PADEREWSKI V. HAMBOURG.

Hark Hambourg, who is to r visit Australia this year under the direction of Messrs J. and N. Tait, had many curious experiences during his recen: American tour, one of them illustrating the Amer-American ican's keen sense of a business proposition. Paderewski was touring the States at the same time and very naturally a large pro-portion of the musical critics and music lovers spent much time and many words in discussing the respective merits of the two virtuees—more especially as on several occasions their inneraries overlapped and they played within a night or two of each other in the same town-sometimes choosing the same pieces for their pro-gramme. The amount of increst and controversy these incidents occasioned inspired a New York music hall manager with a brilliant scheme. He offered Ham-bourg, and presumably Paderewski, a big fee if they would appear on the same stage and play the same pieces within half an hour of each other—a sort of instrumental duel-in order that the public might settle once for all the vexed question as to whose rendering was the better one. It is perhaps need ess to add that the offer was not accepted. Nor was another of a different sort, from a financial magnate who wanted Hambourg to play at a big social function on New Year's eve. He tried to tempt him with a fee of £400. but the great pianist could not accept with-out sacrificing a very important engage-ment at the Queen's Hall. London. Four other offers of £200 each for similar appearances had to be reluctant'y declined for the same reason.

Arrangements are at present being made for a tour of New Zealand about the end of the year of Mr L. De Groen's full Vice-Regal Band of fifty-five performers, accompanied by a first-class concert company.

Harry Lauder at the close of his five weeks' New York engagement at £550 a week, signed an agreement to return in 1908 for a similar season at £1000 a week-nearly double the salary previously paid to any variety artist.

Eleven hundred peop'e were on the salary list of Drury Lane theatre during the pantomime season.

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Mr John F. Sheridan has secured the Australasian rights of "The Chorus Girl." an American musical comedy dealing with the fortunes of a facetious low comedian, who impersonates an English earl, and "The Gir' from Venus," which is on similar lines to "A Message from Mars." Both pieces are likely to be staged in the Dominion shortly.

Miss. Julia Marlowe, while travelling in Eng and, was taken to task by a doctor for her death scene in "Romeo and Ju-iet." It was in a small town, and the doctor, who met her at a reception, began to .e!! her of the pleasure her per-formance had given him. "I admire your Juliec profoundly," said he, "but your Junes protoundly," said he, "but—pardon me, Miss Marlowe—don't you know that the body does not stiffen for at east six hours after death?" "Now doc.or," replied Miss Marlowe, in the drawl she reserves for such speeches, "do you think that I'm going to keep my audience waiting for me to stiffen?"

Now that numbers of people look to the stage to teach hem the etiquette of dress and customs, a stage manager's life is even more anxious than of yore. The study of the clothes of men-servants as they should and should not be, was attended to by Mr Femming last time he was in England, when he was horrified to discover that his stage butlers erred by wearing low-cut waistcoats instead of the correct high-cut affairs worn by these dignitaries. After a even study of the subject, Mr Flemming prides himself that his mon-servants are dressed as they would be in the houses of the "upper ten." His butlers now can never be mistaken for waiters or footmen.

Herr Sapoffski, with the assistance of his talented wife, will establish an operatic school in Sydney. They consider there is plenty of premising material in Australia to furnish a permanent opera without the necessity of going abroad for principals.

At Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, "The Dairymaids" is in full swing the first week of the Royal Comic Opera Company's rendering of the merry piece having been marked by consistently crowded houses. "The Lady Dandies" which is to be the next production, is meanwhile in active rehearsal.

Alfred Sutro's powerful study of modern temperaments, "John C'ayde's Honour" will be done for the first time in Melbourne at the Princess Theatre, on March

An excellent indication of the way in which "The Merry Widow" has captured Great Britain is afforded by the fact that that when the George Edwarde's Company began a season in G'asgow 'ast December, the whole of the theatre was sold for the entire month to which its stay was limited before the curtain rose on the first performance there.

Realising the special interest which the children take in the annual Xmas Panto-

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mime, the J. C. Williamson management have this year accentuated the interest of the it.15 ones in the "Humpty-Dumpof the strong of the panconine to d in simple "fairy story" cty e by Miss Annie Rentou and daintily it ustrated by Miss Ida S. Rentoul. The sory deals with "Humpty-Dumpty': "six wishes, and the way in which he dispose of those withes is talk the fascination and simplicity which characterises the old time fairy tales. The illustrations—some in black and white, and some in four colours-add considerably to the attractiveness of the publication as can be well understood by those who are acquained with the deightfully artistic work for which Miss Ida Rentoul has for some time past been responsible. Indeed the l'ttle book reflects the greatest credi on all concerned in its production.

The Julius Knight Company's revival repertoire is to be strengthened by the inclusion of "The Prisoner of Zenda" and Anthony Hope's popular romance should receive full justice with Mr Knight in the role of Rudo'ph Rassendy'l and Miss Ola Humphrey as the Princess Fla-

A few days ago a very pleasant after-A new days ago a very p easant after-noon was spent by the representatives of South Australia and Tasmania in the Aus-tralian States Bal'et in "Humpty-Dumpty." The ladies were invited by the respective correspondents of the Ade-laide "Critic" and the Tasmanian "Cour-ier" (Mr T. A. Rogers and Miss Gasch) to afternoon tea. Senator Dobson en-livened the proceedings with a humprous ivened the proceedings with a humorous speech on the manifold attractions of Tasmania, and Mr Rogers spoke up for the charms of his particular State and altogether a very pleasant hour or so was spent. Now the ladies who have the honour to represent New South Wales Queensland and West Australia are won-dering whether a similar function is like-by to take place on their behalf.

The great attraction in the Julius Knight repertoire—" Monsieur Beaucaire"— has just been revived again in London.

Sydney playgoers attended the first night of "Claudian" at the Theatre Royal in a number which showed unmistakably the in-

terest the revival of the great spectacular drama had aroused, and the eagerness to see Mr Julius Knight in a role to which everybody anticipated he would do the fullest justices (writes Mr George Tallis). Their expectations were amply realised, for Mr Knight's study of the Byzantine nobleman, suffering under a curse which imposed eternal youthfulness upon him, was a really fine sustained effort which deservedly won the entire approval of a crowded house. Miss Ola Humphrey too was excellent as Almida, a part that requires a charming presence and a sympathetic touch—both of which attributes she possesses in full measure and the rest of the company were all placed to the best advantage. The scenery with its alternation between the gorgeousness of the Imperial East and the quiet charm of the country side and its most realistic earthquake scene, was a special feature of the production.

At length it is possible to make a de-tite announcement regarding "Peter finite announcement regarding "Peter Pan." that dainty and most whimsical of fairy stories by J. M. Barrie, to the Australian premiere of which playgoers on this side of the world have been ooking forward. That premiere will take place at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, on April 18th (Easter Saturday) and an additional attraction will mark the occasion in that it will signalise the return of Miss Tittell Brune to the scene of so many former triumphs. In anticipation of "the double event" J. C. Williamson booked the theatre twelve months ago and when Miss Brune left on her holiday trip last year, she was asked to 'ose no chance of seeing the two most famous exponents of the character—Maud Adams, in the United States, and Pauline Chase, in Lon-Moreover, she had to present herself to Mr Barrie in London, for he makes it a rule that the actress chosen for "Peter Pan" should be subject to his approval That weighty interview is over and Miss Brune has had numerous conversations with Mr Barrie who has given her every he'o in connection with the reading of the Miss Brune leaves for Australia in a week or two.

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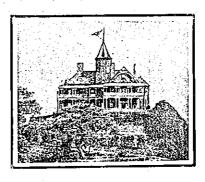
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