

There is a very good example of that state of affairs usually described as an embarrassment of riches prevalent in Melbourne just now at Her Majesty's Theatre (writes Mr. George Tallis). There the pantomime absolutely declines to abate one jot or tittle of its firm hold on the affections of the public, and the big house at every successive performance suggests a first instead of an eighth week of an extremely popular run, so crowded is every part and so enthusiastic is the appreciation showered on the hundred and one good things contained in the production. And yet the management, while rejoicing in the continual accession of new records which every week brings forth, could at times wish that they had happened along at another season of the year. For just now they have another attraction to go: Mr. Julius Knight, fresh from a long holiday, keen to commence work, with a fine repertoire and a new company, is only waiting until "Mother Goose" shall condescend to slacken up enough to justify its removal, in order that he may renew his friendly relations with Australian audiences. But just at present the chance of the pantomime being kind enough to do so seems still remote.

The next eight weeks or so will be occupied by Miss Tittell Brune in a series of farewell visits to various Australian centres. For the last two years her work has been particularly heavy necessitating heavy rehearsals as well as the strain of such impersonations as "L'Aiglon," "Leah Kleschna" and "Kundry," and she feels the need of a prolonged rest from her profession. Consequently, she will say farewell to Sydney playgoers during the next fortnight, and after a Melbourne season lasting through April and May she will go to Adelaide, and thence to Brisbane and other Queensland towns. At the end of September her holiday falls due, and at present it is her intention to immediately set out for a long and lazy tour of India and the East. She has always pined to see that fascinating part of the world, not as an actress, but solely as a private person, and the chance of doing so offered to her by long vacation is too good to be missed.

Miss Ola Jane Humphries, besides filling the position of leading lady to "The Squaw Man" Company, is devoting her leisure in New Zealand to the writing of a novel, the publication of which will create a good deal of interest out here. In the United States Miss Humphries is well known for her literary ability as well as for her stage successes.

A matter of considerable interest music lovers is the fact that Mr Alfred Moulton has been engaged as musical director for the forthcoming tour of Mr. Andrew Black, which begins at Wellington at

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Easter time. Mr. Moulton was formerly well known out here both as a musician and a composer, and since leaving Australia some few years ago he has much enlarged his experience. Almost as soon as he landed in the United States he was appointed to the conductor's chair at Day's Theatre, New York, a position he has ever since held, officiating at many very important productions during his term. Among them was "The Country Girl," which was stage managed by Mr. Gerard Coventry, who indeed has been the chief instrument in persuading Mr. Moulton to pay another visit to Australia.

As soon as "The Spring Chicken" is well starred in Sydney—which will be done, of course, as soon as they return there—the Royal Comic Opera Company will begin the work of preparing "The Dairymaids" as their next big attraction. The musical comedy, with Miss Carrie Moore in the leading part, had a most successful run in London up to Christmas time, when most of the principals had to take up pantomime work, and the piece was suspended, with a certainty that its revival again this year will have just as popular a course.

During his holiday trip to England and America Mr. Julius Knight spent much of his time in the London theatres—to the manifest advantage of Australians, to whom his opinions on many of the pieces now being played there will have interest, in view of the fact that several of them are listed for early production by Mr. J. C. Williamson. Among them are, of course, "Robin Hood" and "Raffles," in Mr. Knight's own repertoire, and both of them pleased him immensely, not because they offered "star" chance to the leading man, but because they were each of them well balanced, vigorous, and excellently constructed pieces. Mr. Knight also saw "Les Merveilleuses," of which he speaks in the most glowing terms.

Miss Amy Castles is forging ahead. It is stated that she will succeed Madame Patti as leading soprano for the Harrison Concert Company. She has just completed a very successful series of concerts under Mr. Harrison, appearing in most of the English cities, and in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Glasgow. Another member of the family of which Miss Amy Castles is the most distinguished representative is about to take up work on the comic opera stage, Mr. George Castles having just signed a contract with Mr. Seymour Hicks to sing in London for a period of three years. Mr. Castles has the advantage of a tenor voice, marked by a rich quality closely resembling that of his eldest sister. He has studied to some extent in London.

The following is the full cast of characters and synopsis of scenery of the drama "Home Sweet Home," which was produced by the Sydney Howard Co. at the Sydney Criterion on Saturday the 2nd inst:—Stephen Armitage, Mr. Sidney Howard; David Armitage, Mr. Nelson Ramsay; Duke of Ancaster, Mr. Jackson Wilcox; Lucas Lyle, Mr. George R. Montford; The Hon. Percy, Mr. Horace Pollock; Dick Redmayne, Mr. Harold West; Solomon Keary, Mr. Mark Paton; Gaffer, Mr. Harry Diver; Dr. Granby, Mr. Philip Carlton; Lord Silvermore, Mr. Walter Weston; Lady Summerton, Miss Margaret Damer; Sybil Fay, Miss Pearl Keats; Dora, Baby Watson; Joan, Miss Lillian Hallows.

The Elton Comedy Company, which has just completed a long tour of Australia, going as far north as Cooktown arrive in Wellington by the s.s. Riverina. The company is a strong one, and New Zealand is to be toured from end to end. Mr. Fred Elton writes me that the repertoire will consist of "When Jones left Home," "Joseph's Sweetheart," and "He, She, and It."

The Greenwood Family, after a prolonged rest at Newcastle, have started on a trip through Queensland, and intend going as far as the Gulf; India to follow. They will open in Brisbane about Easter. Business, as usual with this company, is booming, and the tour promises to be a most successful one from every point of view.

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