

"THE YELLOW PERIL."

The Messrs. MacMahon have made a most important addition to their already extensive repertoire, having secured the Australasian rights of a thrilling drama by Albert Newcomb, bearing the above title. The importance of this acquisition is apparent, when it is recollected that the present relationship of the yellow and the white races is a subject of world-wide discussion and interest. To us in the antipodes especially, the entente cordiale or otherwise between those of our own blood and the Asiatic is a matter of grave and serious import—and it is not at all unlikely that we may in the not far distant future be called upon to pay the deepest and most earnest attention to the subject. "The Yellow Peril" was submitted to a Christchurch audience on Saturday, 9th February, and this was absolutely its first performance in Australasia. The story told in the play is full of dramatic intensity, marked characterization strength of plot, and boldness of design. Vera Montgomery, the adopted daughter of Sir Richard Templeton, in a moment of pique and disappointment at the conduct of her lover Arthur Templeton, yields to the pleadings of one Marquis Tsao, a Chinaman of the highest caste, and a man of wealth and education, and marries him. Immediately after the ceremony, Arthur arrives unexpectedly on the scene, and denounces the Chinese Magnate, impassionately informing those present at the wedding breakfast as to what a horrible fate Vera has been condemned, for as he explains, her position in China will be merely that of a slave, "Wrecked in body, without even the remnant of a soul." Following this denunciation, a most novel and interesting scene occurs. The characters in the drama journey to the Swiss Alps (where an avalanche sweeps one of the dramatic personae into a chasm), then to China, where exciting incidents are met with, and finally back to England. Strenuous efforts have been put forth to ensure a complete and attractive presentation of "The Yellow Peril," and this enterprising and popular management are sparing no expense. Artists, stage carpenters, property-men, costumiers, orchestra and stage managers have been daily working in combination to bring about a notable result, and the theatre-going public of Christchurch have now emphatically demonstrated their interest in this novel theatrical event.

The Willoughby-Ward Company, which is now playing at Newcastle, N.S.W., will visit Goulburn, Wagga Wagga, and Albury before reaching Melbourne. An Easter season will be played in Tasmania, and after visiting Adelaide and Brisbane the company will re-appear at Sydney in August.

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Writing to friends in New Zealand, Mrs. Howard Vernon Miss Vinia de Loitte, late of the J. C. Williamson Repertoire Company, says that after spending some time on their farm "down the coast," they will probably visit London and return with a company of their own.

The Chicago "Record," writing of Mr. H. B. Irving's performance in "The Bells" in which he filled the part of Matthias for the first time on any stage, says:—"When, towards the close of the first act, Matthias muttered: 'Courage, Matthias, courage!' all doubt about the great performance vanished. With the passing of every subsequent situation he rose and rose in demonstrations of power until, in the dream scene, one could only gasp and say, 'The father is here.' This was to do more than imitate; imitation does not convince and intrall, as Irving did throughout."

Mr Clyde Meynell, of the firm of Meynell and Gunn, is at present in London, where he has engaged Miss Maud Hildyard, formerly of Mr Tree's London company, to tour Australia with her own company during the present year. Miss Hildyard will produce several English successes, including "The Great Awakening" and "A Beautiful Fiend."

That much photographed Spanish dancer, La Belle Otero, is to be married shortly to Mr Rene Webb, an English manufacturer, living in Buenos Ayres. The most romantic part of the engagement is that Mr Webb first fell in love with Otero by seeing her photographs on pictorial postcards, and had accumulated a collection of several thousands. The moment the original opened her tour of Argentina Mr Webb proposed to Otero, and was promptly refused. Nothing daunted he followed her on her return to Paris and repeated his offer. "I refused once more," stated Otero to the London "Daily Mail" correspondent, "but he would not take no for an answer. These

English are so persistent. Then," she added, ingenuously, with a shrug of her shoulders, "the thought flashed across my mind, why not try marriage, just to see what it is like?" Accordingly Mr Webb was accepted on his agreeing to settle a large marriage portion on his bride, submit to extravagant habits she admitted, and set up her younger sister in business.

On the termination of their Wellington season the Besses o' th' Barn Band will visit the West Coast of the South Island. The following are the towns to be visited, and the dates booked:—

Nelson—February 18 and 19.

Westport—February 21.

Reefton—February 22.

Hokitika—February 23.

Kumara—February 24.

Greymouth—February 25.

A return season will be commenced in Christchurch on the 28th February, extending until 13th March.

The Royal Comic Opera Company after leaving Auckland will tour the South Island, finishing there on the 22nd March. The alteration in the pantomime dates will necessitate the postponement of their visit to Sydney, which had been fixed for Easter time, and instead Mr J. C. Williamson has decided to give Adelaide the pleasure of their company at that time. The visit will obviously be only a short one, as their presence will be required in Sydney about the middle of April.

One of the two new playhouses in Shaftesbury Avenue, London, which is called the Hicks Theatre, was opened by Mr Seymour Hicks on Thursday, the 27th December with "The Beauty of Bath," which was transferred from the Aldwych Theatre. The handsome building was designed by Mr W. G. R. Sprague, and has accommodation for 1200 people. The interior has been treated in the Louis XVI. style, the decorations being carried out in an ivory-white tone, while the upholstery is of a deep shade of old rose.

The adjoining playhouse will be called the Piccadilly. This will be ready for occupation next March, but up to the present nothing has been settled as to who will be its first lessee.

It is understood that Mr Johnny Sheridan intends visiting New Zealand once more at an early date with some new attractions.

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