

Once," though a repetition of last week, was well worth listening to again, and deserved the applause it aroused. "Matrimonial Bliss" is the side-splitting comedy presented this week by the popular duple, Mr Fred Graham and Miss Nellie Dent. It is a piece of Mr Graham's own composition, and has some decidedly clever situations. Mr Wiggins, as the man with a motto that 'tis human to err, returns home in a more or less—principally more—intoxicated state. Mrs Wiggins sets about establishing a permanent cure. The completeness with which she attains her purpose forms the theme of one of the brightest and cleverest sketches this renowned combination has put on since their appearance at the Opera House. Mr Graham, besides being really funny, is decidedly good in the character of the inebriate. As a rule the part of a drunken man is not one that can be made to appeal to the audience. The usual stage drunkard is badly over drawn. Not so Mr Graham; his portrayal of the wine-bibber was perfect, and he was really so very comical that the degrading element was never once uppermost. Miss Dent was equally good in the part of Mrs Wiggins, and the suicide scene was almost painfully ludicrous, to such an extent did it provoke insuppressible laughter. "Matrimonial Bliss" is well worth seeing. Miss Lilian Loftus is making her first appearance this week, and received a welcome which should make her feel at home at the Opera House. Shaw and Gilbert, as loose legged comedians, are more original in their antics than they are in their jokes. Nevertheless their boxing act won for them a good round of applause. The Bicknells are back again, and received a very warm welcome. Their eccentric dancing is always attractive, and they can invariably be counted on to provide an interesting turn. Mr Bicknell sings a good song and dances nicely, while his companion easily holds the premiership of any dancer Auckland has seen, and is an established favourite as a pretty and clever terpsichorean. The Herz Bros., a musical trio, appeared in a farmyard medley; some of the imitations were rather good, and a representation of the Scotch bagpipes was excellent. Rex, the human conundrum, continues to tie himself into extraordinary knots, and generally convince people that he is made of indiarubber. Next Saturday sees a number of new artists make their appearance.

**WIRTH BROTHERS' CIRCUS.**

Messrs Wirth Bros.' "Greatest Show on Earth" will open a five nights season in Auckland in Victoria Park, Freeman's Bay, on Tuesday, February 26. The doors will be opened at seven o'clock, so that an hour may be spent in inspecting the horses and other animals and freaks before the commencement of the main programme. The programme will consist of twenty-seven items, and of these twenty are being given for the first time in Auckland. Most interest will centre around the American sensation of the Flying Herberts, human skyrockets. This feat has attracted large houses throughout the Australian States, and

during the past month, and despite its dangers, the Herberts have been able to accomplish it with success at practically every performance. The programme has been so arranged that the Herbert's act is withheld until late in the evening, so that people for whom the danger of the act is too thrilling to be pleasant may view the milder part of the programme and then leave if they so wish. Among the other leading artists are Hugh Lloyd; the Leoni Family, of seven, claimed to be America's leading equestrians; Lurina de la Stella and Mdlle. Mayona; Miss Philipina, the only lady somersault rider in the world; Three Leon Sisters, the world's greatest iron-jaw ladies; Mons Marco, whose thrilling act with three fierce jaguars is the acme of wild animal training; the Four Comets; Sampei Osada, Oriental equilibristic gymnast; and Captain Burrow's wonderfully-trained and largest herd of elephants ever seen in Australia. The museum contains a 30-foot python, three-legged horse, two-headed calf, horned-hoofed pony, and Condor, and Kinkajou, and Blue Spec, the smallest pony in the world. The menagerie contains seven elephants, water buffaloes, zebu, ouads, llamas, vicunas, tapirs, lions, jaguars, gunaroos, wolves, bears, mountain sheep, apes, sloths, camels, ourang-outangs, baboons, dromedaries, gorillas, kangaroos, emu and snakes. Mr Wirth's fine exhibition of horsemanship is declared to be one of the best things on the programme.

**CHORAL HALL.**

**THE BLANCHE ARRAL SEASON.**

The Blanche Arral season at the Choral Hall has proved eminently successful, Thursday's and Saturday's recitals being attended by large and enthusiastic audiences who were evidently delighted with the famous prima donna and her talented little concert party. On Thursday Madame Arral's programme included such taking melodies as Gounod's "If I Were King," the same author's "Flower Song" from "Faust"; Masse's "L' Air du Rossignol," Bizet's "Habanera," the scene "Ah! Fors, e lui," from Verdi's "La Traviata," and the "Grand Bolero Espagnol," the delivery of all of which fairly thrilled and entranced the audience, so much so that Madame was recalled again and again, and received numerous floral tributes. The recital was in every respect a remarkable one, and concluded with Verdi's famous "Bird Waltz," which proved so irresistibly attractive at Madame's opening concert, and was again thunderously applauded. On Saturday the programme included the aria "Adieu mon Beauvirage" from Meyerbeer's opera "L'Africain," the grand aria from Mailart's "The Hermit's Bell," Tosini's "Good-Bye" (given in English in response to an encore), Gounod's "Serenade," and the Shadow Song from Meyerbeer's "Dinorah"; the Bolero from Verdi's "Scillon Vesper," and Lococo's Spanish song "Heart and Hand." Madame Arral gave a fourth concert last evening, and will, it is understood, give a fifth before leaving Auckland, where she has made hundreds of admirers by her magnificent powers of song.



MISS BEATTIE MACDONALD, APPEARING WITH FULLER'S CO. AT WELLINGTON.

**EDISON'S POPULAR PICTURES.**

**A NEW SERIES.**

Edison's Popular Picture Company under the management of Messrs Andrews and Bailey will make a return visit to Auckland next month, opening at His Majesty's Theatre on Monday, March 11. Mr Andrews writes to say that the Company has had a most successful run at the Lyceum Theatre, Sydney, and Melbourne. The pictures to be shown this time are an entirely new series, and include "The Great Marble Industry," "Baseball in America," "The Winter Straw Ride," "Life in an American Coal Pit," "Grand Rapids of Ozu," "The American Beauties," "The Beautiful Fairies of the Spring," "A Great Meeting of Indians," "A Message from the Sea" (said to be a most beautiful subject), "Coney Island by Night," "Stormy Winds Do Blow," "The Arabian Nights," the last Melbourne Cup showing New Zealand horse Solution leading into the straight and Poseidon winning. "The Grand Parade of Horses" (these pictures were specially taken for the Edison Company of America) and many other subjects which make the programme a feast of pure merriment and refined fun. This company when here last certainly gave one of the finest picture shows ever submitted to an Auckland audience, and theatregoers should not miss seeing their new series.

have cost a small fortune to stage, the scenery being of an exceptionally gorgeous description, the "Ichang Mountains" in particular forming a stage picture such as is not often seen in N.Z. The Chinese temple and torture chamber were most realistic, also, and the latter brought home rather vividly to the minds of the audience the ingenious ways the Chows have of making things lively for their prisoners. "The Yellow Peril" has been running all this week, so far, to record business. The Dunedin season commences Monday, February 18. My hearty congratulations to the Messrs MacMahon on their latest. I fancy they will find it a bonanza wherever they go.

On Tuesday, J. C. Williamson's "Royal Comics" open here at His Majesty's in "The Orchid." This will be produced for five nights, and is to be followed by a whole host of special attractions.

I enjoyed a few minutes chat with Harold Ashton after his arrival here with Mr J. C. Williamson. Ashton is showing the famous manager round, and long before this reaches you the pair will be in Dunedin, from whence they return, by easy stages, north. "Tell them in Auckland," said Mr Ashton to me, "that we shall get there in time to pick up 'The Squaw Man' Co. So that's alright. Mr Williamson is delighted to renew his acquaintance with Maori-land after a quarter of a century's absence. He calls Christchurch "the Boston of New Zealand," which is, in the humble opinion of this scribe, more complimentary than appropriate. Had J.C.W. called this sweet spot the dust-hole of N.Z. he would have been nearer the mark. But of course that wouldn't have done. We expected something nice—and we got it. . . . New arrivals at the Opera House include:— Slade Murray, descriptive vocalist. Arthur Taucher, comedian, Nellie Power, and A. L. Cropp (bass). The present bill is altogether a very strong one.

**SOUTHERN THEATRICAL NEWS.**

My Christchurch correspondent writes:—"The Yellow Peril," produced last week at the Royal by the Macmahon Co., would rejoice the heart of Lionel Terry, could that celebrity escape from Sunnyside to see it. It's something new in melodramas, and a refreshing change from the stereotyped thriller in five acts with "real water" for the beautiful heroine to take a header into after her heartless desertion by the bold, bad baronet, and "real horses" to race for the blue riband of the turf. But it is not a piece calculated to increase our natural affection for the almond-eyed Celestial, or our disposition to regard him as a man and a brother. The plot is quite an elaborate one, but the gist of the story is the marriage of a pretty white girl with a Mandarin of high degree, and the horror of the bride when she discovers that her husband has any number of other wives already, and that she is only "one of the crowd." I shall not tell you the rest of her adventures, because I want you to go and see the piece for yourself. And you can take it from me that it is very well worth seeing. Strange to say, Chas. Blake (usually the persecuted hero), is cast for a villain in this piece, and plays the part as if he quite enjoyed the change from stage virtue to vice. Boothman is the Mandarin, and makes up splendidly. As the much married heathen Chinese, with principles as loose as his robes, Boothman has a part in which he fairly revels. As the long-suffering heroine, Miss May Renno was excellent. Miss Granville played an American girl of the rapid type very cleverly, and Miss Helen Fergus is to be congratulated on her acting as the adventuress. This piece must

The pantomime "Mother Goose" has been running for seventy consecutive nights in Melbourne, and shows no sign of finishing up the season so far. Mr Williamson promises "Mother Goose" shall visit New Zealand this year.

Little Baby Watson, who was in Auckland with Rickards' Tivoli Co., is appearing at Sydney Criterion Theatre with the Howard Dramatic Co. Harry Diver, who visited New Zealand last winter under Andersonian management, is also with the company.

Exit Charles Hal', Shakespearian exponent of the histrionic, aetat 67. For close on 40 years Hal' was associated with the Australasian stage, and was a prominent member of George Rignold's Co. in the palmy days.

Miss Jessie McLachlan will commence another Australian tour at the Sydney Town Hall on April 1. The "Queen of Scottish Song" will be supported by Mr Murray Graham (pianist) and Mr Robert Buchanan (accompanist and conductor). Mr Frederick Shipman will direct the tour.



MR. CHAS. WALDRON AND MISS OLA HUMPHREY IN THE SECOND ACT OF "THE SQUAW MAN."