

New Zealand troopers already at the Cape. He felt that the men now before him would do credit to themselves and to the colony. They were going to fight the battles of our country, and our Queen, and he prayed that He who knew all things would have them in His keeping. Some of them would be killed, but they would die in the service of their Queen and country. In conclusion the Premier wished the Contingent God-speed. (Cheers).

The Premier, whose powerful voice carried considerably further than the other speakers, was frequently applauded during his speech.

The third and last speaker was the Mayor of Wellington (Mr J. G. W. Aitken). He said he had received a telegram or a letter from nearly every Major in the colony, and all wished the Contingent every success.

After a Benediction, pronounced by Bishop Wallis, Chaplain of the Wellington Rifle Battalion, the bands struck up "Auld Lang Syne," and the grand old chorus was taken up by multitude with stirring effect. The Governor and party drove away immediately afterwards, followed by the Premier and family, and the other Ministers. Both His Excellency and the Premier were heartily cheered as the carriages passed along Jervois Quay. The ceremony over, the troops formed up in marching order again, and keeping the same order as before marched down to Queen's Wharf, where the Contingent embarked on the Waivera. Only the members of the Contingent and personal friends were allowed on the wharf, both sides of which were lined with volunteers.

Misses Matthews and McHarg, of Napier, who are at present on a visit to Auckland, have been spending last week at Rotorua, and return to the Grand Hotel to-day.

Mr J. Milne, for some time recently minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Auckland, left for the Old Country by the Alameda on Monday. Mr Milne who lately resigned his charge purposes to remain at Home.

Music & Drama

Sensational melodrama, with realistic scenery and appointments, reigns supreme in the Auckland Opera House where Bland Holt rightly draws tears and smiles alternately from full houses "How London Lives," which replaced "White Heather" on Wednesday of last week and ran till Saturday, was a drama with the same motif, virtue v. villainy, which forns the vertebrae of Mr Holt's pieces. On Monday last it made way for "New Babylon," a piece singularly rich in its stage effects and of absorbing interest. It is packed with sensational incident, and startling situations and gives scope for a good deal of strong acting. Moreover, it is well cast on the present occasion, all the leading roles finding finished interpreters in the company. For clearer scenic effect nothing that Bland Holt has put on the stage can exceed the shipwreck scene in "New Babylon." It is wonderfully realistic. Other excellent stage pictures are the cattle show, into which live bullocks, horses and sheep are introduced, and the Covent Garden fete.

The Pollards are said to be well satisfied with the success attending their production of "The Geisha" in Wellington. There is a probability that the company will make a tour of Australia in the near future.

Miss Nellie Stewart's father, who has been away from Australia for the last twenty years, is now treasurer for Mr J. C. Williamson at the Theatre Royal, Sydney.

The Gaiety Company, notwithstanding Bland Holt in Auckland, does not lack patronage.

Mr Howard Chambers is down for two songs nightly at the Palace, Sydney, and seems to enjoy a certain popularity. The company, Harry Rickard's Variety, has now gone over to the Criterion, and will remain there till the opening of the Tivoli on Easter Saturday, April 14th

After closing his season in Auckland on the 29th inst., Mr Rowley will take his waxworks show to the Thames, and later he intends to visit the Paris Exhibition. A special matinee is announced for Saturday.

Mr M. Marcus, the well-known theatrical agent, has been permanently engaged by Mr Harry Rickard's, and will probably act as resident manager of the Adelaide Bijou.

Mr Walter Bentley, who has recently been playing "David Garrick" in the Criterion, Sydney, with great success, is meditating the formation of a company of his own.

A drama called "The Absent Minded Beggar" was produced at the London Princess Theatre in November last, and the entire proceeds from the first performance given to the War Soldiers' Fund.

The honour of opening the new Municipal Opera House, Wanganui, on the 8th of next month, will rest with Bland Holt. The theatre is certainly one to be proud of, being capable of seating 1023 persons, but the question is how can Wanganui hope to fill or even half fill it?

Mr Edwin Geach is reported to have cabled to Mr Winston Churchill on behalf of a Melbourne syndicate offering the intrepid war correspondent £200 a week for a lecturing tour in the Australasian colonies. Mr Churchill, however, replied that he was unable to visit the colonies.

The Broughs brought their Christchurch season to a close on Wednesday last, the ever green "Niobe" being the final piece staged. The Company has had splendid audiences in the City of the Plains, where its high-class repertoire and finished acting have elicited loud encomiums.

A London writer says of Sullivan's music to "The Absent-minded Beggar":—"The setting is worthy of the poem and the subject, than which there can be no higher praise, and it will be surprising if the edition of 75,000 copies is not speedily snapped up. Messrs Enoch and Son, the famous music publishers of Great Marlborough Street W., have borne the

whole cost of preparing and bringing out this edition, and the proceeds will, without deduction of any kind, be handed over for the relief of the wives and children of the men serving in South Africa. The price is a shilling a copy, and the addition means an addition of £3750 to the "Daily Mail" Fund. There is no discount to the trade, and no professional copies. The song was written for a special object, the music was composed for a special object, and to that special object every penny of the proceeds will go.

Mr Alfred Daupier was fortunate in his choice of a play when he staged "Briton and Boer," a dramatisation of Rider Haggard's "Jess," for anything touching on the subject of the war cannot fail to take at the present moment.

Miss Rosie Rees of Gisborne, was one of the chosen three of the pupils who had their voices tried before Mr J. C. Williamson with a view to their future engagement in one of his companies.

"Sherlock Holmes" has been dramatised over in America, and is said to be a performance literally of lights and darkness. Mr Gillette was always a dramatist of peculiar originality, but the effects in this play of his and Dr. Doyle's it is said catch people by the throat and keep them breathless. The great scene is one of a diabolically ingenious attempt upon Holmes' life. Entrapped in a desolate old house, and hemmed in by a band of bloodthirsty villains, the detective is put to it to save his own and the heroine's lives. His plan has the simplicity of genius. By smashing the solitary lamp, he plunges the great room into pitch darkness. One glimmer of light only can be seen; the red glow of his cigar. At this the ruffians make a dash. It is seen disappearing; they rush for it; a melee ensues; a light is struck; and it is seen that under the cover of the darkness Holmes has fixed his glowing cigar in a cranny in the wall, and, while his assailants have been mauling one another in the confusion, has gained the door and locked it on them. Further

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