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Anything AND Everything

"HAWKS do not pick out hawk's een" is a trite and true proverb, but seemingly it does not apply to every species of biped, feathered and otherwise. For example there are Jays. Richard Jay and William Jay have been tearing and plucking at each other's optics with relentless fury. They began by cooing and pecking mildly as a pair of amorous turtle doves, but ended like tiger cats in a battle *à outrance*, in which the fur flew all over the columns of the *Star*. Perhaps the latter metaphor is the more appropriate, as both combatants belong to the *fee-line* race! The *Star* at length realised that fact, and acting upon the Kilkenny precedent, flung the pair upon its advertising clothes line at 2s. 6d. per inch. Result—two tails ragged and torn, a long and a short one! Readers have at least enjoyed the struggle, and we trust have garnered some fragments from the magnificent display of elegant Latin and recondite literature. Such erudition and such taste!

MR. WATKIN's fine picture "At Bay" recalls a couple of pig anecdotes never before published. In days of old when pork was the chief dietary staple of the early colonists, the Registrar of the Supreme Court, the Sheriff, and the Collector of Customs resided in the suburbs within a stone's throw of one another. A Maori with a fat porker, tempted the Collector to buy. The bargain was struck, and piggy tied up with a flax rope in the back yard. When all was quiet the dusky vendor whistled gently to the pig, who quickly gnawed through his bonds and rejoined his old master. The latter played the same wily game with the Registrar, and as a climax sold piggy a third time to the Sheriff. The Collector, presently missing his porker, sought tidings of him from the Registrar, who thereupon discovered his loss. The two gentlemen immediately repaired to the Sheriff, whom they found also lamenting and threatening a *capias* against some person or persons unknown. It presently dawned upon the three gentlemen that they, as well as the porker, had been thrice sold, and that the dusky Antolycus had got their money. How many times more piggy was sold, and who ultimately became his fortunate possessor, was never discovered. Anecdote number two refers to a struggling settler, who, finding his cultivations rooted up and devoured by the pigs of his Maori neighbours, naturally felt injured. The Maoris at once admitted their liability, and as *utu* brought a gaunt specimen of the true Cook breed. Thinking it better than nothing, the settler accepted the proffered compensation. In the night, however, the Maori owner called his pig home and introduced him to a patch of *kumeras*, in which he played great havoc. Next morning the Maori brought back the pig, and in turn demanded compensation from the settler for the damage which his porker had wrought. The unfortunate *pakeha* was only too glad to return the "Grecian gift" and cry quits.

MR H. M. STANLEY.

To-NIGHT the famous explorer, 'journalist, correspondent, and author makes his bow to an Auckland audience. Around the personality of so distinguished a hero there must of necessity hover a certain halo of romantic interest. It is all very well for the school of arm chair geographers to formulate marvellous theories, but theories they must ever remain were it not for the indomitable pluck, energy and administrative genius of men such as the lecturer, whose brilliant achievements are familiar as household words. It may interest our readers to hear that 18 months ago Mr. H. M. Stanley married Dorothy Tennent, a cousin of Colonel Carré. The great explorer has as a pilot Mr. R. S. Smythe, the much travelled one, and the connection is singularly in accordance with the fitness of things. Mr. Stanley gives only three lectures, on this, Friday, and Saturday evenings.

An amusing *contretemps* occurred at one of the Kowalski concerts while the great pianist was playing a brilliant solo. At a somewhat unexpected pause of the music, a sound resembling a sort of guffaw-sob came from the direction of the pit. M. Kowalski stopped dead and shot a thunder and lightning glance at the offender, but a moment later resumed his fine performance, a benevolent expression of Christian forgiveness gradually stealing over his genial features. The incident reminds one of two plain Scotch farmers, who somehow got to a country ball, and finding things slow, adjourned to the buffet. "Eh; Sandy mon," inquired one, "did you ever taste an ice?" "Na, Alick!" "Coom awa and we'll hae one!" Alick, the experienced one, negotiated the frigid delicacy, but Sandy began to chew, and a valse at that moment concluding, allowed the assembly to hear, in accents of woe, the exclamation, "Oh-o-o-o! ma ro-o-otten tooth!"

Music & Drama.

Spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici?

THE "MESSIAH."

ON Tuesday evening last week the Auckland Choral Society gave their annual performance of Handel's immortal oratorio "Messiah," in a style and with a measure of excellence which merit high praise indeed. Performers and audience alike mustered in full strength. The band numbered thirty-eight, and the voices comprised forty-seven sopranos, thirty-three contraltos, eighteen tenors, and thirty-eight basses. A strong cast of soloists included Miss Murray and Miss F. Harding, sopranos; Mrs. G. Coates, contralto; Mr. Martin, tenor; and Mr. P. Dufaur basso, who each and all acquitted themselves admirably. I was especially gratified to see my prophesy fulfilled in the wonderful and marked improvement displayed by the instrumentalists, who under the incisive beat of the conductor, and the careful leadership of Herr Tutschka, did their work on the whole with good tune and excellent pre-

cision. Of course some lapses were noticeable, but one does not expect perfection from an amateur band. However, they can and will speedily do even better. The overture and pastoral symphony were rendered in a manner which reflects the greatest credit on the painstaking and talented trainer. Throughout, the choruses were splendidly given. In attack, leads, light and shade, volume, and steadiness, the society has never done better. The bass leads were especially crisp and good. So equal was the work that it is difficult to pick out any one chorus for especial praise. I will therefore simply say that the singers have deserved well of their country. Among the soloists I must award the palm to Mr. Wm. Martin, who sang the whole of the tenor music with exquisite taste and in accordance with the interpretations which tradition sanctions. He has improved wonderfully in articulation and enunciation, and his equal and reliable voice was heard with telling effect in "Comfort ye," "Every valley," and especially in the plaintive recitative "Thy rebuke." He also sang "But Thou didst not leave," with great taste and expression; but I have an old-fashioned prejudice against assigning soprano music to a tenor voice. Mr. Percy Dufaur made his debut as an oratorio singer, and his fine voice and crisp delivery, especially of the staccato runs, which were splendidly executed, won for him a brilliant and undeniable success. His "Thus saith the Lord," and "But who may abide," although not quite in accordance with tradition, were excellently rendered. "The trumpet shall sound," with the exception of a slight unsteadiness in one or two passages, was quite a feat of vocalisation when the difficulties of the *bravura aria* are considered. Mr. Gribbin assisted with that terribly difficult instrument the valve trumpet, and acquitted himself very well indeed. The music is in places full of passages in the highest register of the instrument, and when we remember that there are only two or three persons living who attempt to play the slide-trumpet, no one would dream of withholding high praise from Mr. Gribbin for his gallant and skilful rendering of so stupendous a task. Undoubtedly Mr. Dufaur's greatest success of the evening was the stirring aria "Why do the nations," which quite electrified his audience. Miss Murray, for a debutante, quite covered herself with glory. She sings accurately and crisply, attacking her intervals with decision, and avoiding an undue use of the *portamento*. With care and study she will be a valuable acquisition to our vocal resources. Gifted with a true soprano voice of somewhat limited compass, and a refined and pure natural taste, she should cultivate those rare qualities, being especially on her guard against anything like unduly straining the vocal chords which of course takes "the varnish" off the timbre. Her enunciation is a pattern of distinctness, and I fully expect her to fulfil the high expectations aroused by her capital performance in the "Messiah." All her work was well and equally rendered. Mrs. G. Coates sang the contralto solos very successfully indeed, the fine deep notes in her lower register telling with great effect. "He was despised" was rendered with marked taste and expression, but the accompaniment was in places somewhat faulty. "Oh, Thou that tellest," was well and equally sung throughout, but also was shorn of its full merit by occasional unsteady-