

as "Utopia Limited" is still quite new to Australia it cannot be taken into account in a question of public favour. It was, moreover, most appreciatively received during the last two nights of the company's season in Melbourne, and so convinced is Mr. Williamson of its vitality that he has entirely new scenery and costumes prepared for the present tour.

"Comedy and Tragedy" and "David Garrick" will be the double bill with which the Knight-Jeffries Company will open their farewell season of three weeks at the Palace Theatre, Sydney, this evening (February 24th). Neither piece has yet been done by the company in that city, and as in both of them they appear to very conspicuous advantage a cordial reception may be confidently anticipated. After the Sydney season the company go to Brisbane, Newcastle and Adelaide, breaking up in the latter city.

No matter where one goes in Sydney at the present time some one or other of Mr. R. G. Knowles' stories are to be heard—proof positive of the popularity with which his monologue entertainment has been received. He has, in fact, had a most successful fortnight's season at the Palace Theatre there, and leaves in a day or two for New Zealand. Commencing at Invercargill in the South, he will work northward steadily through both islands until he reaches Auckland on May 12th. After appearing there he returns to Australia, Melbourne, in all probability, being the first city he will visit.

Miss Florence Young gave a most enjoyable harbour picnic to the ladies of the Royal Comic Opera Company in Sydney week or two ago. The original intention was to make it one entirely for the fair sex, but no power on earth could either keep the rendezvous secret or prevent so many attractive personalities from exercising their magnetism, and in consequence some fortunate men did find their way to the function. Miss Margaret Thomas was the heroine of the day, for in a fishing contest she revealed an aptitude for catching fish little short of amazing. They hooked themselves to her line in a most reckless fashion, and if they could not swallow the bait they attached themselves by the tail or the fins. There was a full round of amusements going all day, and no one fell into the harbour—an incident which is usually the invariable accompaniment to a water show.

At the end of last month "A Royal Divorce," which has been an attraction for years in Australia under Mr. J. C. Williamson's direction, was once more revived at the Scala Theatre, London, and Mr. W. W. Kelly, who owns the English rights of Mr. Willis' play, gave the Press some interesting particulars of the hardy peren-

nial. His principal company has now played it continuously throughout the United Kingdom for nearly 15 years, including matinees. "A Royal Divorce" has been performed 8000 times to the ten million people in Great Britain, Australia and South Africa, 70 per cent. of whom were women.

Miss Tittell Brune added another to her long list of triumphs at Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, last Saturday (February 17th), when she appeared for the first time in Australia as La Tosca. Her interpretation of Sardou's heroine was marked by her usual intensity of feeling, full appreciation of the dramatic and emotional possibilities of the part, and the high sympathy and intelligence she invariably brings to her work. Her effort met with the most cordial approval from a crowded and enthusiastic house, and the encouragement of applause was extended to Mr. Roy Redgrave as Baron Scarpia and to Mr. Douglas Gerrard as Mario, and, indeed, to all the members of the cast.

Mr. Charles Kenningham, principal tenor of the J. C. Williamson's Repertoire Opera Company, was quietly married the other day to Miss Vera Buttell, of the same company.

Mr. Frank Curzon, the well-known London manager, commences an invasion of America this month with the two English successes, "Mr Hopkinson" and "Public Opinion." If this experiment in dramatic retaliation is successful, Mr Curzon, in association with Mr. Hackett, a well-known American manager, will produce in the States in direct succession other English plays.

It is 25 years since the first American tour of Sarah Bernhardt. She was then 36. She is now 61 and the critics say she looks younger than she did a quarter of a century ago.

# SMOKE

# Old Judge

## TOBACCO & CIGARETTES.

It is stated that Miss Annie Russell, the American actress, will tour Australia next year under the management of Mr. J. Williamson in Mr. G. B. Shaw's play, "Major Barbara," which is described as a "discussion in three acts."

Mr. John H. Tait has arranged for a visit to New Zealand of the new biograph, "Living London." This comprises about 300 different views of the varied scenes to be met with in the great metropolis. The show will start in Dunedin about the end of the month.

Messrs. Meynell and Gunn have acquired the Australian rights of Stanley Weyman's "A Gentleman of France," in which Mr. Kyrle Bellew starred so long in the United States.

A German firm is building a miniature fireproof theatre of armoured concrete, which is specially intended for fire tests, and is to become a model theatre where any safety devices which have so far been suggested against the danger of fire, as well as any preventions that might be proposed in future, will be demonstrated.

According to the "Lyttelton Times" the City Inspector had again to step in the other night and stop the sale of tickets downstairs at the Theatre Royal, when the MasMahon Dramatic Company produced "Saturday Night in London" for the second time. This was all the more remarkable as the night was anything but an attractive one from the point of view of the average theatre-goer. The play went brightly and smartly from curtain to curtain, and the effective scenes of the drama were well brought out. The whole company worked hard, and the production was even better than upon the opening night of the season. "The Kelly Gang" was billed to follow. The company will shortly make a welcome re-appearance in Auckland again.

There seem some chance of Australia having secured at last a possible leading lady with voice, looks and ability, who is actually tall (says a writer in the "Bulletin"). Miss Olive Goodwin is a Williamscian investment and a local product. She has recently stepped into Dolly Castles' shoes as the Princess in "Utopia Limited," and she does the work so nicely as to justify that expectation. We have a whole drove of fairly clever little ladies for light opera and burlesque, but a tallish girl who can sing sweetly, talk intelligently, and look as if she were really concerned with the matter in hand, is quite a new development so far as the present generation of playgoers is concerned. Miss Olive's Princess is a much more cheerful, dignified and Gilbertian Princess than Miss Dolly's was. It is the latter's misfortune that she is too dolly. Some kindly veteran ought to tell her how to make-up to tone down her too marked resemblance to a waxen cherub—that is if all the kindly veteran isn't monopolised by another little lady.

Caleb Porter, who will be remembered as playing Nero to the life with the Knight-Ferrari combination in "The Sign of the Cross" on its first production here, is playing in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Adelphi.

Mr. Oscar Asche, writing in "London Opinion" under the heading "Does It Pay to Play Shakespeare?" says:—"London audiences do not care about tragedies. . . . Tragedy is rather heavy fare for people who have to work at high pressure for their living; but there is no more delightful form of mental relaxation than to witness a really good comedy. . . . I think at the present moment the public are not only just as capable as they ever were of appreciating a good play, but prefer it to the purely frivolous sort of entertainment classified under the head of musical comedy."

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