

Music and Drama.

OPERA HOUSE. POLLARD OPERA COMPANY.

THURSDAY, FRIDAY, AND SATURDAY.
20th, 21st, and 22nd NOVEMBER.
"HELLE OF NEW YORK."
"HELLE OF NEW YORK."
MONDAY, TUESDAY, AND WEDNESDAY.
2nd, 3rd, and 4th DECEMBER.
"LA POUPEE."
"LA POUPEE."
GRAND MATINEE.
EVERY SATURDAY AFTERNOON at 2.30.
SPECIAL PRICES.

The Pollards, who are doing splendid business in Auckland, withdrew "The Casino Girl" on Monday, substituting "The Geisha," which will be played to-night (Tuesday) and tomorrow night. On Thursday "The Belle of New York," which proved such a favourite with the Aucklanders, will be staged and run for the rest of the week.

On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of next week the favourite opera, "La Poupee," will be staged, and "La Perichole" will follow.

The Auckland public who have shown a lively appreciation of the Pollards this season will be glad to hear that the Company have booked the Easter dates at the Opera House. It is their intention to stage "San Toy" on that occasion.

The Auckland Choral Society gave their fifth performance of the season yesterday (Tuesday), just as we were going to press. The programme of the evening comprised the second and third parts of Coleridge Taylor's "Hiawatha," which were performed in response to a very large number of musical people who were charmed with the Society's recent rendering of the first part.

The management of the Auckland Opera House contemplate changes in the building which will considerably increase its accommodation and improve the theatre in other respects. A gallery capable of seating 500 people will be erected above the dress circle, and the present roof replaced by a movable one. The place will also be lighted by electricity instead of gas.

The Brunson Concert Company gave a performance in the Auckland Federal Hall on Saturday last which attracted a fair audience. The chief singers were Misses Ethel Moulton and Mary Laing, Mr W. Brunson and Mr J. Indor.

The Sisters Lingard, who were very popular when in Auckland last year, form one of the attractions this week at Dix's house. Madame Celine Robe, the xylophone player, Miss Amy Lewis, Mr Chas. Ewing, and the De Wynne Bros. are on the programme.

Miss Amy Castles promises to make as great a name for herself as her Australian country-woman, Madame Melba. A telegram from London last week announcing Miss Castles' successful debut quotes the "Times" comments on her singing, which are peculiarly laudatory. That paper says she has been admirably taught, and if she perseveres will reach a very high place. Her voice is of beautiful quality, resembling Madame Melba's.

Actors in the Crane-Power Company (says Melbourne "Arena") praise the unselfishness of the actor-manager, who they say is not always pining for the limelight and the fat parts himself, and who, whenever there is an enthusiastic call, instead of taking it all for himself generally contrives to bring forward some junior member to share in the sweets of applause.

Middle. Antonio Dolores (Trebelle) will begin her New Zealand season in Wellington early in February next. It was her intention to open last October, but her successful season in Australia necessitated an alteration in her arrangements. She is accompanied by Mr Clarence Newall, a very brilliant pianist.

Colonel Henry Mapleson, the well known impresario, who did the other day, was at one time a colonel in the British Army Reserve. Like his father before him he adopted the profession of operatic director, in which he was very successful both in London and New York.

In his memoirs the late Colonel Mapleson tells the following story of Sir Michael Costa, the great conductor:—

"Costa would have been horrified at the way in which operatic enterprises are now too frequently conducted, especially, I mean, in a musical point of view; works hurriedly produced, and in some cases without a single complete rehearsal. Often, no doubt, the prima donna (if sufficiently distinguished to be allowed to give herself airs) is in fault for the insufficient rehearsals, or for rehearsals being altogether dispensed with. When such singers as Mme. Patti and Mme. Nilsson stipulate that "the utility of rehearsing" shall be left to their judgment—which means that they shall never be called to any sort of rehearsal—all idea of a perfect ensemble must in their case be abandoned. Sir Michael would, I am sure, have protested against the acceptance of such conditions. Nothing would satisfy him but to go on rehearsing a work until everything, and especially until the ensemble pieces, were perfect. Then he would have one final rehearsal in order to assure himself that this perfection was maintained; and the opera could be played the night afterwards. Costa was born with the spirit of discipline strong within him. As a singer he would never have made his mark. In his original occupation, that of second tenor, his remarkable qualities were lost. As a conductor, on the other hand, his love of order, punctuality, regularity in everything, stood him in excellent part."

Miss Lulu Evans, leading lady sourette, and her brother, the comedian, are the two latest additions to Mr Pollard's theatrical throng. They were engaged for Mr Pollard by Mr Williamson when the latter was last in London, and are due in Sydney about the week after next. The probability is that they will be in this colony in time to open with the Company in Wellington on Boxing night.

Miss Ada Rehan, the American actress, is coming to Australia next year under engagement to Mr J. C. Williamson.

Mr Harry Plimmer and his wife have signed engagements with a well-established stock company in San Francisco.

Miss Florence Young, who with Mr Claude Bantock is coming to Australia to play in "San Toy," arrives in Melbourne next week.

Mr George Musgrove, with Miss Nellie Stewart, are due in Melbourne early next month. The Melbourne season will see the production of "The Fortune Teller" or "The Singing Girl," in addition to the pantomime "Little Red Riding Hood."

Mr Arthur C. Pell, the musical conductor of the Josephine Stanton Opera Company, may be remembered in musical circles here as the brilliant child-pianist who toured Australia during 1878-1880. That adventure possessed an element of romance. Little Pell's parents were well-to-do, and although the youngster had shown precocious talent as a pianist in New York concert rooms, they

deemed it wiser to keep him at school. Little nine-year-old Pell had ideas of his own, however. He secretly contracted with an entrepreneur for a visit to Australia, took train to San Francisco without his parents' knowledge, and thence embarked for Sydney. He stayed in Australia nearly three years, and was then sent for by his father, and returned to New York. His only recollection of Sydney is of "a park with an iron fence round it," his childish memories having been dimmed by a long illness, the result of a fever, which nearly ended his life. Mr Pell's mother was considered in her day the best amateur pianist in Brooklyn, and it was in her care that, after a period of schooling, he entered the Leipzig Conservatorium. He stayed there not quite the fixed term of three years, and before leaving Germany heard the first performance of "Parsifal" at Bayreuth under the great composer's personal direction.

Mr Wilson Barrett concludes his Sydney season on December 21st, and opens in Dunedin on December 28th. The New Zealand visit will be brief. The company has been playing "The Sign of the Cross," "The Manxman," "The Silver King," "Virginus," "Hamlet," and "Othello."

Mr Williamson has purchased the Australian rights of "The Toreador," one of the most successful pieces yet produced at the Gaiety, London.

The dramatic company organised for Australia by Mr George Musgrove will arrive in Sydney about March next.

Mr Walter Bentley made his re-appearance in Glasgow, after an absence of ten years, on September 16, with a revival of "Rob Roy." Mr Bentley, of course, appeared as the chieftain, and Madame Amy Sherwin was Diana Vernon, and "the Tasmanian nightingale" introduced several new songs.

Mr Gillette, author of "The Secret Service" and "Sherlock Holmes," who is to come to Australia next year, has extended his London season until the middle of January. He will then return to the States, and continue the run of "Sherlock Holmes," which is to be followed by a revival of "Hamlet." Mr Gillette will prepare his own version from the quarto edition, and make a great feature of the lighting of the production.

"San Toy" will be Mr Williamson's Christmas attraction in Melbourne, and "Alice in Wonderland" his Sydney production for the same season.

Says a San Francisco critic of Miss Hilda Spong, who is the rage there at present: "Tall, elegant, exquisitely attractive, in her smiling ease, equipped to the finger tips with the alluring graces of the queen of society, full of a fascinating suggestion of unsounded depths, with a play of feature and a trained grace of pose and gesture that holds the eye enraptured, with a charm of voice and variety and expressiveness of tone that make the ear hunger for more, she richly fulfils the dramatist's idea of the woman who, in a half-hour's chat, charms the heart out of the hitherto contained breast of the middle-aged bachelor."

Sir Henry Irving's American tour was to have commenced at New York on the 21st of last month.

Miss Amy Sherwin will sing the prima donna parts in "Rob Roy" for thirteen weeks in Scotland.

Fitzgerald's circus has no less than six advance agents in the colony preparing the way for the big show.

Tapley, the singer, has, it is said, been offered good engagements on the dramatic stage. It appears he has histrionic as well as vocal talent.

The Wanganni Amateur Operatic Society's performance of "Rip Van Winkle" was so good that the organization propose giving a second season shortly. Among those who chiefly distinguished themselves in Planquette's melodious production were Mr W. Pawson (Rip), Mr George Swan (Nick Vedder), Miss Lufford (Gretchen), and Miss Pawson (Katrina).

HERE AND THERE.

The Rev. Edward Walker's calculations of the colony's drink bill are plainly designed with a view of proving that the drinkers are drinking more heavily than ever. This, indeed, is the only conclusion he can get compatible with the undoubted increase in the amount of liquor consumed by the colony, and his own prejudices in favour of the success of the prohibition cause. According to his showing the expenditure on drink per head of the population in the colony is £3 8/4. But when he has deducted the children and Prohibitionists who do not drink, and the 10,000 Maori women who are not allowed to drink, and divides the drink bill among what is left of the people, the amount per head comes to £7 16/3, or some £40 per household. As, however, he very properly supposes that many who are neither children nor avowed Prohibitionists are practically total abstainers, a further weeding out of the sheep from the goats will still further increase the proportion of the drink bill which the individual drinker has to account for. The result we arrive at is certainly staggering—£60 a household or so. Considering the enormous number of non-temperance families whose total income is not much more than twice that sum, Mr. Walker's calculations hardly carry conviction. I am afraid his prohibition bias throws him out. In his devotion to his mission his manifest tendency is to saddle the poor so-called drinkers with more than their full share of the drink. The increase he points out might as reasonably and more justly perhaps be accounted for by presuming a slight rise in the drink consumption of the temperance as opposed to the total abstaining section of the community. But the Prohibitionist is alas! the apostle of extremes. He that is drunken let him be more drunken still, rather than we should admit the increase of a moderate indulgence among the people generally! There is their attitude.

According to a Christchurch paper Mr Seddon and Mr Pirani recently "tried" their weight at a bazaar at Ashurst, when the Premier's portly figure caused the hand on the dial plate of the machine to fly round to twenty stone, while his illipitian "friend" could not register eight and a half stone. Mr Seddon is the biggest man in Parliament and Mr Pirani the smallest, but no member in the house makes his weight so felt against the Ministerial benches as Mr Pirani does his hundredweight, and no man bumps against the Premier with more effect than does that same little member.

The Attorney-General of South Australia has promised the Society for the Protection of Birds that he will bring in a Bill making it a penal offence to wear the plumage of birds. There was a time when such a measure might have fluttered Fashion's dove coats, but at present the small bird, in part or whole, is an unusual ornament in ladies' hats or head dresses. The ostrich plume still holds its place, but as it is obtained at little or no sacrifice on the part of the bird the society does not make war on its wearers.

The lady who was engaged by the Government some time ago to give health lectures or something of the sort—one of the curious freaks of our paternal administration—is reported to be organising a crusade against the small waist. She is appealing to the male portion of the population to discountenance the contortion of the figure of which so many ladies are supposed to be guilty, and a great many no doubt are. She advocates the abolition of the corset altogether, an extreme in which I am by no means so certain that the gentlemen would support her, for the latter are also the slaves of fashion to some extent, and their eyes have been so long used to the incourning line that a Venus-like liberality of waist might offend them. Then it could only be the married men who could, with any propriety, protest against the slender waist, and that only in their own families, where it is well known their opinion on the subject would go for very little.