

A benefit to Miss Gertie Campion will take place at His Majesty's Theatre on January 17. A very high-class programme is to be given, and it is hoped that the proceeds will enable Miss Campion, who is almost completely restored to health, to start in business.

Mr. John Fuller, jun., leaves for England in February, going by way of America. He will be away for six months.

Mr. Ben Fuller wires me "A Happy New Year to yourself and the boys." The compliments are reciprocated.

Mr. Will Stevens has been eight years under the Fuller banner. He leaves for Australia very shortly.

Mr. A. G. Mabey is acting as hon. secretary of the Gertie Campion benefit.

My Christchurch dramatic correspondent writes:—"The Squaw Man" after drawing all Christchurch to see him, has now retired to his wig-wam, which is my figurative way of intimating that there is at last a change of bill at the old T.R. "The Christian" is the new attraction, and Mr Chas. Waldron and Miss Ola Humphrey certainly deserve all the nice things that are being said and written about them. Mr Waldron is admitted, on all hands, to be one of the finest artists of his class we have ever had in this dust-cursed city, and he makes an ideal "John Storm." It has been the lot of this scribe to see John Storm's more suggestive of the Rev. Sparerib in "The Private Secretary," than the fine, manly, if erratic, parson depicted so powerfully by Hall Caine. But Mr Waldron does credit to the great novelist's conception, and if Miss Humphrey is just a little cold as the famous "Glory Quayle," her acting is nevertheless very striking and more than once on the opening night of the new bill the house testified in the most unmistakable manner its appreciation of the leading lady's portrayal of a very exacting part. The season closes to-night (Saturday), when "The Christian" will be repeated. . . The Circus is still with us, but to mourn its place will know it no more—at all events for the present. The season has been a huge success, as per usual. . . Fuller's Opera House is crammed nightly—a gratifying proof of managerial tact and ability. "Find out what your public wants," said the immortal Barnum, and give it to them." The Fullers follow this plan and it works like a charm.

Mrs Henry Bracey, at latest accounts, was playing in the United States. She appeared in a sketch, arranged by herself, called "A Cure for Love." Mr Phil Bracey is with George Edwardes at the Gaiety London, and Mr Sydney Bracey is on the American stage.

Miss Florence Lloyd is playing the Queen of Hearts and the White Queen in the pantomime "Alice in Wonderland," at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, London.

Mr J. J. Dallas, who toured New Zealand with the "J.P." Company, is in the cast of the new musical play "Nelly Nell," which has been produced at the Aldwych Theatre, London.

The Bovis Bros. (Will and Chas.) have entered into management on their own account, and have taken over the National Amphitheatre in Sydney and opened it as a vaudeville house. The place has recently undergone extensive alterations, and has been brought up to date. Accommodation has been provided for 4000 persons.

A meeting of members of the theatrical profession was held in London on December 18, to consider the question of commemorating the name of the late Sir Henry Irving. It was resolved to erect a statue of the eminent actor, and managers, actors, actresses, and dramatic authors of the United Kingdom and America are to be invited to participate in the movement. Miss Ellen Terry, who was for so long associated with Sir Henry Irving, is promoting a national memorial in the form of a museum, library, and picture gallery.

The latest sensation of the London music hall stage is "Juno," otherwise Miss Jennie May, a young lady 6ft 2in high and 18st in weight, who claims to be the champion woman wrestler in the world. Trained by Antonio Pierri, the Greek wrestler, who brought out Maddralli, the "Terrible Turk," Juno, who is described as an extremely handsome girl, with nothing coarse or excessively muscular about her form, challenges the female world to a match for £1000 in the Graeco-Roman style. Miss May, whose father is said to be a man of independent means in South Africa, has so far found nobody to accept her challenge, and she is giving exhibitions on the music hall stage.

In America Mr Wallace Brownlow has made a hit in "Madame Butterfly," Miss Hilda Spong is "starring" in "John Fudson's Wife," and Mr Tyrone Power, with his wife (Miss Edith Crane), has created a good impression in "The Plainsman," the rights of which have been acquired by Mr Williamson. Miss Nellie Morzyne is playing with one of Mr Nat Goodwin's companies in America. In England, Miss Clare Manfield (daughter of Meta Felham, now Mrs Poole) is with her husband's (Mr Chas. Windermere) company in "Facing the Music." Mr W. F. Grant and Miss Jessie Rignold are "leading" in "Leah Kleschna," Miss Sophie Harriss has taken out her own company with "The Prince of Pilsen," and Miss Eve Titheradge is on a suburban circuit of "The Fascinating Mr Vanderfeldt."



MISS FLORENCE LEIGH, of "The Little Stranger" Company.

Miss Carrie Moore continues to meet with marked success in England. At present she is playing principal boy in the pantomime, "The Babes in the Wood," at Manchester.

George Edwardes pays £10,000 per week in salaries and fees among his numerous musical comedy companies.

The termination of the run of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," at the Adelphi Theatre, London, will close the long engagement of Mr. Oscar Asche and his wife, Miss Lily Brayton, at that theatre. They will then tour the provinces, and later on will visit Australia. Miss Brayton has achieved a high place in the English dramatic world as an exponent of Shakesperean and romantic characters; whilst Mr. Asche, who was born in Geelong 34 years ago, and educated at the Melbourne Grammar School, has steadily advanced in Shakesperean and the higher drama, until he is now regarded as one of the leading actors in London.

Miss Julia Marlowe, one of America's leading tragediennes, and Mr. E. H. Sothern (son of the famous creator of "Lord Dundreary"), have now concluded their long-pending arrangements for their visit to Australia next year. Their repertoire will be a remarkable one introducing celebrated plays which resident Australians have never seen. In addition to a series of Shakesperean tragedies, it includes Hauptmann's "Sunken Bell," "Jeanne D'Arc," Maeterlinck's "Jolizelle," D'Annunzio's "Francesca Da Rimini" and others. In all these important leading parts are assigned to Mr. George Titheradge.

Nothing in the modern English theatre (says London "Evening Standard") is more dangerous than the excessive development of gorgeous stage scenery and costumes. Beginning in the melodrama houses, where real lamp-posts and real fire-engines are used to bolster up shoddy expressions of sham emotions by sawdust puppets, it has now become the fashion to demand for every play an elaboration of ornament that is both unnecessary and ineffective.

"The Village Blacksmith," which is being played by Mr. Anderson's company at the Melbourne Theatre Royal, is doing splendid business.

Miss Emily Soldene's benefit in London recently resulted in £800 for seats, and £150 made up of the sale of flowers, photographs, programmes, and the like.

La Belle Otero has once more loomed up very large in the public eye in Paris. She was to have gone to Russia to dance at £44 a performance.

Moreover she was to have taken a male dancer along with her. But the "Belle" one, disliking the present state of the country, decided not to go. Wherefore her was-to-have been assistant is suing her for breach of contract.

One of the most attractive novelties in the "Mother Goose" pantomime in Melbourne, is the "Swing Song," in which a row of girls seated on ropes of electric light are swung right out from the stage over the orchestra and auditorium by their "boy" partners to the refrain of a tuneful song.

Though the audience at Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, were abundantly satisfied with the four hours to which the performance of the pantomime extended, they were not half so greedy in "getting their money's worth" as the London audience which witnessed the first production of "Mother Goose" at Drury Lane. On that occasion Queen and Le Brun went on for their speciality at 2.15 a.m. with the harlequinade still to follow, and even then the house was just as large and enthusiastic as it was at the beginning of the evening.

Nothing was lacking in the production of "Mother Goose" at Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne to make the performance a notable success (writes Mr George Tallis), and to stamp the pantomime as one of the very best that Mr J. C. Williamson has ever put on. With excellent foundations in the shape of a book that tells a connected story in a really humorous way, a superstructure has been built up that displays all the best characteristics of its type—excellent specialities, artistic novelties, gorgeous dressing and mounting, a strong singing cast, dashing dances, much fine comedy work, and a generally finished stage management which reflected the greatest credit on Mr Gerard Coventry. Some of the novelties, notably the very effective Swing Song, in which the chorus swing out over the orchestra on long lines lit by multicoloured electric lights, were cheered to the echo by a delighted house, while others, and especially the ludicrous imitations of a horse and donkey by Messrs Queen and Le Brun, evoked inextinguishable laughter the first entrance of the asinine pair, when they were run down by a motor car, keeping the house in a roar of merriment for many minutes. Mr Harry Phydora in the dame part more than fully realised the high expectations formed of him as a comedian. Miss Florence Young's principal boy was an instant success, the enthusiasm for her impersonation growing steadily as the evening proceeded. Miss Olive Morrell was dainty and charming as the principal girl, and Mr Harry Shine was intensely funny in a part that suited him down to the ground, and Mr Victor scored heavily all along the line as a typical Scotch comedian. The singing and dancing



MR. JOHN W. DEVERELL, of "The Little Stranger" Company.