

Music and Drama.



NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS.
EASTER HOLIDAYS.
 Cheap Excursion Tickets at the rate of 2d per mile (first class and 1d per mile second class (minimum 4 and 2 respectively) will be issued between all stations from TUESDAY, 23rd March, to MONDAY, 4th April, available for return up to and including TUESDAY, 3rd May, 1904.
 BY ORDER.



WAIKATO CENTRAL AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION'S SHOW AT CAMBRIDGE.

ON 23rd AND 24th MARCH, 1904.

CHEAP EXCURSION TICKETS, available for return on MONDAY, 23rd March, will be issued from any station to Cambridge on 23rd, 24th, and 25th March, at the rate of 2d per mile first class and 1d per mile second class (minimum 4 and 2 respectively). Mileage counted one way only.

WEDNESDAY, 23rd MARCH, 1904.
 A Special Train to convey stock and exhibits will leave Te Awamutu for Cambridge at 7.30 a.m.

THURSDAY, 24th MARCH, 1904.
 A Special Train will leave Auckland at 9.45 a.m., Newmarket 6.57, Mercer 9.23, Hamilton 11.20 a.m., arriving Cambridge 12.15 p.m., returning leaving Cambridge at 5 p.m., arriving Auckland 10.10 p.m. These trains will not stop at Westfield or Runciman.

A train will leave Te Kuiti at 6.40 a.m., to Awamutu 8.30, Hamilton 10.0, arriving Cambridge 11.0 a.m., returning leaving Cambridge at 5.30 p.m., arriving Te Kuiti 9.5 p.m.
 The 7.0 a.m. train from Rotorna to Frankton, and the 11.10 a.m. train from Frankton to Rotorna will not run. A special train will leave Rotorna at 6.30 a.m., arriving Cambridge 12.15 p.m., returning leaving Cambridge at 5 p.m., arriving Rotorna 11 p.m.
 A Special Train will leave Thames at 7.15 a.m., to Arua 9.23, arriving Cambridge 11.40 a.m., returning leaving Cambridge at 5.15 p.m., arriving Thames 9.25 p.m.
 The 12.10 p.m. train (Cambridge to Ruakura) will NOT run. A train to convey stock and exhibits will leave Cambridge for Te Awamutu at 3.15 p.m.
 For further particulars, see Posters and Handbills.

BY ORDER.



SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF COAL.
 1904-5.

Railway Department, Head Office, Wellington, March 8, 1904.
 Written Tenders will be received at this Office up to Noon of THURSDAY, 24th March, 1904, for the supply and delivery of New Zealand lignite or Brown Coal for the New Zealand Railways.
 Specifications and forms of tender to be obtained at the Railway Manager's Offices at Auckland, Dunedin, and Invercargill.
 Tenders to be addressed to the General Manager, New Zealand Railways, Wellington, and to be marked outside "Tender for Coal."
 The lowest or any tender will not necessarily be accepted, and telegraphic tenders will not be entertained.
 By order, T. RONAYNE, General Manager N.Z. Railways.

Looking back on many, many years of professional theatre-going, the writer hereof does not remember a play which achieved so instantaneous and dominating a success on a first production as that secured by Mr. Barrie's marvellously clever play, "The Admirable Crichton," when first produced in Auckland on Saturday last. More noisily demonstrative audiences one can remember in plenty, likewise houses deeply and silently thrilled by that culmination of emotion which sends chill shivers down the spine, but for complete understanding between the stage and itself, for keen, quiet enjoyment of humour, and instantaneous sympathy with the author's whimsical mood, and absolute appreciation of his wit and satire, Saturday's audience at His Majesty's Theatre, Auckland, would be hard indeed to equal. There was veritably a perceptible exultation in the atmosphere after the first act, a sort of drawing together of the audience as if all were saying to all: Now, isn't this truly delightful? Isn't this something to tickle the intellectual palate in the way a theatre should, and are we not already raised above our common mental plane by the stimulation of Mr. Barrie's admirably conceived and perfectly polished whimsicality? Even the extraordinary between-the-acts-drink habit gave way before it. Not for years have I seen so few leave the theatre. They sat still to realise, and perhaps analyse their enjoyment. A victory of mind over matter indeed. Barrie's wit stimulated as no ardent spirit could. Great as was the vogue of "The Light That Failed"—and heavy as must have been the treasury returns—it is already certain with two more nights to run, that "The Admirable Crichton" will easily beat the record established by Kipling's play for His Majesty's Theatre, and this is remarkable; for while "The Light That Failed" was a play which knocked so directly on the heart as to insure success, Mr. Barrie's play has the more difficult task of appealing solely to the humour in a man and to a certain alertness in intellectual enjoyment of delicious nonsense. The fact that the play created the delighted impression it did is a matter for profound gratulation on two heads. First, it means that the taste for the higher form of theatrical enjoyment has not been seriously weakened by the enormous inanities of musical farce or the heavy banalities of sensational melodrama, but is as keen as ever. Secondly, it means that finding this sort of entertainment fills his pockets, Mr. Williamson will send more like it, and other managers will follow suit, a consummation devoutly to be prayed for. Certainly a more original—a more enjoyable or a more clever piece of work than this admirable conceit has never been seen on our side of the world, and in the dramatic literature of our time it must occupy a high place indeed. Of the acting and staging most readers of the "Graphic" are already aware. The acting is well nigh as good as it could be with most of the characters, and the staging faultless. The Crichton of Mr. Cuyler Hastings is an admirable bit of work, and few faults can be found with the rest of the cast. One suggestion one might make is that Crichton is almost a trifle too genuinely the polished gentleman right through. The "gentleman's gentleman" never once shows through. He is so evidently the true aristocrat of the entire set amongst whom he moves, that there is a trifle too much shock when he returns to bullerdom in the last act. Such a character might give up Polly out of love for her, but it hurts to see him go back to Tweenie, and the idea of a public-house, the fault is partly with the author, and perhaps he meant it to hurt, but the sense of inborn culture which Mr. Hastings creates for Crichton intensifies the jar.

The alterations which the B-Law Committee of the Christchurch City Council ordered to be carried out at the Theatre Royal in that city, have now been completed. The dress-circle entrance is now in the centre, where the pit entrance was formerly—an arrangement which lands the dress-circle audience, on leaving, in the centre of those

making their exit from stalls and pit. This necessitates going out into the road to get along. The staircase to the dress-circle is wide and easy of ascent, being divided by an iron railing in the centre. The interior of the house and the seating have not been altered.

Albert Chevalier has re-appeared in the London music halls after a long absence—with some very old but apparently very welcome coster songs.

That awful burlesque, "A Chinese Honeymoon," recently broke all musical comedy record in London by celebrating its nine hundred and thirty-second performance!

Cecil Ward has returned from the Hot Springs, New Zealand, looking bronzed lean and healthy (says an Australian exchange). Perhaps he thinks his rheumatism is due to the proximity of his Neutral Bay home to the water. Anyhow, Sunny-side, with its deep-water frontage, three reception rooms, billiard room, and terraced lawns is to let for £200 a year and taxes.

Dates are now fixed for the Edwardes Gaiety Co's Australian tour. Manager Williamson works with the big Cockney entrepreneur in this deal. The company will open at Melbourne Princess early in May, the Princess becoming a Williamsonian establishment for the term of its natural run. The company is probably too expensive to visit New Zealand, unless the Royal Comic Opera Company proves this colony a real gold mine.

A country paper says that if sufficient inducement offers, the Royal Comies shortly to appear in New Zealand, will play at Stratford and other country towns. As the cost of an opera company of such dimensions as the one to burst upon this colony is something over £150 per night, it will be a decidedly risky experiment. More than likely the management will not consider the game worth the candle.

A Country Girl's marked success has led to the suspension of Arthur Adam's Maori opera "Tapu," which is now unavoidably crowded out so far as Australia is concerned, and will be held over for an opening in the indefinite future. It is not improbable it will be staged during the New Zealand season, as it will be an excellent opportunity for "trying it on the dog." New Zealand is looked upon by managers as a dog of discrimination.

The Royal Comic Opera Company leave Melbourne for New Zealand by the Monowai, opening on March 22, at His Majesty's Theatre, Dunedin, on March 29. Owing to the enormous increase in travelling expenses (fares and freights alone for 10 weeks' trip will run over £1500), Mr. Williamson finds it necessary to increase the prices to 6s., 4s., and 2s. This is apt to seem stiff to New Zealanders, but in either London, Paris or any American theatre, they would have to pay very nearly double these prices for a similar show.

Miss Dora Rignold carried off first prize at the fancy dress ball held on the India during the passage from Australia to India. The character personated was a Red Cross Sister of Mercy, and she was very proud of the fact that she made the dress entirely on the boat. It was all white except for the red cross on the breast and arm. It is easy to picture the stately, distinguished figure Miss Rignold would make in such a becoming dress.

"The Flood Tide," a tremendous Drury Lane drama, was staged for the first time in Australia. "The Flood Tide" is unlike the average Drury Lane melodrama in having a semi-farcical plot, but it is a brightly written thing, and has no lack of sensation. It contains the much-talked-of raging scene in an army barracks, and a great flood scheme. Mr. and Mrs. Bland Holt have particularly vigorous parts to deal with, and the whole may be expected to bring the season to a glorious conclusion somewhere about the end of this month.

Miss Gerrie Campion, one of the cleverest of musical comedy artists, who ever visited New Zealand, and who has been very seriously ill in South Africa is reported convalescent, though it will be some time before she is about again. In certain parts Miss Campion was unapproachable so far as any of Tom Pollard's Company was concerned. In anything "French" she excelled, being able to give spice and snap without vulgarity, and without suggestiveness, a consummation not always achieved by more famous artists in their roles.

Australian Gippsland is going to succeed as a famous fattening country. It is already famous amongst pastoralists as the best place in the world for lean cattle to pick up in, but it is gradually earning a world-wide reputation as the country that turns out fat human prodigies for the cheap museums. Already five or six enormous Gippsland products, all girls, have been sent abroad, and presently Mr. Taverner, the new Agent-General, will be receiving communications like the following from the enterprising Yank proprietors of dime shows. "Dear Sir—I believe you are agent for the colony of Gippsland, in Sydney, New Zealand. Can you deliver within 60 days, in good order and condition, two Gippsland-fed fat girls and a giant boy. F.O.B. Highest price given for a good article.—Circus Blink, Proprietor Wonder Show, New York."

Mr. Lauri has succeeded, says "Prospero," in securing for Mr. George Stephenson three comedies entirely new to Australasia, viz., "Le Voyage en Suisse," better known in England as "The Swiss Express," "His Majesty's Guests," and "Fritzholtz." The first of these has been a standard attraction throughout the Old World for close on twenty years. It was first produced by "The Hulton-Lows," then by "The Lauri Family," and is now being played at Home by "The Renauds." The reason it has never been played in the colonies is the difficulty in getting the right people. Not only must the performers be actors and actresses, but they must be singers, dancers, pantomimists and acrobats. Mr. Lauri has been associated with this piece for years, and he is at present scouring England and the Continent for the artists he knows can adequately represent this work.

A friend of "Pasquin" recently returned from London visited Barnum and Bailey's "freak" show in the Big Smoke. Some of the sights: The Legless Man. This individual's feet grew from his trunk, but he was able to run about as though fully and well developed. When spoken to he said he was in receipt of a big salary, and was perfectly happy. The rhinoceros-hid man was a gentleman who danced on sword points and jumped through hoops bristling with knives. A playful individual was the man who swallowed ironmongery in large or small doses. He dropped a watch (borrowed from a person of the audience) into his "interior," and asked the owner to listen to it ticking from the "outside." My friend gave him a packet of carpet tacks, which he swallowed with gusto. At this she made a bolt for the door, having had enough of freaks for one day.

The great attraction on the other side just at present is strong woman Valcana, who poses, a la Sandow, on a revolving pedestal, and whose back raises a violent excitement whenever she goes. A correspondent of the "Tribune":

There's news in all the papers 'bout the trouble in the East. But folk are sick of war, and there's no interest 'till the least: Elijah Dowie's Capers are no longer all the rage. Teetotalers' fallen fat, though raised another stage. Though Druggery Irvine's checked the job, and Bent's begun to wane. And Lawson's been disqualifed—no one has gone home. There's another thing to talk about, so there's a not only so sick. For you're greeted with the query, "Have you seen Valcana's back?"

Miss Nellie Stewart has been taken for Mr. Mungrave's daughter in America. An American paper, the "St. Louis Republic," gives the following amusing description of Mr. George Mungrave and Miss Nellie Stewart's appearance in a private box at the Olympic Theatre in that city:—"Miss Mungrave, an English beauty, created something of a social sensation last night at the 'Du Barry' performance. She is a daughter of

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FOR THE SKIN
 COOLING, SOOTHING, HEALING
 and Emollient; Preserves the Skin, heals all eruptions, and Beautifies the Complexion more effectually than any other preparation; removes Freckles, Tan, Scabs, Redness, Roughness and all blemishes, and is warranted harmless. Ask Sellers and Chemists for Rowland's Kalydor of 67, Hatton Garden, London.

Mr. Harold Ashton has booked New Zealand dates for Mr. J. C. Williamson's new English Comedy Company, now on the way to Australia. The tour commences in Auckland on August 1. The company's repertoire will include "The Marriage of Kitty," and "Cousin Kate," the latest comedy successes.