

in the first half of the programme, does some wonderful tumbling, and appears to be able to balance himself on any corner of his anatomy with the greatest ease. Appearing unexpectedly throughout the turn, he kept the house in roars of laughter from start to finish. The three Gibson girls, who next appeared, danced most charmingly, and won hearty applause for their turn. The programme concluded with a series of biograph pictures lately imported from London, and the curtain fell on an evening's entertainment that speaks volumes for the enterprise of Mr. John Fuller in his successful catering to Auckland audiences.

At the end of the week the Opera House is to be closed for a fortnight, when an entirely new company will appear. On January 20th Czerny, the magician, is billed to appear in a sensational programme, which on February the 7th the great Thurston, who has been mystifying Australian audiences for some time past, makes his appearance at the Opera House.

Miss Nellie Stewart passed through Auckland on Friday last by the mail steamer Sierra, bound for San Francisco. By the same steamer Messrs. George and Harry Musgrove and the "Sweet Nell" Company were passengers. Everyone in the colonies will wish the company every success during their tour of the States.

Mr. Harold Ashton left for America on Friday. Rumour has it that he is on a roving commission for novelties.

Mr. J. C. Williamson has every reason to be gratified at the results of the past year's work in the various operatic and dramatic combinations under his control (writes Mr. George Tallis). As might have been expected, the first places in these divisions were gained by the Tittell Brune Company and the Royal Comic Opera Company respectively. The former "went big" wherever they appeared, and the popularity of the young American actress has now extended through the length and breadth of Australasia. The New Zealand tour in particular was a remarkable one, and the returns showed a substantial increase above those of any former company sent to that colony by Mr. Williamson. The Royal Comic Opera Company was also entirely successful throughout the year, especially in the really phenomenal season they had in West Australia. The chief pieces essayed by them during the year were "The Cingalee," "The Orchid," and "Veronique," the first-named holding the week's record for any theatre in Australia. The Knight-Jeffries Company experienced their accustomed satisfactory conditions of appreciation until the illness of Mr. Julius Knight interfered with their plans, but matters resumed their usual course when he returned to duty. The short seasons of the Gilbert and Sullivan Company throughout Australasia were productive of excellent receptions everywhere, and the approval with which the talented company were greeted has persuaded Mr. Williamson to maintain it as a permanent combination even after the present popularity of the Gilbert and Sullivan revivals has waned. Among the visiting companies, that headed by Mr. Andrew Mack was easily first, and an uninterrupted career of prosperity accompanied his representations of Irish comedy from Melbourne, where he commenced it, to Auckland, where he ended it.

The production of "Pinafore" by the Gilbert and Sullivan Company at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, on December 23 was welcomed by a large and enthusiastic audience. The five years' interval which has elapsed since the opera was last staged in Melbourne has dulled remembrance, so that the piece was almost like a new one, an effect increased by several incidental numbers introduced in the second act, chief among which was a graceful juvenile ballet. "Princess Ida" will follow "Pinafore" as the first of the four operas added to the company's repertoire since it was last seen in Melbourne. It has already been played in Sydney, where it was exceptionally well received, and Mr. Henry Bracy, who was in the original cast at the Savoy Theatre, London, and has seen every production in Australia, speaks of it as the best all-round performance of the opera that has been staged in this country. Later on, probably on January 13, "Utopia Limited," which is to be the "feature" of the season, will be put on.

The universal popularity which Miss Tittell Brune enjoys in the eyes of Melbourne playgoers was well exemplified in the demonstrative reception she was accorded when she made her entrance in "Merey Mary Ann" before a packed house at Her Majesty's, Melbourne, on Boxing night. Her season there will be an extended one, and Mr. Williamson will in all probability take the opportunity of adding one or more new pieces



SOME PROMINENT ENGLISH ACTRESSES.—Miss Gabrielle Ray, Miss Marie Stndholme, Miss Billie Burke, Miss Lena Dare, Miss Gertie Millar, Miss Hil da Antony.

to her repertoire, besides giving her admirers further chances of seeing her in roles which a ready rank among her successes. "Leah Kleschna" will, of course, be the next new piece staged, though a revival or two may intervene between that event and the end of the run of "Merey Mary Ann."

The Royal Comic Opera Company, after a long and successful run in Melbourne, went back to Sydney last week, opening with "The Girl from Kays" at Her Majesty's Theatre on Boxing night. It is perhaps needless to add that the welcome accorded to the individual members was of the most entirely cordial description, and that the enthusiasm displayed was, if anything, greater than that which has attended any previous night.

Mr. J. C. Williamson's generosity on behalf of the Theatrical Charities' Fund is well known, but the latest instance of it is perhaps the most striking. To curtail the season of two most extremely popular companies by several days and thereby obviously to reduce the box office receipts by the amount which would have been received on the idle days, is an example of philanthropy that even Mr. Williamson has seldom bettered. He had his reward, however, in an unequalled success which attended the open air fete at Princes' Court on December 21, at which it is computed that 16,000 persons were present.

Mr. J. C. Williamson has been fortunate to secure the services of Mr. Gerald Coventry, who for the past few years has been recognised as one of the most able stage managers in the United States, where he has been engaged in the various interests of Messrs. Schubert Bros. Mr. Coventry will be remembered out here as the manager of "The Belle of New York," "The Casino Girl," and other musical comedies. He will arrive here very shortly, and brings with him the latest impressions of "The Spring Chicken," "The Little Michus," "Veronique," "The Blue Moon," "The Catch of the Season," "My Lady Madcap," and others of Mr. Williamson's latest acquisitions, all of which he took the opportunity of seeing in London before he left for Australia.

Mr. R. G. Knowles leaves Capetown today (January 4) for his Australasian tour under engagement to Mr. J. C. Williamson. The bright little entertainment, "Trifles that Trouble the Traveler," will be seen first in Melbourne early in February.

Mr. Edmund Payne, the London Gaiety comedian, had the unhappy experience the other night of being "hissed" every time he appeared on the stage. The "hisser" gave as his reason that "Mr. Payne reminded him of someone he'd not like."

Mr. Weedon Grossmith says the London public wants legs, not brains.

A theatrical expert in a London paper has given it as his opinion that what the public want nowadays is "something with a story in it." Having regard to the number of stories constantly told behind the scenes, there should be no difficulty whatever in supplying this requirement to the full.

According to the "British Australasian," the sweet Miss Winchester, who made a fortune on the Paris sugar market, is shortly to appear in London. She has the largest repertoire of "dresses" of any artist, and as for jewels—well, even the heels of her boots are studded with diamonds.

The editor of the Russian paper was threatened with death by an actor, who thought himself insulted by an editorial criticism. Next issue the editor wrote:—"I have received a communication from the celebrated actor, M. Dalsky, in which he categorically declares his intention of killing me. I beg M. Dalsky for the one favour of fixing the day upon which his punishing hand shall strike me, so that I may have time to settle my affairs, and to prepare myself properly for the journey to the best of all worlds, where there are no diseases, no newspapers, and no famous actors."