



[By ORPHEUS.]

"Orpheus" will be glad to hear from those managers of theatrical companies touring New Zealand who desire that the public shall know the movements of the companies. Any information as to dates, etc., will be acknowledged in these columns, as well as any other items of interest to the theatrical world. All letters should be addressed—"Orpheus," SPORTING AND DRAMATIC REVIEW, Vulcan Lane, Auckland.

"THE MESSIAH."—Two performances of Handel's great oratorio were given last week in the Choral Hall, with the Exhibition soloists as principals. The first, on Tuesday evening, was the Choral Society's annual production. As it was greatly marred by a brass band playing close by during the evolutions of Professor Lawrence's pupils and other difficulties, including defiance on the part of the organ to observe Talleyrand's trite maxim, "Surtout point de zèle." I prefer noticing Thursday's "Messiah," which was a good performance all round. The orchestra played in good tune and with delicacy and precision. The chorus sang nobly, with the exception of a slip by a soprano in "For Unto Us," and the soloists acquitted themselves well. Mr John Prouse again was *facile princeps* with his pure style, correct phrasing, and clear enunciation. "Thus Saith the Lord," "But Who May Abide," "A Refiner's Fire," and "Why Do the Nations," were all examples of what oratorio singing should be. His efforts were warmly applauded. Mr John Hill was in capital voice and form, winning approval for "Comfort Ye," "Every Valley," "But Thou Did'st Not Leave," "Behold and See," and the pathetic recitatives, "Thy Rebuke" and "He Was Cut Off." Miss Large sang the soprano music with taste and expression, but now and then altered the text in a way, not without precedent it is true, but still a bit of a shock to sticklers for old tradition. Her recitatives were sympathetically given, and she won loud applause for the arias, "He Shall Feed His Flock" and "I Know That My Redeemer." Madame du Rieu has manifestly not yet recovered her best form, the lower and upper registers being full and pure, but the middle register weak and uncertain, compelling her to resort to a somewhat undue use of *portamento* in crossing the *ponticelli*, or little bridges between the registers. Still, under the handicap, she sang the contralto music very fairly. Her portion of "He Shall Feed His Flock" and "He Was Despised" being her best numbers. The pick of the choruses were "And the Glory," in which the few sopranos who attack it hit and held the A sharp gallantly. "Glory to God," "Surely He Hath Borne," "Lift up Your Heads," and "The Hallelujah," the last being (in volume, tune, and contrast) an especially fine rendering. The contraltos did very well all through. The tenors, although weakened by a number of absences, sang bravely and effectively. The basses, as usual, carried off the *premium virtutis*. Herr Carl Schmitt conducted with characteristic tact and energy, and Mons de Willimoff and Mr Yates, as leaders respectively of orchestra and second violins, contributed greatly to the general success. Mr Beale, at the organ, played with discretion. The orchestra was nicely balanced wind and string alike playing extremely well, and a special word of praise is due to the cellos.

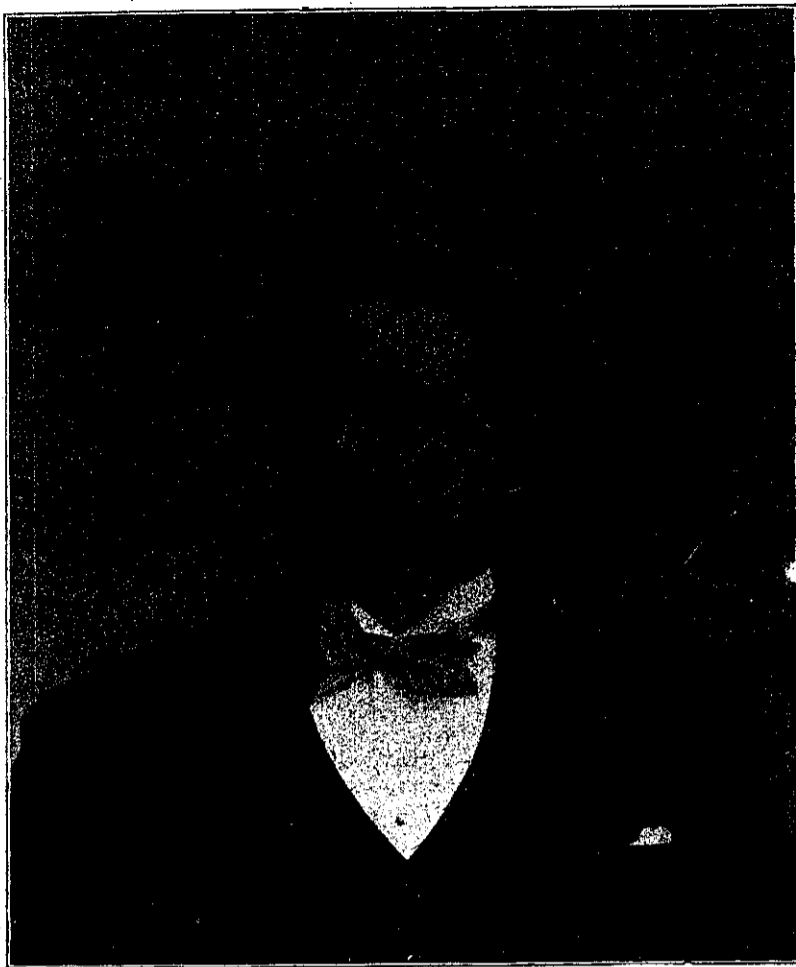
MR GEORGE RIGNOLD has completed his colonial tour, and proposes to retire during the summer months. He will probably open a season at the Criterion Theatre, Sydney, about Easter time.

EXHIBITION.—The musical and dramatic competitions proved a decided draw, large audiences listening with interest to the efforts of the many candidates for Exhibition honors. Save one or two possible protests, the final awards were made on Saturday night, when the following class-list was announced:—Singing: Soprano, Miss Maud Howard (gold medal), Miss G. Crowther (silver medal); contralto, Miss Ethel B. McIntyre (gold medal); no other award. Tenors and Baritones: In these classes Messrs Towsey and J. Hill (the judges), who took separate notes, were at variance, and a re-hearing of three of each class took place on Saturday night, with Mr John Prouse as referee. The result in the tenors was—Mr A. G. Murphy (gold medal), Mr C. W. Wright (silver medal), Mr Abel Rowe *proxime accussit*. Baritones: Mr Wilfred Manning (gold medal), Mr E. Walton (silver medal), and Mr Charles Kissling *proxime accussit*. Dr Egan judged the comic singing, and placed the competitors in the following order: Mr Fred. Lloyd (gold medal), Mr M. Lewis (silver medal). Violin (Mons. de Willimoff judge: Miss Stella Alexander (gold medal), Miss Sybil Lewis (silver medal). Pianoforte (Herr Carl Schmitt, judge): Miss E. M. Wyman (gold medal), Miss Simmonds (silver medal), and Miss Maggie Woollams (certificate). Messrs Montague and Hart judged the recitations, making the awards as follows:—Dramatic: Mr George Newsome (gold medal), Mrs Alexander Murchie (silver medal) Miss Jennie Pollock and Mr W. L. Smith (certificates); a special mention was also made of Miss Frances Fraser, Mrs F. A. Burnett, Mr Pollock, Misses Bullen, Rosenthal and Zoe Bartley. Humorous Recitations: Mr H. G. Palethorpe (gold medal), Miss Zoe Bartley (silver medal), and Mr W. L. Smith (certificate). The awards in all the competitions on the whole were generally approved, but it is a pity that, in two or three cases, the golden rule that no teacher should judge his own pupil's work was not observed. On Saturday evening the successful candidates gave an entertainment before a large audience. Among the items most applauded were—Miss E. M. Wyman's pianoforte solo, Miss Sybil Lewis' violin solo (encored), Miss Maud Howard's song "The Carnival," Mr George Newsome's recitation of "Othello's Defence," Miss Zoe Bartley's "Naughty Little Girl," Mr Palethorpe's "Coster's Lament," and, perhaps the biggest hit of all, Mr Fred. Lloyd's comic song, "It Does Go," with an equally clever encore, "The Whistling Ooon." As a hint for the future, I may say that some competitors damage their chances by injudiciously choosing somewhat ambitious selections.

"ORPHEUS" received, by last mail, from Miss Elsie Carew (the bright particular star of the Thornton Company) the compliments of the season in a cordial and elegant form. It is very pleasant to be remembered by our histrionic friends, especially when in the whirl of engagements and travel they are so fully occupied.

A NOTICE of Mr W. H. Webb's 85th open evening for visitors, which scored a great success on December 15, was perforce held over last week and is again crowded out. Among the pupils, Miss M. Spooner's juvenile quartette (always better perfect), and Miss M. Bold, Miss M. Scott, Miss F. Garlick, and Mr A. Walton shone especially, while friends in the shape of the Rev. S. A. Goldstein, Mr Charles and Madame Chambers, and Mr J. A. Beale, contributed excellent vocal and instrumental selections. Mr Webb's high class programmes are always appreciated by audiences only limited by the space available.

MR L. J. LOHR, who is piloting Dante through the colonies, reports that they opened to splendid business in Hobart, and that after a comparatively brief season will come on to New Zealand for the summer months, probably commencing at Dunedin.



TOM POLLARD, THE PROPRIETOR AND MANAGER OF POLLARD'S OPERA COMPANY.

POLLARD'S OPERA COMPANY: "THE GAY PARISIENNE."—This ever-popular company opened at the Opera House on Monday evening to a phenomenal Boxing-night audience—not an inch of space unoccupied and numbers disappointed in the attempt to secure even standing room. Fun (fast, furious, and indescribable), sparkling music, and luxurious *mise en scene* are the characteristics of the new production. It is less an opera than a screaming musical farce, but, nevertheless, capital chorus-work is added to the delightful musical and comic vagaries of the principals. The action of a plot simple, but sufficient for the purpose, turns upon the troubles of Mr Ebenezer Honeycomb, a sham shining light of the goody-goody order, who is pursued by The Gay Parisienne with a breach-of-promise case based on a Paris flirtation. In the first Act (at Kingston-on-Thames) the case is maturing for the trial; in the second, Mr Honeycomb (disguised as a kilted Highlandman) has fled to the Spa Hotel, Schoffenburgen, and the characters meet there in a maze of complications which make irresistible fun. It would need a whole edition of THE SPORTING AND DRAMATIC to chronicle the wealth of incident and ludicrous surprises which tumble over one another in rapid succession. One thing, however, strikes every one who has watched the growth of Mr Pollard's combination, i.e., the wonderful strides made by the old members, and the strength and brilliancy of the artists more recently engaged. Miss Gertie Campion, who takes the title *role*, more than fulfilled the great expectations founded on her brilliant reputation. She is a fascinating imp of devilment without vulgarity. Her versatility is astounding. One hardly knows what to admire most—her graceful dancing, sparkling *verve*, artistic singing, crisp elocution, facial play and gesture, *espieglerie*, etc., etc. Well, to sum up, the *tout en semble* of all these qualities make Mademoiselle Julie Bon-Bon an irresistible *lionne*. Miss Maud Beatty (as Mrs Honeycomb) is handsome, dignified, and a terrible tart; her splendid voice, carriage (long-dress part this time), and vocal and histrionic gifts losing none of their charm. Miss May Beatty again scores as Ruth, one of those wonderfully made-up and portraied eccentric oddities in which she shines so brightly. Her business and singing are immense as ever. Other favorites, to wit the Misses Marion Mitchell, Emily Metcalfe, Lily Stephens, C. Palmer, Maud Hewson, Marie Metcalfe, etc., as well as the Saltarelle dancers (Misses Nellie Wilson, Borthwick, and W. and Z. Karkeek), fully maintain their high reputation. Mr Alf. Stephens is in every sense a shining light in the capital *role* of Ebenezer Honeycomb, making point upon point, and every point a hit, with unerring tact and skill. Mr W. S. Percy's Auguste Pompier is another feather in that clever burlesque actor's many plumed cap; his grotesque antics, dancing, play of feature, gesture, singing, etc., etc., are marvellously effective. Mr Harry Quenly's Major Fossdyke is one of his most brilliant achievements, as he entirely sinks his pronounced individuality in the character, an artistic feat which is especially difficult. Mr Ernest Pitts makes an effective barrister as Tom Everleigh, singing splendidly and introducing a very taking number, "I Trust Her Still." Mr George Young as the vicarious sacrifice (Amos Dingle), Mr E. Nable as the German hotelkeeper (Hans), and Messrs Gleeson, Vaughan, Albert, etc., etc., are all excellent. The new tenor, Mr C. Carter, in the small *role* of Percy Tooting shows great promise, his light, pure, and sympathetic voice being a distinct acquisition. The scenery is lovely, especially the backcloth in the second act. Mr H. T. Harrison's band is, musically, all there. Space will not permit of a mention of the numerous plums in the piece, but the fact that encores

were numerous and imperative should suffice to prove that "The Gay Parisienne's" bon-bons are toothsome and seductive.

BUSINESS still booms at Fuller's Palace of Wonders, and the houses are "fuller" than ever. The pleased public make a tour of the room, examining the waxworks, and then refresh themselves with a cool lemon-squash before trying their strength or testing their lungs, or having their fortune told, or investigating any of a dozen other attractive pleasures of the shows. Meanwhile our only John smiles serenely as the shekels continue to pour in unrestrainedly. Both the afternoon and evening performances are excellent, and form a pleasant and cheering variation to the sight-seeing. The sacred concert on Christmas night was well patronised, and a most enjoyable entertainment was given. We hope that "The Land of the Cross" will be repeated in the near future, as many who missed the opportunity of seeing it will regret the fact when informed by their more fortunate friends of the pleasure they experienced.

THE Woods-Williamson Company are touring the West Coast. We wish them better success than they had in Auckland.

MR JO ST. CLAIR will probably be in Auckland again soon. He is ahead of The Firm's company, which opened at the Opera House, Dunedin, on Boxing Night.

BLAND HOLT's last bill at the Melbourne Royal, previous to the Christmas season, was "The Fatal Card," which was withdrawn to make way for that old favorite drama, "New Babylon." The management have introduced a Costermongers' ballet.

THE oldest theatrical manager in Australia is Mr George Coppin; next comes Mr G. B. W. Lewis, who recently celebrated his 80th birth.

APROPPOS of long runs and the phenomenal earning powers of a successful play, Joseph Jefferson found both fame and fortune in "Rip Van Winkle," and filled the title *role* no fewer than 5,000 times, while the play earned £1,000,000 sterling—a financial record never equalled.

A SYDNEY exchange states that Mr Harry Rickards was fifty on Sunday, December 4th, and entertained a number of friends at his house. This is strange, for, from a careful search of the archives of ancient and medieval stage history, we are in a position to claim that he achieved his first half-century too many years back to refer to in print. However, we wish him joy and every chance of scoring a century.

THAT charming little soubrette, Pattie Browne, seems to have lost her temper badly at Newcastle a short time back. It appears she was subjected to several interruptions from the gallery during the performance of "A Bit of Old Chelsea" and "Sweet Nancy." Suddenly she stepped to the front of the stage and said, "I have visited many places, but I had to return to my own country, and to Newcastle, to find the most insulting audience I have ever met." In defence the Newcastle paper claims that the interruption was not caused by town people, but men off the English boats in the harbor.

RICKARDS' TIVOLI COMPANY is doing very well in Dunedin. Mr Rickards recently joined the company himself.



MR W. O'SULLIVAN, PARTNER AND TREASURER.

All the latest shapes in hats are sold cheap by Geo. Fowlds.