

# Music and Drama.

## OPERA HOUSE.

Under the Direction of  
MR J. C. WILLIAMSON.  
A MUSICAL EVENT FRAUGHT WITH  
THE GREATEST INTEREST.  
MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY NEXT,  
MAY 12th and 14th.  
POSITIVELY THESE TWO CONCERTS  
ONLY.

THE PEOPLE'S YOUNG PRINCESS  
OF SONG.

AMY CASTLES.  
Fresh from her London and Australian  
Triumphs.

MISS CASTLES  
Will be supported by the following  
Brilliant Combination:—

MISS UNA BOURNE, Pianist  
MISS MAUD DALRYMPLE, Contralto  
MISS NORA MCKAY, Violinist  
MR R. NEEDHAM, Baritone  
HERR BENNO SCHERER, Accompanist.

And by Special Engagement,  
SIGNOR CARLO DANI, the Magnificent  
Young Italian Tenor, who created a  
Furore of Enthusiasm during Mr  
Williamson's recent Grand Opera Season.

Musical Director:  
HERR BENNO SCHERER.  
HAROLD ASHTON,  
Business Manager.

Miss Amy Castles, whose portrait appears on another page of this issue, is having a most triumphal progress through New Zealand, the rush to hear the famous young soprano being everywhere tremendous. The Auckland season commences on Monday next, and judging from what one hears, the "boom" in the Northern Capital will transcend anything in the south, great as the booking and receptions there were. Booking was to have commenced at 9 a.m. this morning, but owing to the speculation which has occurred in Wellington, where good seats were re-sold for £1 1/2, the management decided to sell the Auckland seats by auction to-day (Wednesday) at noon, at the Opera House.

It is needless to enlarge here on Miss Castles' abilities and gifts. By all accounts they are phenomenal. Critics have differed as to whether her voice is as beautiful as when she went Home to study, but no one has suggested that the lavish laudations of that voice are overdone. New Zealanders have heard a great—a very great—singer in Trebelli, as they prefer to call Mdlle. Dolores, and have a fine standard by which to judge the younger singer who, it must be remembered, does not pose as the finished article. The range, flexibility, and velvety quality of Miss Castles' voice are said by great Melbourne critics to be wonderful indeed. Auckland can record its opinion on Monday next.

The want of a larger Opera House in Auckland is amply demonstrated by the demand for accommodation in request for the Castles' concerts. It is certain the theatre will not hold half the persons who wish to attend the concerts, either on Monday or Wednesday next.

Dani, who accompanies Miss Castles, rivals her in the sensation he creates. Never, so say those who have heard him, has so pure, yet powerful, a tenor been heard in the colonies. Mr Needham is also well spoken of as a baritone of exceptional quality, and in fact the company, as a whole, is exceptionally strong.

The Auckland Choral Society gave their second concert of the season last evening at the Choral Hall. Schumann's "Paradise and Peri" was performed. The event took place too late for any criticism this week.

Mr Gregan McMahon, who now plays Horace Parker in the "Messenger from Mars," on tour in Westralia, was arrested and fined in Perth for obstructing the police. The case appears to have been a very extraordinary one, the police and magistrates acting in a very officious and offensive manner; yet Mr McMahon has every right to go on saying, "Splendid force the police." The irony of it!

When McAdoo's Jubilee Singers were in Broken Hill the other day two of the company stayed at the "swagger" hotel of the town. Their presence annoyed several of the would-be aristocrats who also patronise the hostelry, and a protest was lodged with the manager, objecting to the presence of coloured people in the dining-room, and if that hotel persisted in allowing it they would remove their patronage. The hotel people, sensibly, said that while the singers behaved properly they would be treated as anyone else, and pointed out that in decency and education the objected-to coons were a model to many white men, even to some of the objectors.

Mr W. S. Percy, of Pollards, who is to be married to Miss Ramsay (late of the Co.) in Dunedin, received several wedding presents before leaving Auckland last week. Mr Percy is in private life of a studious turn of mind. Many actors are abstainers, but few are like Mr Percy, both temperance men and non-smokers.

On June 25 the Wellington Amateur Opera Club will produce the "Yeomen of the Guard," with the strongest amateur cast ever made up for an opera in this colony. If a fine orchestra is engaged, and the "Yeomen" needs an exceptional one, the performers should be worth going far to hear and see.

An amusing incident occurred at the Queen's Hall sacred concert, London, on Ash Wednesday evening. It so happened that Miss Ada Crossley, who was to have been the great attraction of the evening, found at the last moment her voice so out of order owing to a cold that she decided not to sing. The disappointing circumstance was duly notified on huge posters stuck all round the hall. Miss Crossley, however, was sufficiently "fit" to be able to take a place among the audience, and, with a party of friends, was conducted to the front of the stalls. The usher, who apparently had imagined from the posters that she was seriously ill, only recognised her when handing her a programme. The man started as though he had seen a ghost, and exclaimed in tones that sent the whole house into roars of laughter: "Good Lord! it's Ada Crossley!"

Mr George Willoughby throws some light upon the recent episode in a Cork theatre, when the representation of "The Dandy Fifth" caused a riot, owing to the pro-Boer feelings of the audience. Mr Willoughby has himself played in this piece, Miss Florence Young being at the time a member of the same company. Mr Willoughby did not visit Cork with "The Dandy Fifth," but he did visit Limerick with "Patience," and the chorus of dragon guards, "The Soldiers of the Queen," in that popular production proved such an unwelcome number that the audience expressed their disapproval by pelting the singers with ginger-beer bottles.

An attempt was made by Mr. James Rawson Bapty to prevent Miss Janet Waldorf from appearing under the management of Mr. Williamson, but this broke down, and the injunction to prohibit her performing for Mr. Williamson was refused.

As Juliet Miss Waldorf has received exceedingly high praise from the Australian critics. "Handsomely and richly costumed (says the "Telegraph"), the actress made a favourable impression by her appearance at once, and when her first opportunity came in the balcony scene—"the noblest paeon to love ever written"—she secured a hold on her audience, which she never lost. It was delicately, tenderly and modestly done, and with just that touch of girlish joyousness that was needed to give it additional charm. There is one strikingly commendable feature about everything Miss Waldorf attempts, it is her propriety of action and demeanour, and without being tame, she

tempers her fire with a judicious restraint. One wonders what some of the New Zealand critics who patronised Miss Waldorf with the faint praise which damns, will say to this handsome and carefully-worded tribute.

The revival of "Dorothy" in Melbourne has proved a tremendous success. Collier's tuneful work has been rapturously greeted. Miss Florence Young, well remembered in New Zealand, plays Dorothy, and dainty Grace Palotta Lydia, while Lauri is inimitable as ever as Lurcher. Other members of the cast are not well known to New Zealanders.

Mr. Dix's Dunedin Variety Company is going on tour of the middle-sized Southern cities.

The post of Master of Music to the King of England carries with it a salary of £300 a year.

Mr. Fred Duval, general manager for Mr. P. R. Dix, has booked the Theatre Royal, Invercargill, from the 12th to 17th May. A strong company of vaudeville artists will appear.

The Adelaide season of Mr. Williamson's second musical comedy company has been very successful, and this company will now go to the West. Mr. Williamson explains that he has so many musical plays that it has been absolutely necessary to form this second company to produce them, and he hopes to bring it up to the standard of the Royal Comic Opera Company. Why doesn't Mr. Williamson send this company over to New Zealand? The "Graphic" would go bail it would have a right royal reception.

The cost of producing "Ben Hur" at Drury Lane is estimated at from £15,000 or £20,000. Four chariots take part in the celebrated race scene. May Mr. Arthur Collins have more luck than Mr. J. C. Williamson.

Mr. James Doel, the oldest living actor, on March 9th celebrated his 98th birthday, and was the recipient of numerous congratulations at his residence at Stonehouse, Devon. Among the telegrams received was one from Lord Charles Beresford. Even within two years of being a centenarian, Mr. Doel, though feeble, enjoys remarkably good health, eats and drinks well, and still smokes two or three cigars a day. He does not touch alcohol, and has always been an abstainer. He reads little now, and has not been out for several months. He barely knew of the recent visit of the King and Queen to Plymouth, and, being out of the route of the decorations and festivities, saw nothing of it, except the fireworks, which were visible from his windows, and on which he feasted with childish delight. Nor can he write, his last attempt being to affix his autograph to the volume which the theatrical profession are to present to King Edward VII. at the Coronation. This he did, though with much difficulty. It is extraordinary to think of a career which began in supporting Edmund Kean at Exeter long before "the little man in the capes" came to take the town by storm at Drury Lane. But Mr. Doel was scarcely a child when he rowed out with his mother to see Napoleon enter Plymouth Sound as a prisoner. Mr. Doel has not "lagged superfluous on the stage." He gave up acting in 1881, and until a year or two ago this veteran wore no overcoat and carried no stick, but, as stated, latterly his physical strength has partially failed.

Sydney "Bulletin's" opinion of the late De Witt Talmage is characteristically flippant—and amusing. In its exaggerated way, too, it is true. The pur (bowdlerised) says: "Nobody could listen to Talmage and imagine for a moment that he believed in the dreamy, unworlly, unpractical gospel of the New Testament. He talked of Heaven fiercely through his nose as if it was an 'ho-tel,' and he talked of Hell savagely through his nose as if it was another ho-tel where the liquor was worse than at the previous one. There was no reverence about Talmage. He was a bagman, pure

and simple, carrying samples of creed in his "grip." Talmage was a dry, hot, feverish, eloquent hustler; a frightful elocutionist; a humorist of a kind, with an irrepressible tendency to wink confidentially at the Twelve Apostles, and an utter inability to disguise his opinion that, if he had been an apostle, he would have made things fly along a good deal faster, or have burst up Galilee in the attempt. The foolishness of these twelve unpractical pedestrians in not floating the business into a good syndicate at the start, and letting Pilate have some preference shares so as to keep him solid, and building a railway, so that the Gospel could be rushed to Ephesus or Thessalonica at 35 miles an hour, always appeared to weigh on Talmage. It was probably the thought of that wasted opportunity which killed him in the end.

Bland Holt is not likely to be seen in Auckland for rather over two years. He has pencilled the Opera House, Wellesley-street, for the Christmas dates for 1904. That is somewhat of a far cry, and is the record gap between Mr Holt's visits for a very long time past. Without the broughs and without Mr and Mrs Holt, Baker, Norman and the rest of that clever company, one feels a distinct sense of something wanting as the theatrical year goes round.

"Kitty Grey," which Mr Williamson has secured for Australia, is so successful in London that Mr George Edwardes has made no extensive preparations for the piece to follow. This will be "The Three Little Maids," the dialogue and lyrics written by Mr Charles Hands and M. Paul Rubens, while Mr Rubens is the composer of the music. Mr Edwardes describes it as an "enlarged German reed piece." The three little maids will be presented by Miss Edna May, Miss Ada Reeve, and Miss Ethel Irving. At the termination of its run Miss Edna May will go to Australia to fulfil a long-standing engagement. Mr. Williamson says that as he has the pieces to be produced at the Gaiety, Dulys and the Apollo Theatres, as well as the Savoy, he practically controls all the principal operatic and comic successes for some years to come.

### FOR CORONATION DAY.

A possible feature of Coronation Day—if precedent be followed—will be free performances at all the theatres the evening of Coronation Day. In 1878 there were gratuitous representations at the following playhouses:—Drury Lane, Covent Garden, Haymarket, St. James', English Opera House, Olympic, Adelphi, Strand, Astley's, Surrey, Sadler's Wells, City of London, Pavilion, Kensington, Garrick, Standard, Grecian Saloon, White Conduit House, Apollo Saloon, Royal Victoria Gardens, and Bagnigge Wells. Next June the public might hope to choose from a much longer list. Free theatrical entertainments are not uncommon in Paris, where there are subsidised theatres, but they would be a great novelty in London, and theatre managers do not seem to be enthusiastic about the proposition, although they profess willingness to obey any royal command that may be issued on the subject, while they do not want to lose the money-making opportunities of the Coronation season.

The Plague has come to light again  
To give us all a scare;  
Death stares us in the face, that's plain,  
Let everyone take care.  
Attend to every ailment that  
You may have to endure,  
Drive off your cough and put on fat  
With WOODS' GREAT PEPPERMINT  
CURE.

NAPIER & FITZHERBERT,  
SOLICITORS.

N.B.—MONEY TO LEND on Freehold and Chattel Security at Current Rates of Interest.

VICTORIA ARCADE,  
Queen-st. Auckland.