

these gentlemen are recognised as leading authorities in their professions, and they have acted as adjudicators at all the principal competition festivals in Australasia. In Sydney, Mr. Orchard occupies a very high position in musical circles, and as conductor of the Sydney Liedertafel and Madrigal Society his musical abilities are remonstrated by the magnificent performances which these Societies give under his direction. As a composer Mr. Orchard has also achieved fame, several of his songs and Choral works having become extremely popular in England and Australia. As an adjudicator, Mr. Orchard has been most successful, and the demand for his services in this capacity are more than he can fill, and the Auckland Competitions Society is fortunate in having secured such a thorough musician and adjudicator. The eloquent adjudicator, Mr. W. L. Paine, has had a most distinguished career, and ever since 1883 when he was champion of the famous Ballarat Festival he has won success as performer, teacher and adjudicator. In conjunction with Mr. Walter Bentley, Mr. Paine has appeared in many Shakesperian productions, and latterly with the assistance of Mrs. Paine has conducted in Melbourne "The Modern Academy of Eloquence," which is recognised as the finest elocution school in Victoria. For the past 20 years Mr. Paine has adjudicated at all the leading festivals, including Ballarat, Melbourne (six years), Launceston, Hobart, Hamilton, Queensland, and many others, at all of which his work was appreciated by the societies, competitors and public, and all intending competitors for the Auckland competitions, which are to be held in August, should have the greatest confidence in Mr. Paine's judgments, and benefit by his good advice.

Empire Day Concert.

Amongst the various efforts which are being made to draw together in closer comradeship the scattered members of this great Empire, none should appeal more strongly than the claims of music. Above all things, music and song are calculated to rouse patriotic and brotherly sentiment, a fact which was fully demonstrated by the enthusiastic progress of the Sheffield Choir. There are two societies now working in Auckland whose objects are common, although the work lies in somewhat different directions. The one the "Over-seas Club" has as part of its creed—the pledge, "to maintain the heritage handed down to us by our fathers," and as its special work, the establishing in Auckland of an Emigration Bureau, through the medium of which emigrants of a suitable class will be sought for and assisted on their arrival.

The "Victoria League" is so named in memory of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria. It is a non-party Association of British men and women. Its objects are to advance the general interests of the Empire as a whole, and to promote and foster every movement calculated to effect a closer union between the Mother Country and the colonies. It receives and distributes Imperial information and assists with advice and hospitality Britons from all parts of the Empire visiting Great Britain or the Overseas Dominion. The League also takes care of the graves of soldiers and others who have rendered service to the Empire.

On Empire Day, Friday the 24th inst., a grand patriotic concert will be given in aid of the funds of these Societies. The artists appearing have given their services gratuitously as their quota to Imperialism, and a glance at their names will reveal the excellent programme which will be submitted to the public.

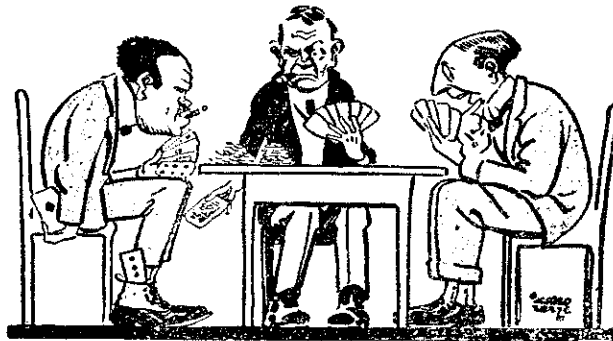
The following ladies and gentlemen will sing: Madame Wilaert, Madame Beatrice Markstedt, Mrs. Sutherland, Miss Mackenzie, Messrs. H. Barry Coney, Oliver Farrow, and Wilfrid Manning, whilst Herr Pechotzsch will give one of his celebrated violin solos, and Miss Edith Jay will be the elocutionist. Mr. W. T. Sharp will play appropriate organ numbers, and the Birkenhead Musical Society and the Dominion Boy Scouts will sing choruses of a patriotic nature. His Excellency the Governor, who is patron to both the societies, under whose auspices the concert is being given, has kindly signified his intention of being present. The following ladies and gentlemen are the concert committee:—Messdames Hope Lewis, Sutherland, Daw, J. J. Culpan; Messrs. Horace H. Hunt (chairman), S. Choumelis, J. G. Culpan; Miss Statham and Mr. J. C. Raine (joint secretaries).

Von Ark, Illusionist.

Von Ark, the "magician," and illusionist, opened his Auckland season at His Majesty's Theatre on Saturday night. Although a large number of his tricks lacked novelty, he possesses undoubted skill and dexterity, and goes to work in a quick, business-like style. Many of his best illusions are cleverly carried out with the assistance of a lady, who appears and disappears at will, and, indeed, completely baffles the audience, even to the man who is always ready to explain "how it is done." The final illusion is particularly striking. The lady is tied up in a bag, and placed in a trunk which is locked and corded up. The trunk is concealed in a cabinet, inside which Von Ark goes also. In a few seconds the curtain is lifted to show the girl outside the trunk and the conjuror inside the box and bag, both locked and tied as before. An eccentric juggling "turn" by George Murphy caused a good deal of amusement. Professor Dean gives an exhibition of burlesque hypnotism which can be taken seriously by those who wish to do so. He is assisted by several "subjects" who are all readily suscep-

tributed to Mr Sauer that, to his mind, Josef Hofmann is "the greatest pianist in the world to-day." And the older pianist is further credited with the opinion that it is only Hofmann's want of personality and lack of "long, flowing locks" that prevents the public from recognising his claim to that exalted position. It must be some years since Hofmann played in this country, where, indeed, he is chiefly remembered as a prodigy of quite extraordinary powers. But that was in the eighties, before wonder-children, pianistic and otherwise, became a glut in the musical market.

While it does not take the shine out of the 1902 production, says the Sydney "Referee," the revival of "Ben Hur" at the Theatre Royal claims recognition as an important theatrical event. Only in regard to the dressing of the religious melodrama was there an opening left for fault-finding. The stage costumes were richer and more "in time" when "Ben Hur" was performed at Her Majesty's. With insufficient time for the work of preparation in this department, the producers, Mr. Wybert Stamford and Mr. James W. Hazlitt, and the wardrobe mistress, Miss Emily Nathan, did all that could be reasonably expected of them. Still the observant ones in the crowded audience must have noticed that lack of harmony in the colours and the jar-



PLAY TITLES TRAVESTIED.

"The Pigeon."

tile to the influence of the Professor, and in addition show a decided ability towards comedy.

The entertainment, with various alterations and additions, will be repeated nightly for a limited season.

Stray Notes.

The Kaiser is planning a new opera-house for Berlin. His desire is that the building shall be simple in design, and not be overloaded with ornamentation. The present opera-house seats 1800 people, but His Majesty wishes the new building to seat 2500. At the Kaiser's desire there will be a considerable number of places for sale at a very moderate figure.

Mr. Julius Knight, is appearing at the Repertory Theatre in Manchester—the Gaiety—and won tributes from the critics for his performance in a leading role in Mrs. W. K. Clifford's play, "The Likeness of the Night." The "Guardian" critic writes:—"No praise can be too high for Mr. Julius Knight. His performance was admirable throughout in tone and feeling, and technically a most finished piece of acting."

There have been about 2000 performances of "Charley's Aunt" in London. Nineteen years ago the play was produced at the old Globe Theatre, where it ran for over four years—the longest run ever enjoyed by a play in the West End of London, consisting of over 1400 consecutive performances. In the whole of the United Kingdom the play has been performed some 3000 times, and about five million persons have seen it. "Charley's Aunt" has been translated and played in every country on the Continent, and has even captured the theatres in Japan. In Germany the Kaiser commanded two special performances. Taking the entire world, it is estimated that "Charley's Aunt" has been played 25,000 times, and that about 25,000,000 persons have seen it.

The J. C. Williamson firm has recently acquired, amongst other plays, "Milestones," the artistic play written by Mr. Arnold Bennett in collaboration with the author of "Kismet," Mr. Edward Knoblauch, and produced not long since in London. "Nightbirds," the clever adaptation by Miss Gladys Unger of "Die Fledermaus," will reach Sydney in June, at the Criterion. Mr. Fred Niblo and Miss Josephine Cohn (sister of Mr. George Cohan, the well known New York author and manager) have been engaged

ring modernity of some of the dress designs took off from the effectiveness of stage pictures which were otherwise admirable from the spectacular point of view. On the principle of compensation the leading part was played in a much better manner than it was played ten years ago. In a sense the brilliant personal achievement of Mr. Eric Maxon in the character of Ben Hur was the saving grace of the revival. The young English actor who came to Australia with Mr. H. B. Irving dominated the performance, and won his laurels in the manner of an artist who has, at his command, in addition to fire, fervour, and feeling, the enviable quality which seems to surround an actor with the atmosphere of romance in a romantic part. It was the union of the man and the opportunity. Within a few days (says the writer of Musical Notes in the "London Daily Telegraph" of March 28th) London has given a welcome recently to three pianists who have long been numbered among the giants of the keyboard. Their names are Sauer, Busoni, and Godowsky—we give them in the order in which the artists appeared, and not according to their respective merits in the view either of the public or of any individual. The question as to which of the three deserves to rank highest is one that only the greatly daring would answer off-hand. Indeed, if the reply had to be dictated by purely technical considerations, very few people, even after mature reflection, would care to supply it. And who, to take an even knottier problem, would venture to lay down an emphatic opinion as to who is the greatest living pianist? Our thoughts are directed to the question by seeing the statement at-

The trouble moaned and sighed his tale,
Threw up his eyes and sighed—
"If I should try to kill and fail,
I'm down for suicide."
He bit a larynx savagely,
But Woods' Great Promerium Cure
Came down and killed him instantly,
And saved the patient sure.

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AT 8.

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HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

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