

last penetrated, and, like the immortal Scotchman, the house might have exclaimed, "I see it noo." On Monday the first change of bill will eventuate, when "The Cingalee" will be put on for four nights. . . . Slade Murray, the Driscolls, A. L. Cropp, Nellie Power, Les Warton, A. Tanaher, the Lewis Sisters, Dorothy Lestrangle, and the Rollos are all contributing to the present Opera House bill—and keeping the ball rolling right merrily.

WIRTH'S CIRCUS AND MENAGERIE

Wirth's Circus and Menagerie deservedly takes high rank amongst travelling shows as affording an almost inexhaustible fund of amusement. There is always something to interest and hold the attention of visitors from the merry patter and doings of the clowns, whose really clever burlesque feats are always good fun, to the feats of horsemanship of the skilled riders, the daring exploits of the wire and rope walkers and dancers, and trapeze performances of the acrobatic troupe, whose daring flights through the air thrill and entrance the crowd. Apart from these things there is the menagerie, or wild beast show, always specially interesting in a country devoid of such animals as comprise the collection, and particularly so in New Zealand where we are without anything approaching the character of a zoological garden or gardens. The mere announcement, therefore, of "Wirth's" advent is sufficient to draw crowds from every direction to view the elephants, the tigers, the camels, the water buffaloes, the zebra, the Japanese Polar and Himalayan bears, the boxing kangaroo, Indian leopard, the jackal, the guanaco, the baboon, ape and monkeys, the jaguars, the Royal Bengal tigers, the lions, the wildebeeste, the boars, the goats, and the zebu, to say nothing of the "freaks" and performing dogs.

The great tent erected by the Wirth Bros. at Freeman's Bay, forming such a capital amphitheatre, and capable of seating in comfort 1200 people, was well filled on Tuesday evening, when the circus opened for a short season in Auckland, and for fully three hours, with only a ten-minute interval, the large audience was kept in a simmer of excitement as item after item was unfolded from the unique programme provided. What was termed "A Grand Oriental Parade," introducing the whole of the company in procession around the hippodrome track was followed by a toreador dance, in which the equestrians and equestriennes of the company took part, the horsemanship displayed being excellent. Miss Phillipina's hurricane hurdle and somersault acts, and her daring horsemanship aroused great enthusiasm. Miss Marziles Wirth was no less well received in her serpentine dance on bare horseback, and a little girl, May Martin, did some really good trick riding, while Master Edie rode and drove six ponies with a skill far beyond his years, and was deservedly applauded. Miss Cook on the dancing horse "Major," gave another capital exposition of feats of horsemanship, which are usually regarded as bordering upon the impossible, and added greatly to the interest of the evening's performances.

M. Sampei Osado, "the Japanest Wonder," is rightly described. He gave some remarkable exhibitions of balancing powers, doubling himself up in the most extraordinary fashion on a table and stand, which left him barely room for his foot to stand upon. Hugh Patrick Lloyd again, danced, turned somersaults, played the violin and tambourine, jumped through a hoop and over articles held in both hands, all on a tightened rope—the "corde elastique," as it was termed—just as easily as if he were on solid ground, giving a really astonishing performance. The "Flying Herberts," or "Human Sky-rockets," as they are termed on the play-bills, gave a very daring and thrilling entertainment, flying from trapeze to trapeze in extraordinary fashion, turning somersaults in mid-air, one moment joining hands with the man suspended from his heels in the centre of the tent, and the next flying back to the swinging trapeze from which they had started.

The performances of the animals were

hardly less interesting, trained elephants, camels, tigers and lions performing feats which simply astonished and delighted the audience, one of the most clever of the tricks being the mouth organ performance of Toby, the big elephant. Herr Lindo evidently has his savage troupe well in hand and must be congratulated upon the astonishing results secured. The most thrilling moment of the evening was, perhaps, that in which he placed his head in the lion's jaws, while the fascinated crowd held its breath and wondered what would happen next. Altogether the show was a great success.

EDISON'S POPULAR PICTURES.

BESSIE SUTTON.

At His Majesty's Theatre on Monday, March 11, Edison's Popular Pictures will open with an entirely new series of "America at Work," and "America at Play." In speaking of this entertainment the Otago "Times" says: The excellent bioscopic entertainment running at His Majesty's Theatre drew another good house last night. To all lovers of brightness and the picturesque, the unusual and the instructive, the animated and the droll, this charming show is again with confidence commended. The films are admirable in quality as in variety and novelty. The accompaniment of sound, while never exaggerated, is strikingly effective. The pictures are steady and brilliant, focussed to a nicety. Some of the most characteristic American films now showing are wonderfully humorous and droll. The Coney Island series is especially to be commended. Coney Island is the popular watering-place of New York—popular in the broadest sense. Thither on holidays

ordinarily popular run at Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, with a record behind it of eight weeks of business that has never even been approached before (writes Mr George Tallis). With the close of this week it will have registered over 70 successive performances, at none of which has the attendance fallen below the level of crowded houses, and there is so far no evidence at all to indicate that the production has lost a hairsbreadth of its hold on the public. Recently moreover the introduction of several new features seems on the other hand to have increased its attractiveness—if indeed, that were possible. Miss Florence Young now sings a spirited song, "Cupid is the Captain of the Army;" Miss Celia Ghiloni has a fine ballad, "If You Only Knew," and Miss Pressy Preston has changed "Gretchen von Wetchen" for another, "Little Dutch Colleen." Mr Victor Loydall warbles a ditty about: "Parting on the Shore." Little Sadie has a song about the band, and Lennon, Hyman and Lennon put in some work alternately, clever and comical with Indian clubs for the benefit of the inhabitants of Gooseland.

It is not often nowadays that serious drama in Australia can achieve an uninterrupted run of eight weeks, and the fact that "Parsifal," which was withdrawn last Friday from Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, was able to do so speaks volumes for the drawing power of this artistic and admirably done play. This week Miss Tittel Brune is appearing in a revival of "Leah Kleschna," a role she has always maintained to exceptional advantage, and she is being supported by

son, which commences on Easter Saturday, the chief attraction will be "The Spring Chicken," and this most modern of musical comedies will be followed by "The Belle of New York," "La Mascotte," and others of the revivals in which the company has of late so distinguished itself. Mr Reginald Roberts his friends will be glad to hear, will rejoin the company for the season. In addition to the severe operation of a few months ago he has recently had to undergo another slight one, but he is ensured by his doctors that he will be perfectly well again in a few days.

Another result of the popularity of the pantomime is the further extension of its touring arrangements by Mr J. C. Williamson, who has decided to take in New Zealand as well as Brisbane, Adelaide, and West Australia—a move which will keep the company employed till the end of the year.

As everybody knows, superstition is a marked characteristic of nine out of ten members of the theatrical profession, a fact vividly instanced in a recent experience of Miss Florence Young. She received a solemn circular intimating that unless she copied out daily and sent to a friend one of the nine prayers attached thereto, something awful would befall her. Impressed with the intimation and with her feelings worked upon by her fellow players who took the most serious view of the situation, she proceeded to faithfully carry out the instructions, her task being zealously watched by every member of the Mother Goose Company, *Αρρητοι ειναι οι ανθρωποι οτι ειναι ομιλαιοι* of her duty from day to day, and otherwise took as many precautions as she did to avert the impending doom. When it was averted and the ninth day passed without incident, there was much rejoicing. It is not on record what the recipients of the daily prayers thought of it.

"There are many reasons," says Mrs T. P. O'Connor in an article in the "Daily Mail," why English companies in English plays can no longer look to America for a rich harvest of dollars. America is rapidly finding herself; she has discovered her own value, her own individuality, and her own independence, even in the subject of plays. The fashionable and the cultivated set, who wish to be au courant with every movement abroad, no doubt still go to see English plays, and profess to admire and to understand them, but deep down in their heart of hearts they prefer an American atmosphere, which, in spite of the same language, is quite different from England; they are as widely asunder as the two poles. One of the most prominent managers in America, who has successfully fought the theatrical combines, said to me: "It isn't necessary for us to have one English play in this country. When you realise that if an American play is successful it takes five years to exploit it, with companies travelling from Maine to Florida, and from California to the East, you can fancy that an American success is worth working for." There are plays in America that have had a twenty years' run. "The Old Homestead" has run in America for twenty-five years, and "Shore Acres" has had a success of similar duration.

Mr Andrew Mack has left San Francisco with the new company he has organised for the reconquest of Australasia. They begin that campaign in Wellington at Easter, and will remain in the Colony until July, when they are due in Melbourne.

Messrs J. and N. Tait announce Madame Clara Butt and Mr Kennerley Rumford will commence their Australian tour in Sydney early in September next. It is expected that the visit of these famous singers will be very successful. Both Mr and Mrs Rumford have appeared at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, and are, in fact, great favourites of Royalty as well as being exceedingly popular throughout the United Kingdom. Madame Butt is the greatest contralto of modern times, and Mr Kennerley Rumford is a magnificent baritone.

Rex, the human conundrum, having completed a five months' tour of New Zealand, returns to Sydney on Monday. It is only 18 months since Rex, on the suggestion of the medical fraternity, made his first appearance on the stage. He never goes through any preparation or training, and all his acts are simply exhibitions of double-jointedness.

William Anderson, of "bellowdrama" fame, is simply coining money with his "Wonderland" show at Bondi, Sydney. One of his latest attractions was the performing of a marriage ceremony on an elephant's back. The happy couple were dressed in Oriental costume, and the novel ceremony drew thousands. As a wedding gift the management presented the pair with a furnished house and a honeymoon trip to the Blue Mountains.



MR. H. R. ROBERTS, in "The Prince Chap," with which play he will shortly tour the colonies.

go Chimmy Fadden and the girl, extraordinary creatures who must be seen to be believed. The fine flower of American civilisation blooms with excessive quaintness in Chimmy Fadden. He is the nearest prototype of the London coster class. His ideas of enjoyment are crude, but of infinite development in their order. He loves intensely (in his fashion) as any epicurean could desire. He dresses wonderfully. He knows what he wants, and he does not always want what he gets. He talks his own speech, and hates the limitations of the merely fashionable. At Coney Island you see him at his best. He is wonderfully well worth seeing. There are other marvellously beautiful coloured films. There is a tremendously dramatic series, and in addition to these splendid pictures an excellent entertainment is given by Miss Bessie Sutton, who has reached the age of eight years. Notwithstanding the weight of so many summers, little Bessie sings like a dainty music hall artist, and dances like a fairy. Her voice is a surprisingly powerful one for so small an individual, and she is well versed in all the coquetties and fetching tricks of the experienced lady before the footlights. Her second act, in which she appeared as a juvenile man of the world, accoutred in evening dress and top hat, was too good for words, and her concluding step dance was worthy of Lauri himself. Bessie had to respond to treble encores on each appearance, and the audience was even then inclined to have more. One way and another, this show—the statement is honestly made—is the best picture show Dunedin has so far seen.

a cast almost entirely new to Sydney, among them Mr Thomas Kingston in particular, earning unanimous praise for his finished performance of Kleschna. The rest of Miss Brune's Sydney season will be devoted to short revivals of old favourites.

Owing, of course, to the success of the pantomime in Melbourne, to Ballarat fell the duty of welcoming Mr Julius Knight back to Australia, and very worthily they fulfilled their responsibilities, when "Robin Hood" was produced before an absolutely packed house, which followed the course of the stirring and romantic drama from first to last with the closest attention and the warmest appreciation, giving Mr Knight himself and to every member of his new company the most enthusiastic recognition of their respective efforts. The piece indeed, justified entirely the high expectation formed of it, and there is no possible doubt but that it will be popular throughout Australasia. The occasion was of a doubly important character, as it marked also the re-opening of His Majesty's Theatre after a complete overhaul, which has made it one of the best provincial theatres in the Commonwealth, equal indeed, to the metropolitan houses in the adequacy of its stage arrangements, which will allow the biggest spectacles being produced there, and in its electric lighting modelled on that of Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne.

Having finished with Auckland the Royal Comic Opera Company are now filling in the last month of their New Zealand tour with a round of the South Island centres. For their Adelaide sea-



MR. G. BRYANT, stage manager for "The Squaw Man" Company.

On February 16, "Mother Goose" entered upon the ninth week of its extra-