

RANDOM NOTES.

"A chief's amang ye takin' notes,
An' faith he'll prent' 'em.

Mr "amusing" friend of "Passing Notes" is at it again, and appears to have forgotten the last Random shot which he received. The term amusing must, however, be accepted *cum grano salis*, as the risible faculties of his "numerous" readers are affected, not by the facetious qualities of the writing, but at the insane and persistent efforts of its author to make it appear so. This suckling Junius takes the TABLET to task for the character of its selections, and with a ray of intelligence, which at times visits the dullest intellects, strives by courting a castigation in the TABLET to be rescued from the oblivion in which he is buried in the columns of the 'Witness.' Now, I will be merciful to him against his will, and, like the negro Demosthenes, show him that I am too magnanimous to strike at weakness, and, therefore, grant him the mercy of my silence. Had I not, however, come to this resolution, and determined steadfastly to adhere thereto, I should have been inclined to cavil, not at one of the individual "selections" of which his "original" column is composed, but at the series of articles *in globo*. I should have felt inclined to tell him that his tastes and the public were very much at variance; that what he flatters himself to be originality, is only such as being the emanation of an Original of an unique stamp, and that his productions when viewed through the large end of the telescope, like the sun's rays dazzle and confuse with their brilliancy, but, when seen by the reverse, are too far off to be intelligible. This and much more could I say, but, as I have promised to be silent, and my lips being sealed, and my pen powerless, I will defer till a future time any remarks I might have wished to make on the subject.

And so Otago's most "rising" young orator and his colleagues—the great Fish and the smaller fry—have been compelled to rise from their seats much against their will. Scarcely had the Hon. Horace mounted the State Coach, and comfortably tucked the Government rug round his Ministerial feet; and his passengers found places to suit their comfort, when himself and his cargo have been peremptorily ordered to descend. Alas! for human greatness. Not even the passionate eloquence of the newly fledged Commissioner of Railways could avert the stroke, and the Ministry of Reform which was to save the Province from the ruin to which it was fast drifting, have only been allowed to shuffle, but not deal the cards. In the words of the inspired young orator in his Dying Speech, who knows what they might have turned out to be had they had but time. They who, in the short time in which they have had the public coffers into which to dip, have dealt out "justice" with no niggard hand, and whose hooks were freighted with golden baits, have shared no better fate than their miserly predecessors. Who, in listening to the impassioned tones of the Ministerial mouthpiece, as he indignantly forged link after link of the chain which was to weigh down the Reid-Executive, could have imagined that the member for Caversham would cause them to melt like dew in the sunshine. But true it was, and in the calm, logical, and convincing speech of the late Provincial Solicitor—a speech which, by its utter absence of either personal or vindictive motives, stood out in bold relief in comparison with that of their accuser—unmistakably convicted the member for Dunedin of the *suppression eri*, if not actually of the *suggestio falsi*. It is somewhat strange that after the elaborate details of the arduous labors that would devolve upon the Minister of Railways, after proof of the necessity that the office should be filled by a young man of activity, industry, and intelligence, and then the announcement by Mr. Fish of the extraordinary amount of work performed by Mr. Fish since he has been at the head of the department, the Council did not take the hint, but sacrificed the future prosperity of the country by the expulsion from office of such a prize. Of course, that gentleman did not care to occupy the Treasury Benches for one hour—at least he said so—and it appeared there was a majority who shared in the wish, and did their best to gratify so worthy a young man, and as a consequence the piscatorial lines are cast in troubled waters. After the modest *resumé* of his labors since the assumption of office, an Executive without so admirable a working partner must be viewed in the light of a national calamity, but amidst this universal wailing, I venture to say that there will not be many wet eyes found poring over the books of the Railway Department.

PRINCESS' THEATRE.

During the interval between the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Hoskins and the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Bates, the management of the Princess have maintained their claim to patronage by the introduction of pieces new to a Dunedin audience. In the earlier portion of the week the sensational Hibernian drama entitled "Last Life" was presented, with great success. On Wednesday night "Rob Roy" was produced, Mr. Steele being the Macgregor, and Mrs. Stoneham his wife. It might be generally supposed that the latter is a character beyond the range of that lady, but it is only fair to say that excepting a few defects for which she is scarcely accountable, her rendering of the character deserved much credit. Mr. Steele, as the lawless freebooter, surpassed our expectations of him, and proved that to be always effective he requires but to make the effort. Without doubt, however, the best sustained character of the piece was the Bailie Nicol Jarvie of Mr. Keogh. If we except the Major Galbraith of Mr. Musgrave and the Matie of Miss Stoneham, the remaining characters were scarcely up to the mark. The public may look forward to a treat during the next few weeks in the re-appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Bates, and we trust to see the management receive the patronage which their spirited conduct deserves, in securing artistes of ability, thus enabling them to produce entertainments of a high-class character.

CONCERT AT LAWRENCE.

MR. AND MRS. WOOD'S long talked-of concert, in aid of the funds of the Tuapeka Hospital, came off on Monday evening. The concert was held in the Catholic school, the attendance, owing to a variety of reasons, was not very large, about one hundred persons comprising the audience. At a quarter of an hour after the advertised time, the concert commenced with an overture, played in excellent style, by Mr. and Mrs. Wood, on the violin and pianoforte. The local portion of the entertainment commenced with the song, "Lo, here the sabre," from the opera of the "Grand Duchess," Mr. Corrison sang the solo, and the children of St. Patrick's School sang the chorus. Ballad, "The Arab Steed," Mr. Wood; this piece was rapturously encored. Comic duet, "Le John," Miss Topsy Clark and Master James Harris. Song, "Paddy's Long Dream," Mr. Wood. Ballad and chorus, "We meet again," Mr. Corrison, with chorus by Miss Clark and Mr. Wood. Humorous reading from "Valentine Vox," Mr. Wood. The selection was the well-known bedroom scene, where Vox and Mr. Jonas Beagle kept awake for hours by Vox imitating the howling of cats in the bedroom. The reading was well rendered and created much amusement. Pianoforte duet, "The canary bird quadrilles," Mrs. Wood and Miss Clark. A very sweet piece of music which we would much like to hear repeated by the Quadrille Band. Vocal duet, "Very suspicious" Miss Clark and Mr. Wood.

This concluded the first part of the concert, and after a few minutes interval the second was commenced by selections of popular airs on the pianoforte and violin, by Mr. and Mrs. Wood. Song, "Off to Old Ireland," Mr. Wood. This piece was substituted for the song mentioned on the programme by special request. Song and chorus, "The Minstrel Boy"—solo by Miss M. A. Fahey, chorus by the Company. Song, "Awfully Clever," by Master James Harris, who received a recall, and sang in response, "What is the use of repining." Duet, harmonicon and piano selections of Scottish airs, by Mr. and Mrs. Wood. This duet called forth an encore, which was kindly responded to. Song, "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep," Mr. Corrison. Character Song, "Captain Jinks," Mr. Wood (in character). A recall was again given, Mr. Wood singing "Nancy Barr." Song, "Driven from Home," Miss Topsy Clark. Song, "Good Evening," Mr. Wood. This was the last piece on the programme; and on its conclusion, Mr. Wood thanked the audience for their attendance, and retired amidst a storm of applause.

Mr. Carew, the President of the Hospital, then rose and thanked Mr. and Mrs. Wood, the amateurs, and the company present, for their endeavours to assist the funds of the Hospital, and spoke in glowing terms of the talent and energy displayed by Mr. and Mrs. Wood.

Mr. Wood, on again appearing before the curtain by the constant calls of the audience, said: It is very gratifying to me to find the efforts of myself, wife, and friends, and pupils, so warmly appreciated. The success of the evening's entertainment has been certainly a pleasing surprise to me, as many difficulties occurred since I first offered my services to the Hospital Committee to militate against its success. It is always a pleasure for me to assist in entertainments of this description, as the task is light, when our efforts meet with success. Again, on behalf of Mrs. Wood, Mr. Corrison, the children, and myself, I thank you for the kind manner in which you have shown your appreciation of our services (applause).

Comment upon amateur entertainments is looked upon, to a certain extent, as out of place, but the few criticisms we intend passing are of a favourable kind. The concert throughout proved great musical taste in Mr. Wood in his selection of the different pieces, and nothing but thorough hard practice had brought some of the youthful performers to the state of efficiency they exhibited. Mr. Wood's singing was capital, and in "The Arab Steed" he showed vocal talents far above mediocrity. Without presuming to dictate, we should recommend him to follow the higher class of ballad singing for which his voice and taste are much better adapted than for comic songs. The instrumental music rendered by Mr. and Mrs. Wood was really excellent, and drew forth the warmest encomiums of the audience. Mr. Corrison, who is new to a Lawrence audience, acquitted himself very well, and although he is not possessed of a very strong voice he shows evidence of musical culture. Miss Topsy Clark, who, though young, has contributed to amateur concerts for some years past, promises, under the able tuition of the present teachers, to attain more than average proficiency in the musical art. Master James Harris is also a singer of some promise, and he is improving at every appearance. The chorus, who numbered thirty-seven, are, as yet, "green," but, should Mr. Wood persevere with them, they will form an excellent nucleus for the rendering of concert music on a large scale. We must here express a wish to hear this company at no distant date, and as Mr. Wood has so kindly offered to lend his services when required, we hope, without trespassing too much on his good nature, he will undertake the management of a similar concert at the first convenient opportunity.—'Tuapeka Times.'

At a recent sale of curiosities in Paris, a Turkish scimitar of the 16th century was knocked down to Baron Rothschild for £2000; it was originally bought by the late owner for £10.

On the 12th April a veteran officer, Mr. John Pollen, eighty-four years of age, was thrown from his horse and killed near Dubbo (New South Wales), and the 'Dispatch' has learned that the deceased gentleman was at the memorable ball in Brussels when the distant booming of artillery filled the room with consternation, and summoned the British officers suddenly from the brilliant scene of happy revelry to a scene of glory, certainly, but where they had to enter upon a work of fearful carnage. Mr. Pollen long survived the dangers of the battlefield, though he came not out unscathed, for he bears to the grave the scar of a sabre-wound across the forehead, and we believe another of a bullet wound in the breast; but died at last almost unknown, unheeded, and alone, in the Australian bush.