

with an answer in the affirmative." The date of writing was March 29, 1891; Sims Reeves died in 1900, and the interval of nine years was not spent by any means in silence.

Vienna appears to have discovered a new tenor. His name is Tamini, and up to a few years ago he was, it is said, the manager of a bank in Munich—a post he relinquished in order to devote himself to singing. Opera-goers in the Austrian capital heard him a few nights since in "Carmen" and lavished upon him a good deal of enthusiasm.

The National Opera Company is being gradually recruited in Australia as regards principals as well as chorus. In "Il Trovatore" now under rehearsal, I notice that Miss Florence Quinn has been allotted the part of Azucena. Madame Slapoffski is to be the Leonora.

The Florence Baines Company has scored a decided hit in Wellington with "Miss Lancashire, Limited," the Theatre Royal being crowded in every part nightly. The "Star's" representative says that the piece is a most diverting one, and Miss Baines, in the main role, achieves a genuine triumph.

Among the prize-winners who took part in the concert at the distribution of prizes at the Guildhall School of Music on Oct. 31 was the young New Zealand violinist, Miss Audrey Richardson, who played Wieniawski's "Faust" fantasia. Miss Richardson, who is a pupil of Mr Johannes Wolff, is notable as a Merchant Taylor's scholar holding the school (violin) prize, 1906, the Tullie Gold Medal, 1907, and the Tubbs prize, 1908.

So delighted was Mme. Tetrzinni at reaching F in altissimo during a concert she gave recently in Sunderland that she threw her arms round a woman listener who occupied a platform seat and kissed her ecstatically.

Israel Zangwill, the Zionist leader, has been creating a stir in New Zealand social circles, and more particularly among the "four hundred," by the production of his latest drama, "The Melting Pot." The play deals with Russia and America, and is particularly scathing in its delineation of American family life. The divorce laws of the United States are attacked without mercy, and therefore the play is well patronised. "Teddy" Roosevelt thinks it a trifle over-strung, and has told the author so, but Mr. Zangwill holds to his opinion that it will do good. To make a play draw, an attack on some section of the public seems to be the best means.

New York has seldom had to submit to such a succession of dramatic failures as the Broadway theatres are now recording, says the mail just to hand. The cause is a mixture of hard times, hot weather, election, and indifferent plays. "Miss Billie Barker," however, has captured the whole city. The only other pronounced personal success is Harry Laurier.

The George Musgrove's "Belle of New York" Company is still touring in England. They were at the Grand Fulham at latest mail advices. The combination has been on the road now for about ten years, and has a very much altered personnel. Mr. Lawton and his whistling, are, however, still a strong attraction.

Miss Lena Ashwell, one of the leading English actresses of the present day, and at present at the Kingsway Theatre, was quietly married at the Westminster registrar's office on Saturday, October 31, to Dr. Henry Simson, a physician living in Grosvenor-street, and the eldest son of the late Robert Simson, of the Bengal Civil Service. The intention of their managers had not been known at the theatre, so the wedding came as a surprise. The decree in the lady's divorce from her former husband, Mr. Arthur Playfair, was made absolute a few days earlier.

Mr. W. J. Lincoln, the well-known theatrical avant courier, is about to sever his connection with the Meynell-Gunn syndicate in order to take up a position on the managerial staff of the Florence Baines Company, which opens in Auckland on Boxing Night.

"The Merry Widow" concluded its continuous run of 421 performances in New York a few weeks back. The receipts have been so exceptional as to seem to warrant notice as a matter of news. It was announced by the management that more than £362,000 have been paid to the treasurers of the New Amsterdam during the run there, and it is estimated that more than seven hundred thousand people saw the Viennese operetta. The title role has been sung by no less than seven prima donnas. Mr. Donald Brian played Prince Danilo more than eight months consecutively, and Mr. R. E. Graham, as the comical Popoff, missed playing his familiar role but a few times.

The Beatty-McIntosh Company, at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, has added "Jim the Penman" to its long list of successes. Staged at the Haymarket Theatre, London, for the first time in 1886, Sir Charles Young's thrilling story of the career of James Rakston, the gentleman forger, ran for over 300 nights, and has been on the boards ever since in some part of the world. The piece was received by the audience at the Theatre Royal with enthusiasm. At the end of the Melbourne season, the company goes to West Australia, and appears at Adelaide on its way to Sydney.

A report has reached Wellington (says our correspondent) that important developments in the Australian theatrical world may be looked for in March next. It is whispered that a firm, which at the present time has its hands full in the matter of big speculations in the Commonwealth and New Zealand, is likely to break up its forces, in which case another theatrical entrepreneur will take on the contracts made.

The two latest command performances at Windsor have been Mr Martin Harvey's "Corsican Brothers" and Mr Lewis Waller's "The Duke's Motto." The theatrical performances given on state occasions at Windsor Castle always take place at 10 o'clock, in the Waterloo Chamber, and are timed to end a few minutes before midnight. The improvised theatre is arranged always to accommodate about 200, exclusive of the servants, who are provided with seats in the gallery at the back, and the stage, though small enough to necessitate special scenery being painted for the visit of a London company, is well equipped and as well lighted as any modern theatre.

Since concluding the previous Auckland season, the "Alec Wiggs" company has traversed New Zealand from end to

end. The rapidity of transit from town to town, and the general bustle that has been indulged in, have astonished the American contingent considerably.

It has been stated that before the curtain rises on Meynell and Gunn's Christmas production of "Cinderella" at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, an expenditure of over £6000 will have been incurred. It takes money to put on a spectacular show these days. The dresses in the Fairies' Boudoir scene are put down by the management at over £1000.

Mr. Charles Farnell, until lately musical director at the Fuller firm's Wellington play house, will attempt to lower the world's record for continuous piano-playing in Auckland in a week or two. The present record is 51 hours 5 minutes.

Picturesque Hiring Fair.

Various quaint features characterised the old-fashioned Michaelmas hiring-fair at High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, which took place last month. It is one of the very few fairs which is still held under the old conditions, and it continues to attract large numbers of agriculturists and labourers from different parts of Bucks, Berks, and Oxon. Many of the servants who assembled in the neighbourhood of the ancient Guildhall were picturesquely decorated for the occasion. Some wore huge buttonholes, while others displayed distinctive emblems of their callings. Waggoners, for instance, displayed pieces of whipcord, shepherds tufts of wool, and ploughmen plaited horsehair. There was a good deal of animation about midday, when the major part of the hiring took place. Large numbers of the men make a rule of changing their situations at Michaelmas, and consequently there was a good supply of hands. Terms of remuneration did not show much alteration as compared with the rates prevailing twelve months ago. The pleasure portion of the fair, formerly held in the public streets, was once more relegated to a meadow in the vicinity of the town, and thousands of people were present from the countryside.

To Peking in Sixteen Days.

Peking has been brought twenty-four hours nearer to London, owing to the decision of the North Chinese Railway, which has been induced to run the trains by night as well as by day. It is now possible to reach Peking from London by the Trans-Siberian express in sixteen days. The first-class fare from London to Peking, inclusive of sleeping accommodation, is £50, and another £10 to jerry a wide margin—may be added for means and extras.

CHORAL HALL.

EVERY EVENING THIS WEEK. (Except Xmas Days.) RETURN VISIT OF MR. EDWARD BRANSCOMBE'S SCARLET TROUBADOURS. (From London.) The Troubadours are returning to play a Return Season in Auckland, as announced above, presenting ENTIRELY NEW PROGRAMMES. NEW SCENAR in Costume, NEW MUSICAL NUMBERS, NEW MALE QUARTETS, NEW AND ORIGINAL HUMOUR, and NEW SKETCHES (in Coloured Costumes). POPULAR PRICES 3/ 2/ and 1/. Plans now open at Widman and Arey's, where Day Sale Tickets may also be obtained. CHAS. CHAMBERS, Manager.

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE

Sole Lessee, Mr C. R. Hulley. Under Direction Mr J. C. Williamson. MR J. C. WILLIAMSON'S GRAND XMAS PRODUCTION. THE RED MILL. EVERY EVENING. FULL OF YOUTH AND BEAUTY. FULL OF LAUGHTER AND COLOUR AND SUNSHINE. CRISP HUMOUR AND BRISK INCIDENT, SPARKLING MUSIC AND DELICIOUS DANCES. Interspersed with Charming GLIMPSES OF DUTCH SCENERY. A PRETTY LOVE COMEDY. THE RED MILL. Has won THE UNANIMOUS ADMIRATION OF ALL AUSTRALIAN AUDIENCES. For the QUAINT COMEDY AND ECCENTRIC DANCERS. JOHN FORD, FRED LESLIE, The Famous Amateur Artist, CHAS. A. LOBER, ED. SHERRAS, PAT. BATHURST, PERCY DUNTON, MISS OLIVE GODWIN, MISS IYV SCOTT, MISS MARIE BAXON, MISS ADA STIRLING. During the Season Another Entirely New and Equally Successful Musical Comedy will be Presented, "THE PRINCE OF PILBEN." Will also, the ever Popular "THE BELLE OF NEW YORK."

OPERA HOUSE.

Under the SOLE DIRECTION of MISS FLORENCE BAINES. THE LAUGHING XMAS ATTRACTION. BOXING NIGHT (Sat., Dec. 26). And Following Nights. First Appearance in Auckland of the Brilliant and Delightful Comedienne, MISS FLORENCE BAINES. The Girl who set London laughing as MARY ELLEN THOMPSON. In the Famous Farce, with Music, "MISS LANCASTERSHIRE, LIMITED." MISS FLORENCE BAINES Will be supported by her own TALENTED COMEDY COMPANY. During the performance Miss Baines will sing several of her celebrated song successes, including THE FAMOUS LAUGHING SONG. MANAGERIAL—For this important season the Theatre will be thoroughly renovated, upholstered, and resetted. THE BOX PLAN is at Widman and Arey's. Dress Circle and Reserved Stalls, Four Shillings; Second Stalls, Two Shillings and Sixpence; Gallery, One Shilling. No Early Doors. No Booking Fee. Touring Manager, W. J. LINCOLN.

CHORAL HALL.

Under Direction of Frank Pullin. EDWARD REEVES, THE GREATEST ENTERTAINER, CHARACTER IMPERSONATOR, AND CHARMING STORYTELLER OF TO-DAY. 3 NIGHTS ONLY, COMMENCING MONDAY, DEC. 28th, TUESDAY, DEC. 29th, WEDNESDAY, DEC. 30th.

CROWDED HOUSES IN AUSTRALIA. His Recitals will include: CHARLES DICKENS' "A CHRISTMAS CAROL," CONAN DOYLE'S "EXPLOITS OF BRIGADIER GERARD," and RALPH CONNOR'S "SKY PILOT." Admission 3/ 2/ 1/. Box Plan at Widman and Arey's. Arrangements have been made with the Tramways to run the cars to and from Hall on each evening. Cars leave Three Lamps, Ponsonby, at 7 and 7.15 P.M. WALTER J. MANNING, Touring Representative.

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