

Mr. M. J. Doyle, manager of the *Timaru Herald*, with Mrs. Doyle left on Friday by the *Ulimaroa* on a health recruiting visit to Australia.

On Tuesday evening last an excellent concert was given in St. Joseph's Hall to a large number of seamen of the steamer *Tekoa*, under the auspices of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Those who contributed to an enjoyable programme were:—Messrs. F. Dwan, A. J. Fogarty, Simpson, P. Lawlor, Loftus, E. Reade, F. Whittaker, R. Taylor, Burnette, Hackett, E. Murphy, and "Albert." Mr. F. Halley was an excellent accompanist. Rev. Father O'Donnell addressed a few words to the seamen, expressing the pleasure of meeting them, and the hope that he and the members of the society would again have the pleasure when the ship touched Wellington on some future date. Mr. McNulty suitably responded on behalf of the ship's crew. Special thanks was accorded the performers and those responsible for the arrangements for the successful evening, namely—Messrs. J. Hyland, W. B. Gamble, and R. S. Dwyer.

OPENING OF NEW SCHOOL AT ELTHAM.

His Grace Archbishop O'Shea will bless and open a new convent-school at Eltham on Wednesday next, July 11. In the evening of the same date his Grace is to be tendered a public reception at a concert in the local Town Hall. Rev. Father N. Moore (pastor of the district) extends a hearty invitation to all who can possibly attend either or both functions.

NEW SCHOOL FOR KILBIRNIE.

There was held at Kilbirnie, recently, a meeting of the parishioners to consider ways and means of making some necessary improvements (writes a correspondent). Father Connolly pointed out that the building which had up till now served as church and school was altogether inadequate. Sometime ago the pressure was relieved by securing a cottage next door and converting it into an infants school. After some discussion it was decided that a new school was absolutely necessary. When this was provided the present building could be enlarged and made a suitable church. As there already exists a debt of £2000, it required stout hearts to set to work to wipe this out and get on with the new scheme. It was decided for this purpose to hold a bazaar, and run in conjunction with it an art union. The art union books are now available, and very generous prizes are offered—£300 gold specimens. A novel feature is the giving of a cash prize of £50 to the one selling most tickets.

DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND (From our own correspondent.)

June 22.

The musical and dramatic entertainment given by the pupils of the Sacred Heart College, Ponsonby, in aid of the Takapuna Orphanage, was held in St. Benedict's Hall on Friday, June 15. Although the night was a very cold and rainy one, there was a large audience, and all present thoroughly enjoyed the boys' varied and delightful programme of choruses, recitations, piano, violin, flute and vocal solos, instrumental trio, and scenes from "Merchant of Venice," and "Much Ado About Nothing."

A very enjoyable concert under the auspices of the St. Patrick's Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society was given recently at the Costley Home. Songs were contributed by Mrs. Monihan, Misses McKean, Johnston, Smith, and Elmlie, Messrs. Duffin, Volkner, Hogan, Austin and Dixon; Messrs. McGrail and Moodabe gave recitations. Mr. Whitty and pupils performed several dances, and Messrs. North and Young a banjo and ukulele duet.

Mr. James Mahoney and Miss Nora Mahoney, who are leaving the Thistle Hotel, where they have been so immensely popular for the last five years, were presented by the staff with a silver tea service, tray, and gold-mounted fountain pen. In making the presentation, Mr. Willie Meehan said:—"On behalf of your staff I have been requested to express our sincere regret at your retirement from the Thistle Hotel, Auckland, and also to express our appreciation of the kindly relationship that has always existed between your employees and yourselves. We are conscious of the many kindly acts you have performed for us, and we trust you may long be spared to enjoy good health. You carry away with you our very best wishes,

and we are sure that no staff ever had, or could have more kind and considerate employers. I have been requested by them to ask your acceptance of this little memento to mark the great respect and high regard in which you are held by them." Mr. J. Mahoney and Miss Mahoney then feelingly responded, and in the course of their appreciative remarks, thanked the staff (many of whom had been with them during their whole term) and said, a great deal of the popularity of the "Thistle" was due to the excellent workers they had been fortunate in having. On Wednesday, June 20, a number of friends of Mr. and Miss Mahoney assembled in the dining-room of the Thistle and presented Mr. Mahoney with a travelling case and Miss Mahoney with a silver epergne. Mr. Brockway-Rogers made the presentation, and many speeches expressive of regret at their departure from the Thistle were made.

June 29.

Among the passengers who arrived from Sydney on Tuesday, June 26, was Miss Amy Castles, the gifted Australian dramatic soprano, who is visiting New Zealand after an absence of four years, during which she has added greatly to her reputation. Miss Castles has brought a concert party with her, and it is her intention to spend about three months in the Dominion. Since Miss Castles visited New Zealand her tours have been world wide, including a very successful tour of the United States, and a comprehensive tour of her native country. In the course of a brief chat on the Marama, Miss Castles referred to her experiences on the Continent prior to, and up to the outbreak of war. The statement by an Australian musician now in London to the effect that Australia is practically unknown to the Continental musical world was brought under the visitor's notice, and she expressed genuine surprise, pointing out that in addition to Dame Melba, she herself had appeared for two years at the Imperial Opera House at Vienna, in which city Lalla Miranda and many other Australian singers and instrumentalists had been well received. It will be remembered that it was Miss Castles who was chosen to appear in the title role of Puccini's opera, "Madame Butterfly," at the Imperial Opera House at Vienna, having made her debut in grand opera some years earlier at Cologne in Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, and Faust. It was while at Vienna that the prima donna journeyed to the Hague, at the request of the Queen of the Netherlands, to sing at the performance given by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. At the outbreak of war Miss Castles managed to get out of Austria and went to Australia, where she engaged in war work, later touring America, returning to Australia to appear in grand opera about four years ago. Miss Castles again goes to America after the present tour. The prima donna is accompanied by her sister Eileen, who has a wide reputation as a lyric soprano, and will assist with the New Zealand tour. On Wednesday, June 27, Miss Castles and her concert party entertained the Sisters of Mercy and their pupils at the Convent of Mercy, St. Mary's, Ponsonby. A thoroughly delightful treat it was.

The following appeared in the *Young Citizen* for May 31, 1923:—

THE ORPHANS' S.O.S.

It is now some weeks since an appeal was made in "Our Own Corner" for toys and books for the orphans who lost their possessions in the Takapuna Orphanage fire. Although the general response has not been as good as we had hoped, I am glad to be able to tell you that at least in one school—the Grafton—the pupils have showed a most generous spirit, and as a result, a large parcel of books and toys was recently taken to the Sisters of Mercy at Vermont Street. Among the toys were a number of woollen balls and golliwogs, also a big cat, made by the pupils themselves. The gifts were handed out by the teacher to the little orphans, and there were many childish screams of joy as the toys were unpacked. Another kindly gift which must be mentioned was a parcel of story-books collected by Joyce Minns, one of the prize winners in the last essay competition. For these gifts the orphanage authorities are deeply grateful. The need still exists, and any further gifts will be gladly received by the Sisters of Mercy, Vermont Street, Ponsonby.

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