

Music and Drama

Miss Marie Lowrey, better known in Auckland as Madame Shoesmith, gives her first concert on Thursday evening. Since her training under Mr. Reginald Somerville and Madame Blanche Marchesi, Miss Lowrey has had many signal successes in the English musical world, and her advent is sure to attract the attention of critical lovers of music in New Zealand.

Wirth's Circus and Menagerie, with what promises to be exceptionally strong attractions, open a season at Auckland next Tuesday week, March 31.

The fact is, I think, said Mr. J. C. Williamson, in conversation in Sydney, that the established dramatists are getting lazy; they have a secured position, and they write more to please their own whim. Their works don't seem to have the same vitality; they don't seem to have the same strength—the same heart. That is, of course, speaking of the average. The people in any country—England or America—will only make a lasting success of what has real power and real heart in it. The most reliable man of them all is Barrie. Pinero is not doing so much work, though I may say that I have bought the right to produce all his plays. The problem play, of which he was at one time the recognised exponent, is fading out. A good melodrama will always attract; but it must be good—not a second or third rate one.

One of the most important "characters" in "Peter Pan" is Mana, the big Newfoundland which acts as a day and night nurse to the Darling's children, fetching their "nightsies," filling their baths, and generally looking after them like a second mother—to the accompaniment of the most whimsical business imaginable. Mr. J. C. Williamson has engaged a special animal man for the part, who is already well on his way to Australia.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Musgrove left by the Orontes for London the other day to engage attractions for the Criterion Theatre, Sydney, Mr. Musgrove having obtained a long lease of that playhouse.

Mr. J. C. Williamson told an interviewer that he had opened preliminary negotiations for the appearance at a later date of Tetrazzini, the great singer, who has made such a profound impression in London and in America.

The two new announcements made by Mr. J. C. Williamson on reaching Fremantle, that Miss Carrie Moore will come out to play lead in "The Merry Widow," and that Miss Emilie Melville is to pay us another visit for the Australian production of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," will be received with great interest.

The new theatre in Russell-street, Melbourne, is going ahead rapidly, the structure being already up as high as the stage on one side. The demolition of Bowes' Tattersall's building is now proceeding.

While you have seen tears most realistically simulated, you could not count on the fingers of one hand the actors or actresses who have ever successfully attempted to portray the emotion of laughter, says Mr. Alan Dale in the "New York American."

Miss Maud Fitz-Stubbs, of Sydney, for long years a pianist of brilliancy, and a composer of tuneful waltzes, has for some time past been settled in England in the interest of her daughters, Aileen and Doris Woods. Professionally known as "The New Zealand Twins," the Sydney girls are just now appearing as "second

boy and girl" in the pantomime, "Robinson Crusoe" at the Grand Theatre, Fulham, where their Maori interpolations have formed a feature. The Press notices are very favourable and the "Stage" says that they "distinguished themselves with a Maori War Song and Dance, which, rendered with great nerve and spirit, is received with much delight, and is distinctly one of the hits of the pantomime."

The Simonides of Mr. J. C. Williamson's production of "Ben Hur" in Sydney in 1902, Mr. Austin Melford, died last month at Twickenham. Mr. Melford was held in esteem as a character actor whose methods were forcible, incisive, and convincing. The stage attracted him at an early period in his career, which was to have been that of a commercial traveller. Having proved his ability as an amateur, he speedily found his way into the professional ranks. His first appearance took place at Tunstall, Staffordshire, in "Dick Whittington," in 1880, this leading to a more important engagement in 1881, at the Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool, in the Drury-lane drama, "The World." But before very long he elected to enlist under the banner of the late Wilson Barrett, with whom he remained for 12 years. A visit to Australia followed the termination of his engagement with that actor. On his return to London Mr. Melford found a congenial sphere for his talents at Drury-lane.

"Linked sweetness long drawn out" might be an appropriate heading for the American articles describing a record kiss on the opera stage. The lady is Jane Noria, a St. Louis girl, who in the character of Aida enters the tomb with her lover. The Noria kiss, according to careful calculation, lasts just 295 seconds. This must altogether eclipse the celebrated kiss of Mary Garden, the prima donna, which lasted only 25 seconds. Jane Noria is married to an Italian Count—who should have been the counter to the Countess. Upon this phenomenal occasion, a New York critic remarks: "The kiss occurs for the first time in the opening of Act III of 'Louise.' Dalmores is situated 'down stage' reading. Enter Miss Garden. She steals upon the unsuspecting tenor, and before he knows it the lucky man is incased in a dreamy half-Nelson. Then the kiss begins. The theatre-manager stops counting the house, and worriedly pulls out his watch. For these two young people on the stage are kissing on his time, and he has to keep on paying them high prices just as if they were letting forth their top note. But still the kiss goes on." Apparently there is time for a revolution to take place in the world's affairs during this new process of kissing-while-you-wait. "Outside," on unsuspecting Thirty-fourth-street," says the weary critic, "the autos whiz eastward past Eighth-avenue. They will reach Broadway before that kiss ceases. A man on the corner strikes a match. The light travels 186,000 miles a second. The flare of that match will have travelled 4,650,000 miles before the lips of Dalmores and Miss Garden part. The earth still whizzes through space, in spite of all this ocular excitement. It will have travelled 462.5 miles between the start and finish of the kiss." But followers of the "Benches in the Park" cult of mental science will surely aver that this notorious kiss is by no means germane to the motive power which works the busy world outside the theatre. "Kisses make the world go round," etc. At last, after many anxious minutes for the audience, there is a grand finale to this epoch-making kiss. With reluctance, as if the muscles of the tongue were cramped from lack of motion, four arms relax. Two pairs of lips draw apart with all the unwillingness with which a life-office-holder quits his sinecure. Kissing is easier than singing when one does it at union rates. But until the present influenza epidemic subsides, for reasons of health I would advise my readers, one and all, to steer clear of the "Louise" kiss.

LAWN TENNIS NOTES

By the Man at the Net.

The weather on Saturday effectually disposed of tennis, but from the reports of the club play that have been sent in to me during the past week, it seems that most of the local tournaments are well under weigh, and the various club championships should all be decided before Easter. Certainly they are not likely to have much chance after that date if the present indications hold.

The following notes on some of the more important Devonport matches are clipped from the "Star":

The final for the Men's Championship Singles will be played on Saturday between T. Macky and Robson. Robson, who defeated Sherriff earlier in the tournament, is a young player, who should certainly have a future before him. He is exceedingly accurate and has particularly severe off-the-ground strokes. His principal faults are that he is inclined to volley too far back in the middle of the court, and uses the cut-stroke much too often. Macky should give Robson a very good game, but I am afraid he will be found lacking in severity and in staying power. The contest should provide some excellent tennis.

The Ladies' Handicap Singles have once more been won by Mrs. Cooper from the owe 40 mark. Until the other lady members of the club improve it seems impossible to handicap Mrs. Cooper out of this event.

The ladies' doubles fell to Misses Taylor and Caldwell; the combined to Miss Taylor and Taylor; the men's doubles to Young and Taylor. Both Miss Taylor and R. Taylor are new members of the club and are to be heartily congratulated on their success.

Miss Taylor plays an exceedingly steady game, and has shown great improvement during the last year. R. Taylor, who, besides winning the above events, is still in the final of the handicap singles, is another young player who shows great promise. He is exceedingly steady and severe on the forehand and finds the side lines with great consistency. He will, however, have to cultivate a better backhand before he can go much further. He shows promise of being an accurate volleyer, and should give more attention to that department of the game.

Young, who partnered Taylor in the doubles, is a greatly improved player. He still, however, lacks consistency.

The Men's Championship Doubles provided, perhaps, the most interesting contests of the tournament. In the first round Young and Brabant defeated A. and K. Howarth. A. Howarth was unfortunate to injure his shoulder before the commencement of the match, which necessitated him scratching from all events in the tournament. In the semi-final Young and Brabant were defeated by Macky and Hall somewhat easily. The final was deemed "a good thing" for the former pair, but a surprise was effected by Sherriffs and Miller defeating them handsomely by 3 sets to 0. Sherriffs played excellently, while Miller excelled himself by playing the best game of the four. It is unfortunate that Miller, who is, perhaps, better known as an Auckland hockey representative, cannot get opportunities for more consistent practice, as his play last Saturday showed that he is capable of reaching a very high standard.

Rather an amusing illustration of the difficulty that always arises in appointing a selection committee has just occurred at Home. The trouble of course is that if you put leading players on selection committees, they are placed in the invidious position of having to choose themselves in representative teams; and if you drop the leading players out of your selection committees the second-rate players are, as a rule, poor judges of play and form. Well, the Council of the Lawn Tennis Association of England recently resolved that it was desirable that no player likely to be selected to represent the British Isles in the international match for the Davis Cup should be selected as one of the International Match Committee. It then proceeded to elect its Match Committee, and the first five names read as follows:—H. L. Doherty, S. H. Smith, F. L. Rise

ley, A. W. Gore, H. Roper Barrett. Now, these are without doubt five out of the first six men who would be chosen to represent the Old Country, if all were fit and well. Which proves that it is by no means so easy as it looks to decide how a selection committee should best be constituted; and the difficulty that England experiences in this respect may be some slight consolation to the Aucklanders who have not always been satisfied with the choice of such committees or the work they have done.

An exceptionally interesting double was played recently in Melbourne on a private court at Kew, at which Madame Meiba, by the way, was one of the spectators; Norman Brookes and J. K. Frazer played A. W. Dunlop and R. Heath, the present holders of the doubles championship of Victoria. Frazer is a first-rate doubles man, and usually partnered Brookes before the world's champion first went on his pilgrimage after the Davis Cup. But Dunlop is really a sounder double player than Brookes, and in the end the local champions more than held their own. Brookes and Frazer won the first two sets: 6-4, 6-2, but then Dunlop and Heath asserted themselves, and after a fine struggle won the three following sets: 7-5, 6-4, 7-5. From the calibre of the players and the level scoring, this must have been one of the finest doubles matches ever witnessed in Australia.

The following clipping from the "Australasian" may interest local tennis players, though few of them are likely to be in England next year to see the matches referred to: "Details are to hand by the mail of the tennis tournament to be played in connection with the Olympic games. Singles, doubles, and ladies' singles' championships will be played on the covered court at the Queen's Club, London, on the 6th May and following days, entries closing on the 25th April next; while similar events will be played at Wimbledon on grass on the 6th July and following days, entries closing on the 6th June. At the latter meeting what is termed the championships of the world will be played, but as the All England singles' championship already carries the title of champion of the world, it is a matter of doubt as to what value will be placed on the title won at the July tournament.



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