

MUSIC, DRAMA, ETC.

*Spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici?*

THE PHONOGRAPH, UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF MESSRS. M' MAHON.

My vocabulary fails to supply epithets to fit the case of that bewildering Phonograph; strange, unique, marvellous, wonderful, are all inadequate—miraculous is perhaps the best word. On Monday evening I repaired to the Opera House in the mood of a doubting Thomas, expecting to hear an interesting scientific lecture, with illustrations, resembling more than anything else the tone of a very superior musical box. The first cornet solo utterly routed that idea, and raised my expectations to a pitch which subsequent performances more than realised. The machine and its appurtenances I regard with superstitious awe. In those waxen cylinders lie the echoes of sounds dead and buried; but at the will of the operator they live and speak again and again. The receptive powers of the instrument are readily grasped by the mind, but how those sounds are reproduced in volume so nearly approaching to the voices which engraved them upon the sensitive wax almost baffles the understanding. It is all very well to think of analogous examples such as in photography, the negative from which numbers of prints may be fixed on a prepared medium by the action of light. But that analogy only applies *pro tanto*, and is by no means complete or satisfactory. Mr. Archibald only reveals what he thinks fit, and unexplained mysteries lurk behind. Probably the microphone is in some way brought into play to increase the volume of sound. Another puzzling problem is to account for the phonograph's capacity to catch and fix the music of a whole band, or of a chorus of voices. In the case of a single instrument or voice the performer sings, plays, or speaks right into the receptacle, the sound waves striking the delicate mechanism which immediately records the impressions received. But how comes it that the music of a number of instruments or voices merely floating and waving in the air can act upon the waxen tympanum with a force sufficient to impress a reproducible record of so great a volume? I should like to see Mr. Impey's band and the Orpheus Glee Club on the stage playing and singing *morceaux* for the Phonograph to record and reproduce *coram populo*; but in wishing to penetrate mysteries which ate perhaps sacred I may be acting the part of a Paul Pry, so "I hope I don't intrude!" Not being a Scot, and claiming to have some ear for music, the bag-pipes *au naturel* are not pleasing to my aesthetic senses. But the bag-pipes rendered by Phonograph are simply delicious. The harsh and nasal tones become refined and harmonious. On the other hand, Mr. Bingley Shaw's song was somewhat nasal and unpleasant in *timbre*. Perhaps the homoeopathic dictum, *similia similibus curantur*, applies to the Phonograph. In all the voice solos I noticed something of Mr. Punch's intonation, but in the concerted pieces, both for voices and instruments, this defect was minimised. The vocal quartette was exquisite, as were also the *ensembles* sung by the Jubilee Minstrels, and some of the band selections. But to be convinced of the fidelity of our "recording angel," one had only to listen to the terrible cacophony perpetrated by the Adelaide street band. "Silver thread's among the gold" surprised in atrocious discord the best efforts of the vilest of German bands. Auckland audiences pride themselves upon possessing a refined and critical taste in matters musical—so of course we encored that selection!

To sum up in a few words. Edison's Phonograph is a miracle. It will doubtless be rendered still more perfect by the genius of the colossal brain which conceived and elaborated some of the greatest marvels of the nineteenth century. Any one who allows this opportunity to escape will hereafter, quoting Dogberry, exclaim, "O, that he were here to write me down an ass!"

It is gratifying to hear of Miss Otie Chew's remarkable success and rapid progress in her musical studies in London. I expected nothing less. She is gifted with exceptional qualities. Her fastidiously correct ear and refined taste, after some years of earnest and conscientious

study under competent direction, must place her in the very highest rank among lady violinists. *Festina lente* should be her motto, and I trust that she will not be prematurely brought before the public. Many a promising crop yields a comparatively scanty harvest by a too hasty attempt to garner the grain before it is perfectly ripe for the sickle. Having gained favour with so excellent a judge as Sir George Grove, his sound advice should be scrupulously followed.

MR. SHERIDAN'S "Fun on the Bristol," which is shortly to reappear before an Auckland audience, will be a pleasant change for those who delight in side-splitting comicalities. Widow O'Brien boasts many captives of her bow and spear, and is certain to lengthen her list of victories. I see that the company adds the ballet to its many attractive resources, so that we may expect some *elegant elegies* illustrating the poetry of motion!

ORPHEUS.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

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Under the Direction of Messrs. McMahon.

THE PHONOGRAPH A SENSATIONAL SUCCESS. THE PHONOGRAPH A SENSATIONAL SUCCESS.

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TO-NIGHT, AT EIGHT O'CLOCK. PROFESSOR DOUGLAS ARCHIBALD, M.A., Oxon, will deliver an interesting Lecture, illustrated by Limelight Views, and exhibit the Wonderful Capabilities of EDISON'S STARTLING TALKING MACHINE.

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WAR! WAR!! WAR!!!

MERCER REGATTA, SATURDAY, 7TH MARCH, 1891.

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Programme and Price Lists forwarded on application. Will attend all Country Race Meetings.



FRIDAY, 20TH FEBRUARY, AT 12 O'CLOCK.

PAKURANGA HUNT CLUB SUMMER MEETING, ELLERSLIE.

GATES, BOOTHS, CARDS, STALLS, STABLING.

DIGBY TONKS & CO.

Have received instructions to sell, at Brunswick Mart, on Friday, 20th February,

GATES, BOOTHS, CARDS, STALLS, STABLING.

For the Pakuranga Hunt Club's Summer Meeting, to take place at Ellerslie Racecourse on Saturday, 28th February,

WHITFORD PARK ANNUAL RACE MEETING,

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1891.

Steamer leaves the Queen Street Wharf at 9 a.m.

Wm. L. LOCKHART, Secretary.



CANTERBURY JOCKEY CLUB. SPRING MEETING, 1891.

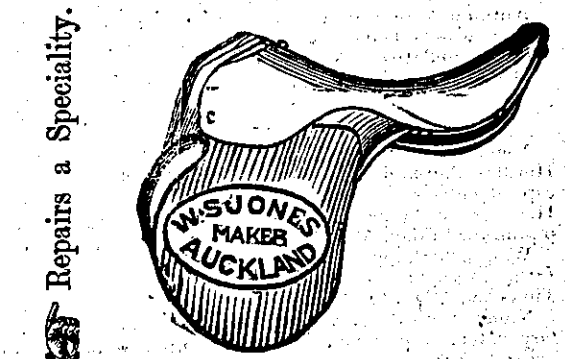
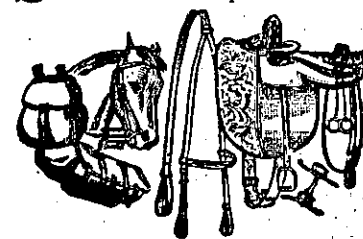
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ENTRIES Monday, March 2nd, 1891, at 4 p.m. W. H. E. WANKLYN, Secretary.

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