

Musgrove's Grand Opera season opens here next Saturday with "Il Trovatore." The rush for seats on the morning the box-plan opened was unprecedented, and the company is evidently going to have a successful season.

Wellington is being visited at present by influenza and measles—two equally unwelcome visitors—yet we have all to accept our fate with the best grace possible and sympathise with our suffering neighbours.

OPHELIA.

NELSON.

Dear Bee, August 5.
After a week of more or less rain and wind, we are once more enjoying bright sunshine, but with it have also returned the heavy frosts, which we fancied were a thing of the past for this season, but winter has not yet departed, and this morning frozen taps, and such like, were once more the order of the day.

The annual BALL OF THE WAKATU MOUNTED RIFLES

was held in the Provincial Hall on Wednesday evening, and was in every way a great success. The hall was gaily decorated for the occasion with stars composed of bayonets, photographs, coloured streamers, greenery, etc. All manner of delicacies were provided for supper, and much credit is due to the ladies' committee, consisting of Mesdames J. Ching, Madigan, Roberts, A. Trask, and Misses D. Driscoll and Laird. The M.C.'s were Lieut. Ching, Corporal Clayden, and Trooper Kihagen, who carried out their duties in an efficient manner. Amongst those present were Captain A. and Mrs. Trask, Dr. and Mrs. Roberts, Dr. and Mrs. Andrew, Mr. and Mrs. F. Trask, Lieut. and Mrs. Ching, Misses Driscoll (2), Leslie (2), Laird, and many others. The large gallery was filled with spectators.

A number of prominent residents have formed themselves into a City Beautifying Committee, for the purpose of improving the Church Hill and other parts of the city. A deputation consisting of Messrs. Fell, Cook, Holloway, and W. Rout, jun., waited on the City Council on Friday evening to ask the necessary permission to carry out their desire, which was granted. The members intend to spend both labour and money on the work they have taken up with such praiseworthy zeal, and it is expected that before long our already picturesque city will be much improved.

PHYLLIS.

BLENHEIM.

Dear Bee, August 5.
The third of a series of concerts was held in the Church of the Nativity's Sunday schoolroom on Tuesday evening, and was well attended. This one was under the management of Mrs. Lucas, who arranged an excellent programme, the items of which were announced by Archdeacon Grace as they became due. Miss May Lucas played an opening piece with great facility, and Miss Purser sang a short but pretty song, which was followed by a vocal duet by Mrs. C. Powell and Mrs. Lucas. Mr. Wilmot sang "Will o' the Wisp" in capital style, and Mrs. Cranston "May Morning" very sweetly. Miss Wakelin recited "The Inventor's Wife," and the Misses Turner and Irving sang a duet. Three little boys, Masters Scott Hindmarsh, Roy Lucas and Noel White, in sailor costume, were encored for "The Jolly Tars," and another chorus, sung by four girls, the Misses Violet McIntosh, Connie Bull, Deanie Clouston, and Marjory Clouston, clad in Chinese style, received the same mark of approbation. It was a Chinese umbrella song, and was very taking. Miss Turner sang sweetly and pleasingly, and Mr. Banks and Mr. C. Powell sang "I'm Off to the Rio Grande" and "The Better Land," and Mrs. Cranston and Mr. Wilmot a duet. Mrs. Lucas acted as accompanist.

On Thursday evening Mrs. Neville gave a progressive euchre party at "Thurston," which was eminently enjoyable. As well as cards the guests were also entertained with dancing, singing by Mr. Wilmot and whistling by Mr. F. Bull. The card tables were

arranged in the drawing-room, and a most delicious supper was set out in the dining-room. Among the guests were: The Misses Mills (2), R. Greenfield, J. Chaytor, Clare, M. Ewart, M. Nosworthy, F. Nosworthy, Anderson, M. Clouston, Horton (2), D. Redwood, Mrs. Barlow, and Messrs. J. Greenfield, C. Mills, Burden, Appleby, K. Moore, Carey, G. Griffiths, F. Bull, Kelsall, D. Chaytor, Barlow, Banks, Sim, Jago, H. Anderson, L. Clouston, who were received by Mrs. Neville, the Misses Neville (3), and Messrs. Neville (3).

Mrs. Bull entertained a number of young persons at her house on Friday evening, to commemorate Miss Edith Bull's birthday, and some exceedingly amusing games were played. The prize for being nearest to the donkey was awarded to Miss Dixon. Others present were: Mr. and Mrs. Hulme, Mr. and Mrs. Coomb, Mr. and Mrs. Bull, the Misses Bull (3), Anderson, Irving, Smith (2), J. Horton, Waddy, C. Chaytor, Farmer, M. Nosworthy and Turner, and Messrs. Appleby, H. Anderson, D. Chaytor, Banks, Moore (2), R. McIntire, Fish, Kelsall, Bull (2), etc. Besides games dancing was indulged in, and some vocal music enjoyed, the singers being Miss Turner, who also played delightfully, and Messrs. Appleby, Banks and Moore (2).

Mr. J. Douglas Perrett had an exhibition of pictures here last week, which were chiefly painted by himself, though several other artists were represented. The majority were pastels, but there were several fine oil paintings, and the whole were sold by auction on Saturday. The prices were, I believe, satisfactory to the seller.

I am told that the Borough Council intend to take steps to improve the roads for cyclists and pedestrians, and hope that the news is true. The fact that so many have been fined for cycling on the footpaths is an indication that the roads, notably the Maxwell Road, are in a fearful state.

FRIDA.

CHRISTCHURCH.

Dear Bee, August 5.
It is all very well to say, "Blow, blow, thou winter wind." 'Tis to endure it is another story, and a very cruel one. I simply do not believe the person who says he enjoys the winter. The shops have tried to make us think the summer is coming by big sales for the last week or two of everything cosy and warm, but with one's teeth chattering, a very blue nose, and watery eyes it is difficult to realise, even with a notice in your pocket of a private view of spring millinery, that we may wake up any morning and find that spring is here. I am a real "John Bull." My grumble out I can tell you the news.

One of the most delightful dances which has ever been given in New Brighton was held in Hawker's Hall on the 30th July by a committee of girls, the chaperone being Mrs. W. J. Bruce. The supper tables looked extremely pretty, arranged artistically in red silk, holly, pot plants and ferns. A special tram took about seventy from Christchurch, returning at 1.30 a.m., and the music supplied by Mrs. Vaughan was all that could be desired. Mrs. Bruce wore black and white and merveilleux, transparent yoke, and sleeves of lace and jet; Miss L. Harris, sweetly pretty evening dress of white silk, the bodice of tucks and silk, Valenciennes insertion; Miss Dora Preston (Sumner), black velvet and turquoise blue; Miss G. Wheeler, white muslin; Miss Blundell, pale blue figured muslin; Miss Dulcie Inwood, white silk blouse trimmed with green velvet; Miss Dora Winter, white muslin and lace; Miss Edie Croxton, white with folded belt of eau de nil; Miss Essie Arrowsmith, white silk trimmed with pink; Miss Wright, black and pink; Misses Dexter (2) wore white; Miss Olney, very pretty white silk dress; Miss Ella Bruce, pale grey trimmed with butterfly; Miss Myra Bruce, cream dress with pretty lace fletu and yellow sash; Miss Gertie Cook, white with green sash; Miss E. Thomas, black and yellow; Miss Ida Thomas, pretty white muslin trimmed with white satin ribbon; Miss Dorothy Restall, pale blue and forget-me-nots; Miss Brown looked well in cream, with pearl passementerie trimming; Miss Lena Collins, white muslin; Misses Peapoint (2), white silk. Amongst the gentlemen were Messrs W. J.

Bruce, E. Hardy-Johnston, Major Milson, Guthrie, H. Anderson, C. Cotterill, Edgar and Gerald Stead, Cecil Louisson, C. McKellar, Wetbey, L. A. Shand, C. Bassett, C. Hawkins, E. Talbot, P. White-Parsons, A. Van Aesch, Reg. White, C. Wheeler, J. Quane, Arrow-smith, Shaw (2), A. Otway, B. S. Lawrence and many others. The pleasant evening terminated by those present giving three cheers for Mrs. Bruce and the committee.

On Thursday a most enjoyable concert was given by the Christchurch Musical Union in the Canterbury Hall to a very large audience. It was mainly an orchestral concert. Miss Maud Graham singing one song in the first part, and Hiawatha's "Wedding Feast," with Mr. Percy Denton as soloist, concluding the second part, making it varied enough to please all tastes. Beethoven's wonderful "Eroica" symphony, though long, was much appreciated, the movement containing the beautiful "Funeral March" being specially liked. Then the dainty music from "As You Like It" was a great contrast and prettily played. Miss Graham looked extremely well in a trained white silk gown, with scalloped over skirt, the bodice finished with pearl and crystal trimming. She was the recipient of a lovely white shower bouquet with long white streamers, after her song "Awake," which she sang in such a manner as to evoke an encore. Among the numerous audience were Judge, Mrs. and Miss Denniston, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wood, Dr. and Mrs. Jennings and Miss Henderson, Mrs. and Miss Julius, the Rev. Andrew Julius, Miss Ambler, Mrs. T. W. Stringer, Mesdames G. Moore, Kiver, W. Lake, J. Little, Mr. and Mrs. A. Kaye, Mrs. Woby (Adelaide), Mrs. and Miss Snow, Mr. T. and Miss Barnett, Misses Inwood, Haydon, Grant, Mr. and Miss Izard, Professor and Misses Cook, Mrs. and the Misses Young, Mrs. and Miss Shaw, Mrs. Marsden, Mrs. Marks, Mrs. H. and Miss Harris, Mrs. and Miss Milson, Mrs. R. Gardner, Miss Conna, Mrs. and Mrs. J. D. Fairhurst, Mrs. N. Macbeth, Miss Wood, Mr. and Mrs. W. Wood and Miss Wilson, Mrs. F. M. Wallace, Mrs. F. Wilding, Mr. A. and Miss Wilding, Mrs. H. H. Loughnan, Mr. and Miss Denham, Mr. and Mrs. Cobham, etc. The majority of the audience were wrapped in opera coats, the members of the chorus almost all wearing them too.

Very often a great reputation spells a severe disappointment, but not so

with M. Jean Gerardy. Everything that has been said of his playing is, I think, absolutely true, and Christchurch people were in the mind to hear for themselves at the Choral Hall on Friday evening. The rush for seats was bordering on a free fight, and to the applause was added shouts of "Bravo!" and "Encore!" after every item, the quiet, staid young performer generously responding to more than one encore. M. Jean Gerardy was ably supported by Mr. Phillips, whose accompanying was most artistically done, and Mrs. Burns sang "La Mia Piccarella" beautifully, looking extremely well in white brocade, the bodice finished with crystal trimming, and cluster of crimson roses on the left shoulder. Among the many present were: Professor and Mrs. Hutton, Mr. and Mrs. Grigg, Professor and Mrs. Cook, Miss Grigg, Mr. and Mrs. Bevan-Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Tyree, Mr. and Mrs. T. W. Stringer, the Hon. C. Louisson, Mr. and Mrs. F. M. Wallace, Mrs. T. Garrard, Mr. and Miss Izard, Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Loughnan, Mr. and Mrs. Hirschberg, Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Fairhurst, Mr. and Mrs. N. Macbeth, Misses Fairhurst, Grant, K. Bewlings, Mrs. A. Merton, Mr. W. J. Bunz, Messrs. W. Day, F. Graham, Dr. and Mrs. Jennings, Miss Henderson, D. Mickle, Mrs. and the Misses Julius (2), Mesdames Appleby, F. W. Thompson, and Mathias, Misses Wither (2), Van Asch (2), Lightfoot, Mr. G. and the Misses Hart, Mr. and Mrs. T. Y. Wardrop, Mr. and Mrs. Russell, Miss Cabot, and many more.

Mr. and Mrs. William Pratt, Worcester-street, celebrated their golden wedding last week, but unfortunately Mr. Pratt was suddenly seized with an attack of pleurisy, necessitating postponing it for a day or two, but he was then well enough to be present at the gathering of children, grandchildren, and a few intimate friends. Mr. W. Pratt, from Nelson, and Mr. Alfred Pratt, from Waitotara, were present, and Miss Florence Pratt had returned to Christchurch about a fortnight before, after travelling many years in America, England, and the Continent. A handsome wedding-cake graced the board, and many presents were brought to the aged bride and bridegroom, who for the exception of the passing illness of Mr. Pratt are remarkably hale.

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