mrs J. Black wore a handsome black brocade with transparent net sleeves; Mrs Aitken Carrick was in a dove grey silk, with touches of red; Mrs Churton wore black velvet with white lace fichu; Mrs Cotter was handsome in a black striped satin toilette, with steel and jet encrustations outlining décolletage; Miss Winnie Cotter looked pretty in black satin, the corsage being lightly draped with black sequin net; Mrs Ching wore an elegant black embroidered net corsage, over black satin; Madame Chambers' heliotrope brocade gown, enriched with white lace, was much admired; Mrs Cattnach wore an effective navy silk with a design in white; Mrs Colbeck looked graceful in black satin, with clusters of red roses; Mrs D. W. Duthie was in white brocade with touches of turquoise blue; Mrs W. S. Douglas wore a rich black satin with a lovely point lace vandyked collar; Miss Mabel Douglas was pretty in white silk, with geranium pink velvet ruffles on corsage, white lace sleeves; Miss Devereux looked charming in black satin with wreath of scarlet geraniums on décolletage; Miss Devereux wore an effective sapphire blue velvet with white swan-down on square cut corsage; Miss Dunnett