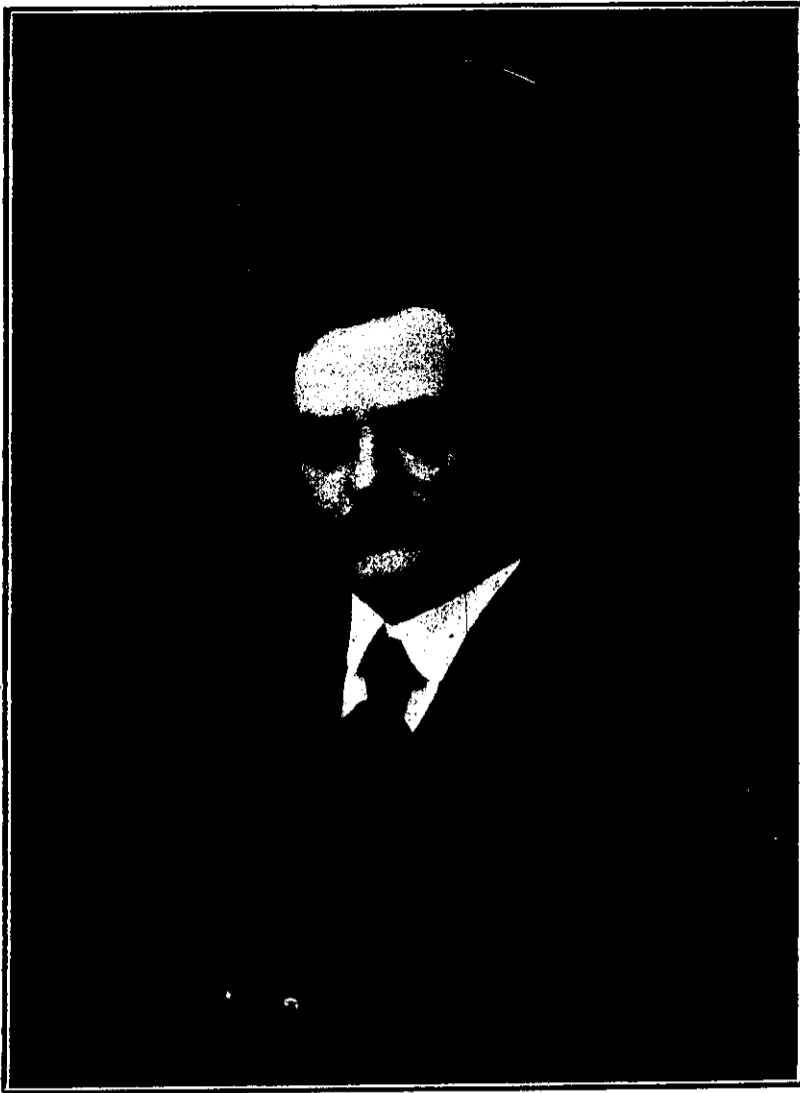


tive lady, Bosco a stout comedian, Leroy a slin. and agile magician. Then there is Mephisto. They are all magicians, in fact, and deal in the weirdest mystery. Where other performers would be content to evolve a canary or two or a duck or rabbit from apparent nothingness, they evolve whole flocks of ducks and fowls and turkeys, rabbits and geese, till the stage is like the last bit of dry land in a flood. They do weird things with coins; they appear where you think it is impossible they could be, and disappear when you think that you have at last "got them fixed." It is a remarkable and bewildering display. Mr Rickards brought various new artists out with him, and others are to follow. They include, according to the entrepreneur, the Jackson family, who were so successful on a previous visit; Ryder Stone, a great comedian; Rog Glen, a talented juvenile raconteur; and A. G. Spry, Post Mason, and Arthur Albert, who open in Sydney. Other attractions to arrive in the near future are the Gilbert Sisters, song and dance artists; Lotto, Lilo, and Otto, comedy bicycle polo team; Ada Cerito, commedienne; Two Bells and eight English Primroses, a troupe of high-class dancers, who will introduce the latest dancing craze "Danse des jambes en l'air," now the rage of Paris; the Sisters Warner, song and dance, duo; Barnard's marionettes; Bert Dansing, comedian and impersonator; Alice Raymond, and John Kurkamp, refined musical specialty artists; Scottish Meisters, quartet of Scotch comedians and vocalists; and Tambo, a unique tambourine specialty.

The next attraction from overseas which Mr J. C. Williamson will present to Australasian audiences will be Mr R. G. Knowles, a comedian who has for years been in the foremost rank of vaudeville performer in London. He has however, deserted that field at any rate for a time, and has struck out "on his own," in an entirely novel kind of entertainment in which, it may be mentioned, he is at present making a decided hit in South Africa. He calls his show "Travels that Trouble the Traveller," a general title which suffices to cover a multitude of humorous stories all based on the funny experiences which greet a tourist in foreign lands. He begins at the beginning, the packing up in his London lodgings, and thence-forward takes his hearers along with him through Europe, Egypt, and else where, to the accompaniment of continual laughter. Incidental to the anecdotes he introduces several songs and also a series of biograph films illustrative of the places visited. Altogether, he has evolved an entertainment that should be decidedly popular. Mr Knowles will begin his Australasian tour somewhere in the early part of next year.

Mr George Lauri sees one of the obstacles to his playing Hamlet already in



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a fair way to removal (writes Mr George Tallis). He gave out that all he wanted for the realisation of his ideal was an Ophelia and the consent of Mr J. C. Williamson. The former has materialised in the person of Miss Clara Clifton, who the other day modestly admitted that she has for years hankered for an opportunity to appear in Shakespeare. Naturally, with such a reputation as she possesses, such an opportunity seemed very improbable, but the fact that Mr. Lauri has seized the skirts of happy chance provided by the benefit in aid of the Distressed Actors' Fund emboldened her to go and do likewise. All that remains now for the two aspirants in tragedy is to select a scene and to obtain Mr Williamson's sanction.

The Members of the Royal Comic Opera Company who sang at the afternoon

concert in connection with Father Robinson's bazaar at the Melbourne Town Hall last week, all volunteered their services without even being asked to do so by the promoters of the function. Such readiness to assist in a good cause has always been one of the most agreeable characteristics of Mr. Williamson's premier Company, as many towns throughout Australasia can bear grateful testimony.

Mr. J. C. Williamson loses a prominent and popular member of the Royal Comic Opera Company this week in the person of Mr. Haigh Jackson, who, after many months of admirable work in the leading parts, concludes his Australasian visit and returns to London. He will be certainly greatly missed by the public who like a good song admirably sung, but as a matter of fact the latter variety of

musical play, such as "Veronique" and "The Spring Chicken," contain no parts scored for baritone voices.

The first week's business at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, has made it practically certain that "Merely Mary Ann" is in for a long and popular run there. The attendance at each performance—notably at the midweek matinee—maintained a satisfactorily high level, and at each the enthusiasm displayed was very marked. As soon as a change becomes necessary, Mr. Williamson intends to supplant it with either "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," or "La Tosca." Miss Tittell Brune has so far played neither part in Sydney.

"Veronique," which was staged for the first time in Australia at Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, on Saturday, November 11th, only terminated its long and popular run in London at the end of last month. Mr George Edwardes produced it there in May of last year, so that it held its place in popular favour for sixteen months, and a total of somewhere about 500 performances. Its attraction lies in the dainty melody of its music as much as in the humour of its comedian characters, and Mr. Andre Messager, its composer, in consequence, now holds a foremost place in the popularity of London audiences, as he has always done in Paris. The opera is in three acts, and the plot, which has more to do with the scenes than is customary with modern musical comedies, turns on the French method of making marriages in which son and daughter respectively, dutifully agree with their parent's choice rather than their own. That filial obedience enables Helene Solanges to masquerade as Veronique, a flower girl, without her fiancée being able to identify her, and in that capacity she wins the affection of a man, who, it must be confessed, had a somewhat too roving eye for a prospective benedict. The published cast of Veronique promises that it will be one of the strongest ever heard in Australia, both as regards its musical and its comedian elements.

The "Gondoliers" was the opera in which the Gilbert and Sullivan Company opened at the Criterion Theatre, Sydney, on November 11th, for a season of a few weeks. Later on, "Trial by Jury," "The Socker," and "Princess Ida" will all be done, but the time will, it is feared, be too short to allow of the production of "Utopia Limited." For the actual holiday attraction at the Melbourne Princess, Mr. Williamson has decided upon "Pinafore."

Early next month Mr. Claude Bantock will enter the bonds of matrimony, and already his comrades in the Royal Comic Opera Company are deliberating as to the most suitable way in which to mark the auspicious occasion.

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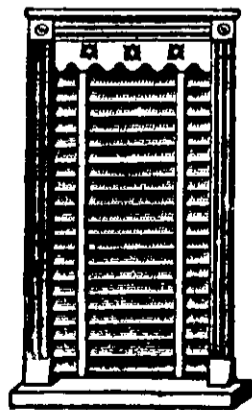
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