

two performances. This fact is greatly to be regretted, because there can be no doubt that the intrinsic merit of the show warrants a much longer run. We had all heard much as to what the kettle could do, but had been left in ignorance as to the capabilities of those taking their share in the other portion of the programme, and this is where the surprise came in, for all were really excellent. Mr. N. J. Gehde commenced with a pianoforte selection. He was followed by four "Trinity Choir Boys," whose fine part-singing fairly brought down the house. The pieces given were "A Gipsy Laughing Song," "The Larboard Watch," "Excelsior," "Narcissus," and "Where are You going, My Pretty Maid?" all splendidly rendered, the boys' voices showing much careful training. Alma, the magician, was seen to advantage in some difficult sleight-of-hand tricks, also introducing the puzzling "Goddess of the Air" feat, recently performed here by Clive. Miss Elsa Dwyer, a young lady of very prepossessing appearance, contributed two songs in a most pleasing manner. The English Pierrot Entertainers proved exceedingly amusing, although the turn was over long and might well have been cut down by the omission of the "pill" song. The best items were the imitation of a county clergyman and the Lancashire dialect stories. Miss Elsie Peerless gave a really beautiful rendering of the extremely difficult song, "Sing, Sweet Bird," for which she was stormily encored, and joined with two of the choir boys in the pleasing trio, "O, Memories." The star turn was, however, Professor Andrews and his Magic Kettle. This has already been described at length in these columns, so that it can only be added the liquid air did all that was claimed for it. Ice cream was made in a moment, flowers were instantly frozen, whisky was converted into a solid block, kerosene oil was frozen into a candle, a cigar was lighted by steam, ice was burnt, and various other of nature's laws seemingly turned upside down. Altogether the entertainment was a distinctly good one, and it seems a thousand pities that the performance cannot be given again.

**THE WATKIN MILLS' COMPANY.**

Last Friday the Watkin Mills Company brought their season of five nights to a close, when they had the assistance of the Auckland Liedertafel. From an artistic point of view a considerable measure of success was achieved, but it has to be admitted that the box office receipts throughout the week were very small. The reason of this was to a certain extent the fact that the programmes submitted only appealed to the musicians among the audience, and not really to the ordinary individual. The latter would have preferred a few more ballads and a little less song cycle and sacred cantata. Possibly the company as a whole was hardly so good as was anticipated, and some disappointment was ex-

pressed in this connection. Certainly Mr. Mills' voice has gained nothing since his last visit. At the same time the indifference shown by the Auckland public was much greater than might have been reasonably expected.

**"THE SCHOOLMISTRESS."**

On Monday week the Auckland Dramatic Society will commence a short season at His Majesty's Theatre with the screamingly funny comedy, "The Schoolmistress." The members of the society are hard at work with the rehearsals, and if report can be relied upon, are likely to make a big success. With this issue I am able to give portraits of several of the players.

Miss Nance O'Neil will commence a season in Auckland on October 28. Mr. Harold Ashton is expected to arrive very shortly to arrange preliminaries.

My Christchurch correspondent writes:—Had a chat with Mr. Harold Ashton this afternoon. He is here in advance of the Nance O'Neil Company, and expects the show to do big business in this flat metropolis. The season opens on the 18th with "Magda," and there is to be a change of bill every night of the seven. Nance and her company are in Christchurch. The company is composed of Americans mostly, all of them well-known people, and Gaston Mervale (here with the original "Sign of the Cross" people) is a member of the combination. Mr. Ashton, who is looking as well and as jolly as ever, tells me he expects to be in your city in the course of a few days. The Auckland season opens on October 28 and closes on November 13. The next time Harold comes along here will be in advance of the Knight-Jeffries Company. Come when he may we are always glad to see him, and the oftener he comes the better we are pleased. The Fitzmaurice Gill crowd have struck it here. Crowded houses all the time. The "star" is a great favourite, and so is Chas. Blake. The season is now fast drawing to a close. The Fuller show is booming, the engagement of Cleopatra, the lady snake-charmer, having proved a little gold mine for the management. It's wonderful how the Fullers contrive to keep up such a perpetual round of attractions. There is always something worth seeing or hearing at the Opera House. The Pollard benefit eventuates on Monday, the 9th inst., at the Theatre Royal, and the advance booking, I understand, is already heavy enough to assure the success of the affair. By the way, I hear Tom Pollard has been engaged at a good salary to boss the entertainments in connection with the great Exhibition in Hagley Park, to open in November, 1906. The municipal theatre scheme has fallen to the ground with a dull, sickening thud, the proprietors of the old Theatre Royal having arranged to erect an up-to-date theatre opposite the pre-



"THE SCHOOLMISTRESS"—Mr. H. Herbert (Vere Queckett), and Miss Pauline Dempsey (the Schoolmistress).

sent one, in Gloucester-street, to be opened in time for the Exhibition season, and to cost from £20,000 to £30,000. It is to be modelled on His Majesty's, Sydney, and is expected to run rings round any theatre in New Zealand. You Aucklanders had better prepare to hide your diminished heads.

A musical society has been formed at Avondale with Mr. J. R. Simpson as conductor.

Abomah, the Giantess, and the Melbourne Waxworks contemplate opening at Napier next Wednesday.

The great Thurston will open here next February. Most of his best illusions would appear to have preceded him.

Mrs. Malcomson Boults' pupils will give an exhibition of dancing at His Majesty's on October 26 and 27.

Mr. Johan Wielaert conducted for the first time at the Orchestral Society's third concert last Thursday. The programme was a good one, among the pieces rendered being the overture to Ruy Blas, Beethoven's "Symphony in F," the Dvorak "Slavonic Dances" and Granado's "Souvenir de Vienne." Miss Whitelaw gave as a volin selection Sarasati's "Romanza "Andaluze," and as an encore Lederer's "Poeme Hon Groises." Miss Madoline Knight was heard to good advantage in "Beyond," "The Land of Yesterday" and the beautiful "Crossing the Bar." Mr. Charles McGowan was heartily applauded for Ardit's "Let Me Love Thee." A most artistic success was scored.

Bad weather was experienced on Monday night, and this was largely the reason for the poor attendance at the concert given by Mr. Hamilton Hodges in aid of the Parnell Orphan Home. Those present enjoyed a musical treat, however, but it is to be regretted that such a deserving fund will not benefit more from the efforts of our leading amateurs to lend a helping hand.

Melbourne playgoers will only have themselves to blame if they allow the Knight-Jeffries Company to say good-bye without refreshing pleasant memories of most of the past successes of the company (writes Mr. George Tallis). For the next three weeks will see the revival of the pieces with which the names of Mr. Julius Knight and Miss Maud Jeffries have been most intimately associated. Already they have done "Monsieur Beaucaire," and this evening (Saturday, October 7) "The Darling of the Gods" will be staged for a week. Mr. Knight playing the cruel, unscrupulous

Minister of War, Zakkuri. Next Saturday, the 16th inst., "Comedy and Tragedy" and a new version of "David Garrick" are announced to succeed the Japanese drama for a week, and the last nights of the season, which terminate on the 27th inst., will be filled in with "The Sign of the Cross," "A Royal Divorce," "The Lady of Lyons," and "The Silver King." Thus in the five weeks of their visit three new pieces—"His Majesty's Servant," "Comedy and Tragedy," and "David Garrick"—and six of the older favourites will be done—no bad record for the company.

"The Cingalee" is now in its last weeks at Her Majesty's, Melbourne, though, judging from the satisfactory nature of the attendances, its season could be indefinitely prolonged. But Mr. J. C. Williamson is desirous of presenting "Veronique" before the Royal Comic Opera Company is transferred to Sydney, and in pursuance of that intention "The Cingalee" will be withdrawn before the end of this month. Prior to the introduction of "Veronique," however, there will be a revival of two of the older favourites, such as "The Orchid" or "The Country Girl." As soon as "Veronique" is started, the company will pass on to the preparation of "The Spring Chicken," which Mr. Williamson intends to make the Christmas attraction in Sydney. He received the material for it—scene plots, photographs, dress designs, and so—by the last English mail, and the working up of the mechanical details of its presentation only awaits the finishing of similar work for "Veronique," while the question of rehearsals will be discussed when the same condition of completeness is reached by the company.

The Royal Comic Opera Company never lose an opportunity under the energetic leadership of Mr. George Lauri of doing their best for the distressed actors' fund, and the customary benefit performance which is a feature of both the Sydney and Melbourne seasons, is now in process of organisation. It will take place on Thursday afternoon, the 19th inst., Her Majesty's Theatre having, as usual, been lent for the occasion by Mr. J. C. Williamson. A full programme is now being arranged, chief contributions to which will include a burlesque of "Il Pagliocci" by Mr. George Lauri and his henchmen (and henchwomen) of the company, and a scene from either "Othello" or "Hamlet" by Mr. Julius Knight and Miss Maud Jeffries. Members of other theatrical companies now in Melbourne, and representatives of vocal and instrumental performers of the same city will also join forces for the entertainment, which promises to be a very attractive one.



"THE SCHOOLMISTRESS"—Messrs. W. Saunders (Reggie Paulover), Bagnall (Lieutenant Mallory) and McQuarrie (Saunders).