

beyond their grasp. Mr. Mumford possesses a good, natural voice, but its lack of training, and his dreary conception of the part assigned to him, made it positively painful to listen to his rendering of the recitatives. Mrs. Hagarty certainly deserves great credit for the manner in which she performed her part, the rendering of "With Verdure Clad" was most tasteful, and by it she has no doubt added to her popularity as a soloist. In the choruses the parts were fairly well balanced, the only noticeable point of weakness being in the altos. The choruses were uniformly well rendered both as to time and tune, but there was an utter lack of that finish in shading which distinguishes artistic from merely mechanical performances. Considering all the adverse circumstances, Mr. S. Porter deserves a great deal of credit, but if the society desires to win a reputation for good musical work, three things will have to be borne in mind, first, the members will have to pay more attention to the conductor's instructions with reference to the observance of expression marks, second, the services of the best soloists here or elsewhere should be secured even if these have to be paid for, and, third, the orchestral work must be greatly improved, or it would be better to dispense with it altogether. Mr. S. Porter is a faithful, hard-working conductor, and the members of the society should not place upon his shoulders the responsibility of making a concert a success, when they individually and collectively could do so much to aid him beyond that which they now do.

Collins' Hill became a well worn toboggan slide during the delightful weather of the latter part of last week, and the moonlight party—the first this winter—given by the R. A. officers, was as perfect as a lovely night and a goodly company could make it. The frosty air felt fresh and invigorating, and the moon sailed across a cloudless sky, lighting the white floor beneath and the pretty blanketed forms moving up and down the slopes. Two big bonfires at the foot of the hill to the right lent a cheerful bit of warm coloring to the scene, and somehow gave an impression that there might be found comforts of an inward, as well as an outward nature. This impression proved correct later on, when the hungry and thirsty gathered round the blazing logs, and ate and drank with that appreciation of good things that only such wholesome exercise can give. What a thing to be regretted is the want of snow this winter! One such party makes us eager for another—and lo! the snow disappears, and with it any chance of seeing again a picture I have in my mind, of two young white-coated figures, climbing the hill, side by side, laughing, rosy and happy—good to look upon, and a goodly thing one always wants to see again. There was a small private tobogganing party on Thursday afternoon, which was much enjoyed—but the charm of the moonlight was not there!

The Children's Carnival in the evening proved a greater success than the previous one for grown up folks, and the dresses were for the most part new and original—the judgment passed upon the best costumes for the prizes gave general satisfaction; and that the recipients of the prizes went to bed richer and happier than the night before is a forgone conclusion.

On Saturday afternoon at 4 o'clock the square in Wellington Barracks was dotted with numerous sleighs, of all sorts and kinds; from a four-in-hand to a small—very small—cutter, in which, however, two people found plenty of room to sit quite comfortably. There was tea and talk to a considerable extent before the sleighs were well underway. The afternoon was everything that could be desired, and the whole party set out looking as bright as the day itself. Bellevue Hotel, Bedford, was reached all too quickly, followed by more tea, a nice little dance, a capital supper—and then we started on our return drive in the moonlight. The party was given by the bachelors of the Duke of Wellington's Regt., and was quite impromptu. This is the first time we have seen our new friends "at home" (or abroad?) and the general verdict is that they thoroughly understand how to make their guests put in a "real good time."

The concert of the Orpheus Club on Tuesday evening last presented an attractive programme, and drew a large and appreciative audience. Miss Louise Laine was well received, and the several songs rendered by her displayed to advantage her sweet soft voice and the artistic finish of her execution, but the selection of No. 11, "In Autumn," was injudicious, as the rendering of a song of that character requires an appreciative musical soul, which Miss Laine has so far given no evidence of possessing. Mrs. Taylor's rendition of "Resolution" was sweetly sad, and of "The old way," decidedly fetching. Mrs. Taylor's sympathetic voice always touches a responsive chord in the heart of the audience. Dr. Slayter certainly deserves special mention for the manner in which he sang Mr. Porter's charming song "Severance," and it has certainly served to freshen the laurels which he won upon the stage a decade since. Mr. Boak has unquestionably an excellent voice, but as a soloist he is uncertain, and, whether from nervousness or from want of care, he always makes his most ardent admirers regret that he had consented to sing. In a choir Mr. Boak is a tower of strength. The cello solos of Herr Mahr were superbly rendered, and his instrument became such a part of himself that it breathed forth in its deep, rich tones the warm appreciative soul of the artist. No one can hear Herr Mahr's cello playing without being the better for having heard it. Of the manner in which the choruses were rendered the writer can say little, as his position in the hall placed him at a disadvantage as a listener, but several features creditable to the Club were noticed, among these may be mentioned the very charming manner in which the theme, taken up by the tenors in "Then round about the starry throne," was repeated in the dark, rich tones of the altos; also the power of the fortissimo chords in the "Chorus of Bacchantes," as well as the very effective unison passage in the "Song of the Vikings." The Club with the Ladies' Auxilliary is far and away the best choral organization that we have had in the city in modern

times, and Mr. Porter, the modest conductor, can take to himself as much of the credit as his modesty will allow him to absorb.

COMMERCIAL.

The condition of general trade, though not active, has been satisfactory in the main. In most staple lines the movement has been steady and, for the time of the year and the state of the weather, has reached a fair volume. In some instances there appears a tendency towards improvement, and in others a better trade is claimed than a year ago. The import returns for January indicate a larger inward movement and seem to reveal that importers have entered the year with confidence in the future of trade.

In the matter of payments there has been no serious cause of complaint and maturing obligations have been in general promptly met. This fact has imparted considerable confidence to trade circles generally, and inspired our wholesale merchants with brighter hopes for the future. Responding to this improvement in the commercial outlook, bank and other securities have been more sought by investors at a considerable advance in prices. The whole business situation, which was full of dark forebodings a few weeks ago, has been completely changed and is now replete with signs of health and coming prosperity. We have a confident hope that this change for the better will prove to be permanent.

A meeting of the business men of Halifax was held a few days ago to discuss the situation, and a temporary organization under the name of the "Merchants' Association" was effected. There would or could be no necessity or field for such an organization if the Chamber of Commerce were a live and efficient body. But it is not. There is no inducement to young, energetic, active business men to join the Chamber of Commerce as it is, and has for some time been organized—that is to say as a political cock-pit.

We do not believe that two associations, both professedly working for the advancement of Halifax, are needed here, and we hope to see them amalgamated, but it must be on the lines of the new, and not of the old association. Railway and shipping rates for freight, duties, civic, provincial and dominion taxes, and our banking currency, are all matters that intimately affect our business interests, and that all our merchants ought to frequently discuss. There is plenty of room for intelligent discussion and improvement in all these lines, and we hail with pleasure any indication that they will receive the attention which their importance demands.

Bradstreet's report of the week's failures:

	Week	Prev.	Weeks corresponding to			Failures for the year to date.			
	Feb. 15, week.	1889	1888	Feb. 15	1886	1889	1888	1887	1886
United States..	311	265	243	244	214	2182	1929	1978	2093
Canada.....	46	46	44	35	26	274	289	196	192

The following are the Assignments and Business Changes in this Province during the past week:—Chas. Wilson, confectionery, Parraburo, N. S., sold out to R. McNamara; James Munro & Son, tinmiths, Truro, N. S., failed; H. H. Harrison, painter, Dartmouth, N. S., closed out his business there; Chas. Fraser (estate of) general store, Springhill, N. S., stock in trade, &c., advertised for sale by tender; Gillis & McDonald, grocers, Sydney, N. S., Allan Gillis & Hector McDonald co-partnership registered 1st Feb., 1889; W. D. Harrington, grocer, Halifax, sold out to Drake & Nisbet; T. B. Dane & Son, tailors and clothiers, Yarmouth, sold out to G. Murray Dane, style unchanged; L. E. Prowse, dry goods, Charlottetown, P. E. I., admitted Benj. C. Prowse, dry goods, partner as Prowse Bros.; McGregor & Knight, books and stationery, sold out to Thos. Knight, who continues business under style of Knight & Co.

DRY GOODS.—The condition of the dry goods trade is, on the whole, satisfactory. The development of the spring business has been quite up to expectations and some houses claim that it shows a larger volume than it did last year. The delivery of goods has been somewhat hampered by the uncertain state of the weather, and the consequent wretched condition of the country roads. Domestic manufactures appear to be on a sound basis. The advance in cottons has been well sustained and, from all that can be gathered, seems to be of a permanent character. It is understood that the mills are carrying much less stock than they did a year ago, and that they have a satisfactory amount of work on hand. Woollen mills now report that the orders for fall goods are more numerous and for larger quantities than for several years, which practically assures a busy season for this branch.

IRON, HARDWARE AND METALS.—The market for pig iron has been firmer in sympathy with the advance on the other side. Travellers are nearly all on the road and some of them report meeting with good success. Prices of shelf goods are not likely to be any higher—in fact slight concessions have been made on one or two lines. In the wholesale hardware trade a fair seasonable business is in progress. In bar iron the market is unsettled owing to the extra duty on wrought scrap iron for which the Londonderry Iron Company ask. The Glasgow market for warrants has advanced from 40s. 10d. per ton to 42s. 6d., being a rise of 1s. 8d. within the last fortnight. The advance is however said to be purely speculative.

BREADSTUFFS.—Special grades of flour have continued in request, resulting in a fairly active business in such at firm prices, but in other respects the market has a quiet look. The bulk of the stock on hand is of grades that are not just now in active demand, and prices are no more than steady. The demand for choice bakers' continues to be fair. Beerbohm's cable says:—"Cargoes off coast, wheat steady, corn nil. Do. on passage and for shipment, wheat quieter; corn slow. Mixed American maize, present and following month, 20s. 3d. Liverpool spot wheat slow; do. corn rather easier. Weather in England, sudden change to mild weather. French country markets firm." The *Mark Lane Express*, in its weekly review of the grain trade, says: "English wheats continue depressed. Foreign wheat is more active and firmer, but quotations are unchanged. At to day's