

# Music and Drama.

By BAYREUTH.

## BOOKINGS.

(Dates Subject to Alteration.)

**AUCKLAND—HIS MAJESTY'S**  
November 17 to 19—Mr. Potter.  
November 21 to 26—Auckland Competitions Society.  
November 28 to December 3—MacMahon Bros.  
December 5 to 17—Meynell and Gunn (George Willoughby).  
December 19 to 24—MacMahon Bros.  
December 29 (three weeks' season)—Allan Hamilton.  
**THE OPERA HOUSE.**  
In Season—Fuller's Pictures.

## TIVOLI.

**WELLINGTON—OPERA HOUSE.**  
Nov. 7 to Nov. 14—William Anderson.  
Nov. 17 to Nov. 24—Johnson-Jeffries Pictures.  
Nov. 25 to Dec. 23—Vacant.  
Dec. 23 to Jan. 14—Royal Comice.  
Jan. 18 to Feb. 2—J. C. Williamson.  
Feb. 3 to Feb. 9—George Willoughby.  
May 17 to June 7—J. C. Williamson.  
August 17 to August 27—J. C. Williamson.  
**THEATRE ROYAL.**  
Vaudeville (permanent).

## Ward Joins Williamson.

THE cable announcement this week that Hugh Ward is to retire in June next and take a hand in J. C. Williamson Ltd., will be news for the theatrical world of Australasia. The announcement may be interpreted to mean that J. C. W. himself will for the future remain at "home" to act as principal for the firm in the selection of plays for Australasia. The portly figure and genial smile of the Australian manager is likely also to be absent from Australia for reasons other than business. He has a partiality for the baths at Marienbad, where many an overried constitution has gained increased years of usefulness by being handy to "the waters." The firm which only last year added "Ltd." to the name of its principal will be all the stronger for the inclusion of Hugh J. Ward in its ranks. There is no other actor-manager in Australasia better suited by ability or experience to undertake the difficult and delicate task of producing and directing dramatic productions of Australasia. He has plenty of youth, energy, and progressive initiative. Mr. Ward was not talking altogether "in the clouds" when he said to me, in an interview that appeared in these pages on August 3rd last, "I look to the future for the realisation of better things. It is never wise to prophesy, but it seems to me the day is not so far distant as one might suppose when there will be room for the intellectual drama to take its place in our artistic life."

Mr. Ward is a believer in what has been claimed in these columns often enough, namely, that there is a definite class of people on this side of the world who are sincerely desirous of getting into touch with modern plays. The activities of Shakespeare (or "Shakspere," as our more eclectic friends spell it) societies and the range of their readings are a manifestation of that desire. Let me recall the Actor-Manager's own words last August:—"There would be ample material to draw on if the public responded. As it is, the demand which exists, I believe, can be met from the box office point of view by giving occasional performances. I mean special matinees—say once a week, on the lines adopted by the Court Theatre in London in the days of the Vedrenne-Barker combinations."

It is one of Mr. Ward's ambitions to see the intellectual classes of the public catered for as well as those who support melodrama and farcical comedies. With the resources of a powerful organisation it will be possible for him to materialise those ambitions. I understand from a private source in Sydney that the site has been procured and a special theatre is to be built by J. C. Williamson, Ltd., in one of the Australian cities which will conform to the needs of the modern play. Following the lead given in London and other centres, the theatre will be small enough to permit audiences to follow the expression of the actors. No long runs will be risked. Short seasons and frequent changes of programme are more likely to be the order of the day, so that intellectual plays will have some chance of succeeding without exhaust-

ing the resources of the audiences who are eager to see them.

The advent of Mr. Ward into the Williamson camp may therefore be looked to as an event of unusual importance to the drama of Australasia. He is an actor of exceptional experience. His boyhood was spent in a stock theatre at Pittsburgh. He has played in England and America. His pantomime work in London was quite a feature at the time he rose to prominence in the metropolis. His ventures have carried him into the Far East, whilst in his own words he knows Australasia "through and through." Altogether, apart from his capacity as manager, Mr. Ward is thoroughly in sympathy with the modern dramatists of to-day who are endeavouring to get the public to realise that shoddy sensationalism, crude emotions and "legs and tomfoolery" are the least of desirable things in the drama.

## Auckland's Big Week.

The Auckland Competitions Society have issued their time-table for the big week that is to fill the Northern City with song, recitation, speech and music on the week commencing with 21st. With considerably over 1300 entries to handle, and competitors innumerable looming large in the landscape, Auckland is going to have a busy time crowding all the events into the time that Scripture tells us the earth was made in. His Majesty's Theatre will be given night and day, whilst both the Y.M.C.A. Hall and the Choral Hall will take up their share of the events. The competitions are due to start on Monday, 9.30 a.m., at the Theatre with the pianoforte solo ("Moonlight Sonata") and "Humorous Recital" at the Y.M.C.A. Hall at the same hour. The official opening, however, will take place at 3 p.m. in the Theatre, when a large gathering is sure to take place to inaugurate Auckland's well-directed effort towards scaling the heights of musical and literary culture.

## "A Woman's Way."

"A Woman's Way," staged by Arthur Chudleigh, is the title of a somewhat pretty comedy produced at the Comedy Theatre in London last month, with Miss Alexandra Carlisle, a clever and beautiful actress in the forefront of the lighter stage at Home, in the leading part. The play (writes a critic) introduces a series of delightful duels of social fencing—a wife for all her wit is worth on behalf of her husband and for the sake of his wavering love. "A Woman's Way" is the way that Mr. Barrie discovered in "What Every Woman Knows"; if your husband is like to fall in love with another woman, invite her to your house, give him opportunities to see how much nicer, and sweeter, and more womanly you are. Do all this with a proper sense of humour, and there will be no more need of divorce courts.

This is what Effie Waldron did when Alan, her husband, a great motorist, and a flying man, was smashed up in a motor-car while driving the "beautiful Mrs. Verney." While the newspapers are talking of an "Impending Divorce Case" (the play, by the way, comes from America), and the parents and brothers and cousins are wanting Effie to pack up and leave her husband, she declines to follow "the hypocrisy of the conventions," and does just the opposite.

## Invitation to Dinner.

She invites Mrs. Verney to dinner, to meet the whole family, none of whom knows that Mrs. Verney is the heroine of the motor accident. And it appears that while the foolish husband thought he was the only man who ever called Mrs. Verney "Puss," she has heard that pet name from nearly every male member of the family. They are all respectably married now, but they all had a flirtatious past with Mrs. Verney!

The comedy develops into a drawing-room farce. The situations are none the less laughable if they are obvious, for the acting is delightful, and every sentence of the dialogue is well turned and witty. "I believe it's because we've got too much money," says Alan Waldron gloomily, when he is asked why

relations between his wife and himself are a little strained.

"This is one of the moments of life when I want you to forget you're a woman and try to be sane," says an impassioned lover. "You're looking very well, General," Nora's mother remarks jolly to Alan's father, who is touchy on the point of his age. "Old age shows up less in the male than in the female," the General retorts with a gobble.

It all works on brightly and gaily enough to the happy goal appointed for the "woman's way," which leads to Effie's triumph, to Mrs. Verney's discomfiture, and to the disappointment of all who had been setting their mouths for a tit-bit of family scandal.

## "An Arrant Humbug." An Unprincipled Liar."

The aviator-actor, Robert Loraine, has come to light in London with a new piece, "The Man from the Sea," written by W. J. Locke. Mr. Loraine is a young actor of the type that is best described as dashing. His style is an agreeable blend of Sir Charles Wyndham's suavity and William Terriss' breeziness. The leading character is described by the "Times" as "an arrant humbug . . . an unprincipled liar." No seaman who ever lived could have talked as Jan Redlander talks. He "spouts poetry" by the yard, and most of his lines are Alexandrines which scan beautifully. Men from the sea do not usually apostrophise the "surf breaking on the coral reef and the lap of the waves in the blue lagoons." They are not customarily capable of delivering themselves, in the rush of conversation of such a mouthful as "the constabulary—an artificial adjunct to artificial civilisation." They do not hold shells to ladies' ears and inform them, ecstatically, that if they listen intently they will hear the whirring of the seabirds' wings and receive the eternal, mysterious message of the sea.

## Conversational Seaman.

The conversation of a man from the sea is altogether more abrupt, and infinitely more convincing. Therefore, Jan Redlander, despite his overpowering breeziness, is no true example of the

type of men who go down to the sea in ships. He is an exotic—a figment of the dramatist's imagination.

That Mr. Loraine should be able to make such a character in the least bit convincing speaks volumes for his histrionic ability and for the vigour of his personality.

"The story of 'The Man from the Sea' is said to be as artificial as the title-part.

Jan Redlander is a modern Ulysses; a restless rover, who has braved the world from China to Ecuador, from Arizona to Cape Horn. After twelve years of adventure he returns to his dear, kind, restful folk in that backwater of the world, the English cathedral town of Durdleham.

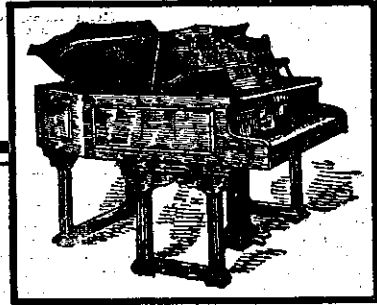
The soul of joyous Jan revolts, of course, against the woeful ways of Durdleham, and in his wrath he coins a phrase, "to durdle," which will become as popular as the historic "to sweedle" in a recent comedy by Mr. Henry Arthur Jones.

He catches, for example, a Durdlehamite in the act of reading a book, entitled "Edifying Opinions on Death by Several Eminent Divines." That, indeed, "is the drivelling essence of durdling." Oh! the cackling tea-parties, the decorous dinners of Durdleham! Give Jan Redlander "the throb of doing, and not durdling!"

## "Crystallised Conscience."

But the one particular nut in the way of durdling that Jan is determined to crack is "that hardest thing in the world, a crystallised conscience." The owner of the conscience is his former flame, Marion Lee, whom he is bent on marrying—and does marry in the end.

Marion Lee's bosom friend, Daphne Averill, is living with a Durdleham doctor while her husband—a thief, drunkard, gambler—is serving four years' penal servitude in an Australian gaol. Slightly Marion Lee's first impulse on learning her friend's secret is to tell the Dean—whereupon the erring Daphne would quickly be durdled out of Durdleham. Redlander, aware how little the Averills were to blame for the irregularity of their union, set himself to defeat



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