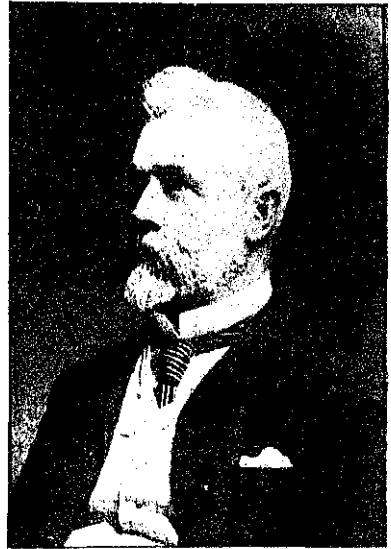


many would-be singers who (in his opinion) possessed no voices, that he made himself unpopular, and was soon forced to seek his fortune elsewhere.

For several years after Mr. Richter's disappearance from the scene of activity, New Plymouth possessed a strong Choral Society (but they called themselves "Philharmonic"), and musical people were thoroughly united, under the conductorship of Mr. Alfred Drew. Mr. Drew was an able musician, but had not had a great deal of experience in orchestral work, which occasionally led him into committing blunders which tended to impair his popularity. He was an excellent conductor, played the contra-bass fairly well, and when the necessities of the orchestra took that instrument away from him, he made a most praiseworthy attempt to master the oboe. A choral conductor is bound to make enemies; indeed, at times it appeared to me that he exists for that purpose, and Mr. Drew was no exception to the rule, but his leaving New Plymouth was New Plymouth's loss,

Anglican Church (of which Mr. Drew was organist), and one of the few reliable solo sopranos in the Philharmonic Society, Mrs.



*F. W. Bunting, Photo.,*

*Palmerston N.*

MR. A. DREW.



*F. W. Bunting, Photo.,*

*Palmerston N.*

MRS. DREW.

Drew was most useful. It always appeared to me a pity that Mrs. Drew's voice had not received a thorough training, as in that case she could not fail to have made a fortune as a professional.

Orchestral affairs had, of course, their ups and downs in New Plymouth as they have everywhere else. The arrival of the Wildman family from England, late in 1879, was the occasion of a remarkable revival in instrumental matters. They speedily got together an orchestra of about thirty members, which flourished so long as they gave it their support. I remember well attending the first instrumental concert given by that orchestra; they rendered a really excellent programme of music (mostly classical), which must have required several months of hard practice. Now, eighteen years or more afterwards, on looking over a list of the performers, I find they are scattered to the four quarters of the compass, and several are dead. Messrs. Wm. Wildman, M. J. Cleary, and W. H. Skeet are dead; as also is Mr. Shawcross, one of the

and a very serious loss at that. Mrs. Drew, also, was a great musical acquisition to New Plymouth; as leader of the choir in the