

Music and Drama.

Vescey, the boy violinist, aged only seven, made about £8000 out of his late London season. He shortly begins an American tour for which he'll receive £250 per concert.

Mr Herbert Fleming is importing an English company of eight. The leading lady is to be Miss Beatrice Bay, whose face is familiar to Australians who take in those London publications devoted to picturing pretty actresses.

Clement Scott left a meagre estate, despite his 30 years of successful journalism. His will has been sworn for probate at £4484, of which sum £1500 was the proceeds of the benefit performance given two days before his death.

Insurance contracts for musical artists show some interesting provisions. Mme. Patti insures every one of her concerts for £1000; Josef Hofmann carries heavy insurance on his hands and each finger; Kubelik has insured his right hand for £2000, with a policy for £10,000 against total disablement.

Mr Sam Adams, the well-known Auckland musician, has composed a sprightly polka called "Gaiete de Soir," which has just been issued in London. The music is bright and tuneful, and Aucklanders will have an opportunity of hearing it on November 2nd, when it will be played by Mr Adams' orchestra at his students' annual assembly. Mr Adams has dedicated his work to Miss Rose Nathan, daughter of Mr and Mrs N. A. Nathan, of this city.

One big co. that visited Australia left a big photographing firm in pretty heavily. Photographs were ordered by the hundred all round, and were taken and delivered, but appeals for money were coldly resented. The ladies and gentlemen of the co. said that they were not in the habit of paying for their photographs. Photographers should be glad to take them for nothing.

Williamson's Bio-tableau, which commenced operations at Adelaide Tiv. on October 1, and which shortly comes to New Zealand, threatens to exhibit a film which takes 20 minutes to run itself out. The pictures will be up-to-date, as besides the war items the other subjects will include the big Toronto fire and the Gordon-Bennett Motor Race, latter only run in June last.

The death occurred at Christchurch last week of Mr. Will Watkins, the well-known comedian. Mr Watkins was a very popular actor, and during his long connection with Messrs John Fuller and Sons (for the past six years) he enjoyed a vogue that indicated great ability on his part. He certainly was one of the most able of the many amusing artists that the enterprising firm has introduced. He will be much missed and regretted by the hundreds who listened to his drolleries many nights in Auckland and elsewhere.

Dolly Castles, sister to the great Amy, will presently make her appearance in Williamson's Comic Opera Co. (says an Australian exchange). Dolly is said to have a neat turn for light acting, and is expected to infuse a new interest into the Royal Comica. There has certainly been a long-felt want for a bright female personality in the show, as none of the ladies now shining have quite the qualities essential in a leading lady in light opera. To be sure the Castles is not expected to take front place at the jump, but she should not be long in going up top if she is anything of a comedienne.

Mr Edward Branscombe, with a new Westminster Glee and Concert party, is about to make another colonial tour. Madame Marie Houton (Mrs Branscombe) will again accompany her husband. The soprano boys will be Masters A. Ludlow, W. Egleby, G. Travis, and A. Bates; the male alto Mr Haydon Fraser and Mr R. A. Nelson; the tenors, Mr Branscombe and E. Banhof; and the basses, Mr W. E. Lowell and T. C. Stenradle Bennett. Mr Dudley Canster, whose humorous musical sketches will be remembered, will again accompany the party.

Here's a neat and far from inapt summing up of dramatic criticism and critics:—Dramatic criticism is of three kinds. There is the critic who goes to the theatre to tell the public what he sees; there is the critic who goes to the theatre to tell the public what he knows; and there is the critic who goes to the theatre to tell the public what it shouldn't see or know. The first is impersonal; the second is egotistic; the third is staidistic. The first will tell you what D'Annunzio says; the second will tell you what he ought to have said, and the third will tell you what he shouldn't be allowed to say at all. The method of the first is inductive; the method of the second is deductive; the method of the third is assinine. The impersonal critic has brains; the personal critic has taste, and the eternally moral critic has billingsgate.

Messrs. J. and C. McMahon have just received some interesting letters from Mr G. H. Snazelle, who at the time of last writing was at Rouen, France, being on a cycling tour of the beautiful province of Normandy. In this letter Mr Snazelle says: "I am singing 'Nazareth' here to-night in French at a grand fete to which thousands are being attracted. I have never been in better voice and form in my life, and when I come out to you for our New Zealand tour you may rest assured that my entertainment will surpass anything we have hitherto given to the people of good old Australasia. France is, as of course you know, romantic and delightful for tourists and the leisured class generally, but my heart goes back to the brisk and breezy colonies where I have always been a winner. I have an engagement in England that will occupy me until December, after which I will make for my good old hunting-grounds in the Antipodes. I will cable you, of course, my exact date of departure."

Manager Musgrove brings "The Prince of Pilsen" to Australia and New Zealand next year. This is his latest Shaftesbury success, and is American from the first call to the last curtain. The wheels bag of them is to come to Australia. Mr Musgrove does not intend repeating the mistake that was made over "The Belle of New York," which on its first production in Melbourne was a flat failure, although the opera had made a fortune in London. If the London company had been brought out with the opera, success in Australia would have been certain. Even the Shaftesbury chorus girls are to come out. They are Yankee damsels, and are decidedly on the fat side. America likes material in its ballet girls. Australian taste, however, is not so fleshy; we prefer elegance to weight (says the "Critic"). The bulky chorus girl cannot dance pleasingly, she flops a lot, and breathes noisily, and although she is all right in repose, she purples under the influence of protracted exertion. On the whole, Mr Musgrove would do better to stick to the slim and nimble Australian character. St. Kilda seems to produce sufficient eager aspirants to meet all Australasian demands.

Now that the people of Melbourne have shown themselves eager for Gilbert and Sullivan's operas, it is expected (says a writer in "Table Talk") that J. C. Williamson will go through the list: "The Gondoliers," "Iolanthe," "Pinafore," and "The Pirates" have often been revived, but few people remember "Princess Ida" or "The Sorcerer." The latter would be a particularly interesting production, as the play-goers of Australia have less knowledge of that than they had of "Patience," and it is a bright and whimsical opera, the story of which is as good as new. It is about the length of "Pinafore," and possesses much of the characteristic humour of words and music that has made the later operas beloved by hundreds of thousands. The last has not been said of Gilbert when the operas have been accounted for. His "Engaged" is one of the funniest farces ever written. The only Australasian performance of it remembered by me was given by Brough and Boucault

many years ago. "Tom Cobb, or Fortune's Toy," is another highly hilarious farce. Surely it would be worth Mr Williamson's while to try these on the diango once more through the medium of his bright little comedy company.

"Paree," spelled so, is always held to be the trade-mark of levity, especially levity manufactured in the U.S.A. for home consumption; and, if the adjective "gay" should precede "Paree," then the revels indicated may be expected to be of the most hilarious. "In Gay Paree" sounds much more "cute" as a title than if the piece were labelled "In Mirthful Paris," and the large audience at the bright little Gaiety Theatre, Melbourne, on the first night of Messrs. Perman and Lang's new extravaganza, found the play quite come up to its title, and even go on better than the promise held out, says the "Australasian." "Paree" is the Paris of the American, and around the financial troubles of a New York widow, Mrs. Waldorf Castoria, the plot revolves. "Americo-Parisienne," the useful word coined by the great Jim Pinkerton to describe London Dods, in R. L. Stevenson's "Wrecker," exactly describes the fun and frolics now in progress at the Gaiety Theatre. The extravaganza will probably be seen in New Zealand.

If the newly-formed Auckland Orchestral Society can maintain its present strong membership and avoid those pitfalls which have previously caused collapse in similar ventures, music lovers in Auckland can look forward to a long series of rich musical treats. And, with past experience to guide them, with the true "esprit de corps" which is at present so excellently in evidence to spur them on, and, above all, with so enthusiastic and able a conductor at their head as Mr Alfred Hill, there seems no reason to doubt that a long and brilliant career is before the new society. The first concert, given in the Choral Hall last week, was certainly eminently successful, and fully satisfying from a musician's point of view. Mr Hill has the magnetism of the born conductor, and made the very most of the large and very capable orchestra, which obeyed his every behest with delightfully sympathetic accord. Herr Weilaert was leader, and Mr Cox headed the second violins. A very excellently arranged programme was admirably carried through, the orchestral items being interspersed with songs by Mr Hamilton Hodges and Miss M. Somerset, a young mezzo-soprano with a light quality voice, who sings pleasantly and with good elocution. At the next concert Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony" is to be introduced.

It is not generally understood that Mr Tree's "school of acting" scheme has a far wider significance and involves a greater sphere of usefulness than the title implies or than we have yet been given to understand (says the London "Era"). It will therefore be interesting to our readers to know the arrangements which Mr Tree has made for giving lessons, not merely in the art of acting, but in every department of stage work. The principal subject which will be dealt with at the school is voice production, which includes elocution, the teaching of blank verse, Shakespeare, etc. But the curriculum of the dramatic school does not end there. In addition to the pupils being taken through plays both old and modern, they will be instructed in dancing, fencing, and in all manner of acrobatic and pantomime work. They will also receive thorough instruction in the direction of gesture, which forms such an important part of an actor's study. The different styles of speech and gesture in different countries at different periods of the world's history will be properly demonstrated by experienced instructors, in addition to the movement of the hands and feet and the employment of any particular article of personal adornment or use. For instance, the fan used to play an important part in the time of Queen Anne. Then, of course, the old minuets, both for the drawing-room and the stage, will not be neglected in the work of the school. The entrance fee to the institution is one guinea, the charge for tuition being twelve guineas per term, or 36 guineas a year of 36 weeks. Prospective actors who enter the school for the purpose of training for the profession, and who are found totally unfit for a theatrical career, will be told as quickly as possible that they are wasting their time and their money. It is neither Mr Tree's

wish nor intention to make a huge profit out of his scheme, which has been prompted only by his desire to see a better generation of actors and actresses appearing on the British board. Nor has Mr Tree the idea of hoodloding the touring companies with embryo actors and actresses. Not until they have shown themselves really fit will they be drafted into theatrical companies or by allowed to go before the footlights of His Majesty's Theatre in minor parts.

It is probable that M. Louis d'Egville and some members of his family will have charge of the dancing department. It is interesting to remark in this connection that Mr d'Egville's father and forefathers have instructed the Royal Family in matters concerning the "poetry of motion" for the last 150 years. Mr Tree will also secure the services of the best fencer in London to superintend the sword exercises and the finest elocutionist he can engage. A special feature of the school will be that once or twice a week a class will be held for reading or acting a play, either on the stage or in one of the big rooms. In regard to the building in which the training will be given, we understand that a special large house is being leased for the purpose, and that it will be in the near neighbourhood of His Majesty's Theatre. Mr Tree, who will supervise generally over all the classes, particularly interesting himself in the elocution and dress departments, hopes to be able to open the new establishment shortly. Separate classes will be held for the purpose of teaching elocution how to read the lessons and how to pronounce. These classes will be taken in hand by Mr Raymond Blaythwayt and the Rev. H. Russell Wakefield, rector of St. Mary's, Bryansdon Square. Both these gentlemen are first rate elocutionists, and are admirably fitted for the work for which they have been chosen. Gentlemen who place themselves under the care of Mr Blaythwayt will be instructed how to avoid what is known as "clergyman's throat," which is merely the outcome of wrong usage of the vocal organs. Another department will be devoted to Parliamentary candidates, who will be shown how to use their voices to the best advantage—an important point sometimes in deciding an election contest. There will be special courses of training for women, and proper breathing habits instilled into them as well as the correct pronunciation of the English language. We can mention that Mr Raymond Blaythwayt, who will have charge of what we may term the "ministerial section," was himself a preacher for some eight or nine years, in which capacity he has worked pretty nearly all over the world. His family is probably the biggest clerical family in the world, for no less than twelve of his relatives are ministers of religion. Mr Blaythwayt is an experienced lecturer, and has always greatly interested himself in the drama.

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