ed by Miss Dolly Castles in the same company. That she has a fine voice she has already shown at several concerts in Melbourne, and her stage presence—she closely resembles Miss Amy Castles in form and feature—should help very materially to her success. Assuming that her intention is to make a name for herself in light opera, she could not receive better training than the one she is likely to get in the interpretation of the Gilbert and Sullivan pieces.

The season of the Knight - Jeffries' Company in Perth "goes on its way rejoicing," and each piece put on is received with the manifestations of popularity which have become the customary experience of the company. Last Monday (August 21st) they revived "The Darling of the Gods," and the present cast did every bit as well as the original one, while Mr Julius Knight himself in the part of Zakkari, the cruel, unscrupulous Minister of War, scored a pronounced success. The company return to Melbourne after the West Australian tour, opening at the Princess Theatre on the 23rd September, in "His Majesty's Servant."

WEST'S PICTURES AND THE BRESCIANS.

The fame of this popular combination has preceded them to Auckland, for their successes in the South have created a record in entertainment-giving, which future entrepreneurs will find it difficult to beat. In a little over four months over 147,000 have paid for admission, and the theatres both at Christchurch and Wellington proving far too small to accommodate the crowds, the management closed them and migrated to the Canterbury Hall and Town Hall. The reason of this brilliant business is that West's Pictures and the Brescians appeal to the whole of the population. Even in an enlightened time a considerable section of the people never cross the threshold of a theatre, and the highest art in theatricals fails to attract this class. But a pictorial and musical entertainment, wedded charmingly together, it is what has made Messrs. West's and Hayward's entertainment such a magnet. Everyone goes—the rigid Puritan or the severest type of the "unco guid" is there sitting next to the devotee of Thespis, paterfamilias, with his quiverful of growing girls and boys, the bachelor male (aye, and maid), with their sisters, their cousins, and aunts; and there is an air of "Come let us all be happy together" pervading the audience. The prices are popular, children being half-price to every performance. The programmes are kaleidoscopic in changefulness; there are no waits, no intervals, and no extra charges. The Auckland season opens at His Majesty's Theatre on Monday next, and there is no doubt that the triumphant progress of this company will continue in New Zealand's premier city.

Miss Katie Barry, an English theatrical artist of considerable repute, in an interesting and clever article contributed to a New York newspaper, attacks a peculiar American superstition that Englishmen have no sense of humour. Miss Barry wants to know how the Americans reconcile this belief with the fact that England has produced a number of famous wits who have excited the risibility not only of their compatriots, but of readers everywhere. Moreover, London has ten comic papers to every one printed in New York. London supplies both countries with farces and comedies, and yet Londoners "do not know the difference between a joke and an obituary notice!" The reason for this international misunderstanding, according to Miss Barry, is the wide difference between the English and American idea of fun. The Englishman refuses to ignore the question of probability, whereas the American takes no account of it. Nothing is too impossible or extravagant to be laughed at in New York. Miss Barry would sum up this variance by saying that Englishmen are witty and Americans humorous. Miss Barry remarks that the demand for exaggeration in American humour is particularly noticeable at the theatres. "Do you suppose," she asks, "that on the other side they would laugh at an Irishman made up with green whiskers? Certainly not. The certainty that no man ever born had green whiskers would rob the jest of its point. When I first came over I arrived at the conclusion that in New York nothing else was judged so witty as the spectacle of a fat man falling down. I say not so radical now, but I still believe that English audiences are keener and quicker in their appreciation of real humour than are their cousins on the west of the Atlantic. It is ungracious to make fun of a whole nation because its viewpoint is not precisely yours. The fact that Americans do not laugh at English jokes proves nothing; there are a great many American jokes at which Englishmen do not laugh."

The following from an Adelaide singer to the "Critic" is interesting to the hub of the universe:

"I saw Melba twice at Covent Garden," she said, "first in 'La Traviata,' and then in 'La Boheme.' In the latter she was associated with Caruso, who has a wonderful voice of a distinct type. Every note is just like liquid gold, and he has such a perfect command over his voice. The London press could not say anything against him—which is a great deal to judge by. He is also a splendid actor. In the death scene, Melba was the most substantial corpse I have ever seen. She is supposed to have died from consumption, yet she lies there looking very happy. The song that Caruso sings over her moved me deeply. The English people usually take such things in a matter-of-course way, because they have so many opportunities of hearing good artists at such ridiculously low prices. That night, however, the house simply rose up at him. They both sang as if they were inspired, and the papers next day said they had excelled themselves."

Did you ever hear Ben Davis?

"England's greatest tenor? Yes. I heard him three times. On the first two occasions I didn't like him. He seemed to force his voice, but I heard him again with more favour at the Liberty Hall in the Patti concert. He has a peculiar voice—totally different to that of Caruso—but a beautiful voice for all that."

And Ada Crossley?

"I was at her first concert after her marriage. She never sang better—so all the critics agreed. She was in splendid voice, and she has such a fine stage appearance. I was present at her wedding. I was sorry to miss the performance of Strauss' new 'Symphonia Domestica.' It caused a great deal of talk in London. People were divided in their opinions: they either raved about it or laughed at it. Strauss' idea was to suggest by means of music, sounds of typical domestic life for instance, one part was intended to represent the crying of a child. Clara Butt, whom I heard three or four times, has a magnificent voice. Both she and Ada Crossley have good positions at Home, but they are totally different in style and every other way, though they each have a large section of the public with them. Clara Butt's voice is phenomenal. She is such a huge woman, too. She is very popular. From the start she carries the audience by storm with her personality and her voice, though, perhaps, she does not put so much feeling into her songs as Ada Crossley does. Her name is good enough to ensure big audiences. Her husband, Kennerley Rumford, is also a very artistic singer, with a rich deep baritone voice."

PONSONBY SHAKESPEARE AND RHETORIC CLUB.

The committee of this useful society, which has its home at the Leys Institute, are to be heartily congratulated on the success which attended the reading of "The Winter's Tale" last week. Notwithstanding the violation of the unities of time and space, its anachronisms and geographical liberties to which Shakespeare—not content with merely following Greene, whose "Dorastus and Fawnia" furnished the main incidents—added the wildest improbabilities, "mixing up together Russian emperors and the Delphic oracle, chivalry, and heathendom, ancient forms of religion, and Whitsuntide pastoals," the play enshrines so much of lofty eloquence, nobleness of character and spirituality of treatment that it is a matter for wonder it is not more frequently presented. As Leontes, Mr Maxwell Walker was well cast. His rapidly developed moods of distrust, suspicion, mad jealousy, remorse, despair, and joy were well conceived and powerfully represented; indeed, the entire reading of this part was wholly satisfactory alike from the elocutionary as the intellectual point of view. Mr. A. S. C. Brown's Polixenes was kingly and virile, and Mr T. U. Wells gave a conscientious presentation of Camillo. As Antigonus, Mr Christie was fairly effective, yet somewhat lacking in vocal mobility, a remark which applies also to Mr. G. Kent's otherwise commendable Florizel. Cleomenes was represented by Mr. Kerr with moderate success. Mr. W. Davies was well suited with the part of the old Shepherd, and gave his lines in good homely fashion. The vocalist vagabond Autolycus was essayed by Mr H. Heaps with marked success, and he well deserved the spontaneous appreciation shown by those present. The scenes with the clown, and also the shepherdesses were really fine.

The Clown, as represented by Mr. G. Neville, was a very yokel, and contributed materially to the comedy element of the play. Hermione, the unhappy queen, was efficiently accounted for by Miss Mary Sloane. Evidently studious and possessing a clear flexible voice, this lady will, with the acquirement of greater inflectional variety and tonal precision, take high rank among local readers. Mrs. Maxwell Walker was a sympathetic Perdita, yet she might with advantage have thrown into the part somewhat more animation. As the belligerent champion of the Queen, Pauline, Miss Auriol Gittos was sufficiently aggressive, and evinced a full appreciation of the essential characteristics. She should however, cultivate a wider inflectional scale, and greater accentual precision. The Misses Rhodes and Adlington, as the rival shepherdesses, were very successful; as also was Miss F. V. Jacobsen, who read the part of Emilia. Messrs. Brady and Tuckey filled minor parts satisfactorily.

Our Illustrations

BRIC-A-BRAC.

One of the most fascinating, if useless, pastimes of the man of means is the collection of bric-a-brac. We give this week some beautiful pictures of a number of much-sought-after articles, including specimens of Bristol porcelain, Italian majolica, lustre ware, etc.

Although several attempts at making porcelain at Bristol are recorded as early as 1753, the ventures do not appear to have been very successful, and it was not until 1768 that Richard Champion definitely started to manufacture porcelain. In 1770 the Plymouth China Factory, belonging to William Cookworthy (the discoverer of the true china clay or kaolin), was moved to Bristol, and three years after was sold to Champion, who borrowed sufficient money to enable him to acquire the patent rights from the owner. He carried on his manufacture there until 1781, and also opened a London warehouse in Salisbury Court, Fleet Street, which remained open until 1782. In an advertisement in the "Bristol Journal" of November 28th, 1772, we are told that the Bristol porcelain was "wholly free from the imperfections in wearing which the English china usually has, and its composition equal in fineness to the East Indian, and will wear as well. The enamelled ware which is rendered nearly as cheap as the English blue and white comes very near, and in some pieces, equals the Dresden, which this work more particularly imitates." Under Champion's direction the same objects were still produced; some of the fine hexagonal vases have open-work necks, and are enamelled with large blue or green trees and tropical birds. The height of the vases with the cover is about sixteen inches, and in some instances the handles are replaced by sprays of leaves and flowers. The sauceboats are ornamented with embossed uncoloured garlands of flowers, and in some cases have the word "Bristol" underneath in relief letters. A decoration which is very characteristic of Bristol porcelain consists of green laurel festoons. Mention must also be made of the oval or round plaques which belong to the best period of the Bristol factory—from 1774 to 1778. They are delicately modelled in white biscuit porcelain, and decorated with coats of arms or medallion portraits surrounded by floral wreaths in high relief. All the articles on page 4, except the cut glass are Bristol porcelain.

Majolica is said by some authorities to take its name from Majorca, in the Balearic Islands, and as the secret of a fine enamelled earthenware was known to the Arabians as early as the thirteenth century, it is possible that the name is derived from this source, and that the manufacture of majolica was introduced into Italy by workmen from Majorca, which until 1230 was an Arabian possession. During the great majolica period it was the fashion for lovers to present their betrothed with small pieces of the ware called "amatorii." These generally consisted of plates, dishes and vases bearing the portrait and Christian name of the beloved one, the background being filled in with flowers, while the border of the plate is painted with grotesque designs. The design is generally painted in blues with a yellow lustre. The pieces of majolica most commonly met with were meant for domestic use, and include salt-cellars, ewers, drug-pots, bowls, candelabra, sauce-boats, inkstands and pilgrims' bottles. Some of the plates and dishes have two holes pierced in the back, and were evidently intended to be hung up on a wall for decorative purposes.

The most important towns engaged in the majolica industry were Gubbio, Urbino, Pesaro, Faenza, Deruta, Siena, Castel Durante, Caffaggiolo and Forli. Of these Faenza was probably the first to manufacture the ware; the pottery made here was chiefly in the form of platrs, with broad rims and deep sunk centres, though, of course, other pieces are to be met with. A figure or coat of arms in deep red or orange usually occupies the