

THE STAGE

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE

MACMAHON'S PICTURES.

On Saturday evening Messrs MacMahon made a change in the programme of pictures at His Majesty's: a large number of entirely new films being shown. These were nearly all of the illusionist or amusing order, none of what for the want of a better name may be called the genuine pictures being found among the collection. Some people might prefer a blend of views of other lands and other customs, but the Messrs MacMahon maintain, and probably correctly, that the bulk of the people who visit the theatre come to be amused and therefore the "acted" picture holds supreme sway. Some of these are surprisingly good and one is left to ponder how much it cost to produce a film such as "The Harlequin's Love Story" a particularly clever example of animated photography. Others which caused roars of laughter were "The Servant Hypnotist," "Save the Pieces," "Palmistry," "Any Barrels to Sell," "The Cabman's Delusion" and that screaming favourite "Her First Bike Ride," which was repeated by request. Of the more dramatic subjects "A Mother's Sin" and "The Child Model" were possibly the best, while other studies well treated were "The Wonderful Mirrors," a particularly clever illusion, and "The Boy Bandits" an amusing example of what comes of reading "penny dreadful" literature. "The Great Steeplechase" was also repeated by request and this stirring picture of a big cross country event, with its chapter of accidents worthy of a Waikato leaping race, proved highly interesting.

Miss Lorraine Tansley sang very pleasingly a number of illustrated songs including "Will the Angels Let Me Play," "The Fireman" and "When the Lilac Blooms Again," the accompanying pictures being particularly good. The pictures will be shown again to-night and to-morrow while on Saturday there will be a matinee as well as the evening performance when the season will come to a close.

OPERA HOUSE.

FULLER'S ENTERTAINERS.

The programme presented this week at the Opera House by Messrs Fuller is of a really high standard and has the effect of attracting large audiences nightly to the popular place of amusement. Les Reggiardos (Antonio and Kitty) appear in a very attractive juggling and sword swallowing act with which they score heavily. These skilful artists commence their turn by performing a number of most creditable juggling feats in an accomplished fashion. Then follows an exhibition of sword swallowing several swords of different lengths making their disappearance down the mouths of the performers leaving only the hilts in view. A rather daring act carried out is to fix a bayonet to the butt end of a loaded rifle, partly swallow the bayonet and then pull the trigger the recoil of the gunshot forcing the blade down the throat of the performer right up to the hilt. As a conclusion to their turn an electric light is assimilated the neck and chest of the swallower becoming illuminated. The Marlowe Sisters are making their reappearance in song and dance items and succeed in immensely pleasing the audience with their charming style. Mr Rud Peterson continues to enjoy unbounded popularity, his songs being always of a high order. Williams and Bonetta are seen in a side-splitting sketch, and the combined efforts of the talented pair are responsible for keeping the fun at fever heat. Miss Brightie Smith, the favourite Australian comedienne, makes a great hit in a number of original songs which she sings in a taking manner. Mr Denis Carney fairly brings the house down with his budget of comic songs, the quaint way in which he delivers them finding much favour with Opera House patrons. Miss J. Marie Johnstone's soprano voice finds full scope in a couple of enjoyable numbers with which she makes a good impression. Miss Connie Solomon, the dainty little burlesque actress is heard in several most acceptable items and receives a fair share of applause. The Ioleens are again presenting their wire-walking and sharp-

shooting act and come in for a welcome reception. A series of first-rate films are shown by the Warwick Bosco that entitled "Who Would be an Athlete" being a decidedly amusing picture.

WIRTHS' CIRCUS.

Aucklanders dearly love a circus so that when Wirth Bros.' big circus opened its doors at Freeman's Bay on Tuesday night there was a monster house present to witness the entertainment, the huge tent showing nothing but a sea of faces. The Wirths always bring a good circus with them but on this occasion have surpassed themselves, it being one of the best ever seen here. The menagerie is a very large one, as there are six elephants, four camels, a bear, and quite a host of lions, tigers, wolves and other assorted carnivora. The entertainment is well diversified, all the turns being good and smartly executed. It is a little difficult to say which is the star attraction as there are so many; but probably Herr Batty and his animal act and the Flying Herberts take pride of place. In the former act, Herr Batty and Miss Vera Robson enter an iron-ringed enclosure and put a number of wild animals through their paces. The list is made up of six lions who do not appear to appreciate the entertainment,

standing on their heads, shamming to be asleep or balancing on barrels. They are a fine herd and pretty well constitute an attractive circus in themselves. The entertainment concludes with a fine exhibition of high jumping by the New Zealand pony Maori, Lady Morton, who has a record of 7ft 3in, and the Queensland jumper Clifton. The pony jumped splendidly, but the star performer was Lady Morton whose clean jumping earned her rounds of applause. She cleared 6ft 4in without much apparent effort. The season in Auckland is a very short one, finishing on Saturday next. There will be a matinee each day as well as the evening performance. Lovers of animals should certainly pay the circus a visit.

TO TOUR THE DOMINION.

Mr Harry Rickards (in conjunction with Allen Hamilton) will send through New Zealand shortly what he rightly considers the strongest Vaudeville Company that he has ever despatched to the Dominion. The company will consist of the three Sisters Klos (the famous aerialists in their thrilling sensational gymnastic act); The Artois Brothers, who at the present moment are creating a furore at the Sydney Tivoli Theatre in their hori-

her newly formed dramatic company in a repertoire, consisting of "The Broadway Winner" (which promises to eclipse "The Fatal Wedding" in popularity); "The Old Folks at Home" and "The Fatal Wedding." A complete tour of the Dominion will be made extending from August until the end of October, under the direction of Allan Hamilton.

HARD WORK.

It is said that an American musical comedy star changes her dress thirteen times during her turn, and some idea may be formed by experts by a record of the dresses changed during the evening:— (1) Black silk princess robe; (2) black crepe-de-chine princess robe; (3) Morning gown; (4) afternoon gown; (5) driving gown; (6) dinner dress; (7) black street dress; (8) evening dress, decollete; (9) decollete gown of gold cloth; (10) white silk costume, (11) white evening dress; (12) pink evening dress; (13) skating costume.

TOO HIGH A RENT.

Mr Oscar Asche, who was born in Sydney, aspires to bring English prices for seats down to something like the Australian standard. He is arranging for a theatre in which rates will range from a shilling to six shillings, with a few stalls at 7s 6d. At present it is impossible to get a stall in any decent theatre at less than 10s 6d, so that two seats break two sovereigns. The trouble arises mainly from high rents. Mr Asche pays £375 a week for His Majesty's, and it is impossible to get any London theatre with a reputation at less than £250 a week.

SHORT RUNS.

Short runs have been the feature of the New Year in London. So far, the ill-fated "Susanah—and Some Others" at the Royal Lyceum holds the record with seven performances, while "The Orange Blossom," with two weeks, at Terry's comes second. Then there have been "The Mastery of Edwin Drood" and "The O'Grindles," and the latest piece to go under is "Stingaree," which ran this week.

W. S. PERCY ON HIS STAGE CAREER.

"How'd I go on the stage?"

"I may as well say at the outset I owe my star, and practically my present position, solely and wholly to Mr J. C. Williamson, who 'discovered' me seventeen years ago. Mr Williamson founded a juvenile opera company, which later became famous in Australia as the Polard Company. A friend of mine who fancied he saw in me an embryo Charles Santley, risked a portion of his capital by having me taught singing, and on hearing one day that youngsters were wanted for Mr Williamson's Juvenile Company, I sallied forth armed with a copy of 'Ho, Jolly Jenkin,' from Sir Arthur Sullivan's 'Ivanhoe' determined to do or die. I am still alive. When I handed the song to Mr Williamson he was much amused. I think my audacity got me the job at any rate, I left Melbourne for New Zealand the next day.

"The first part I was entrusted with was the 'Pirates of Penzance.' I don't think I could have been entirely successful, because on the departure of the company from Dunedin I was not invited to travel with it, but was, instead, shipped with the scenery. Of course, I felt very crushed, and was wondering if I could swim back to Australia. However, when the company arrived in Christchurch my second chance came, one of the performers being indisposed. I was offered the name part in 'The Mikado' and played it ever after, so I imagine I must have satisfied the management.

"By easy stages I at length reached the position of leading comedian and for fully ten years remained in that position playing in all the Gilbert and Sullivan operas as well as in all the stock opera bouffes, touring Australia and South Africa. Our company was the first purely Australian company to travel away from home with an entirely Australian production, i.e. 'Din Din' which, I may say, was eminently successful.

"On the disbandment of Polard's combination I was offered an engagement by



MR. H. B. ROBERTS IN "THE PRINCE CHAP," WITH WHICH HE WILL SHORTLY TOUR THE COLONIES.

a friendly bear, a leopard, and two wolves. These go through a number of tricks and one is left wondering at the in-repedit of their trainer, and the fearless courage of Miss Robson who cannot be blessed, or rather cursed, with anything in the way of nerves. The Flying Herberts we have seen before, but their clever aerial flights continue to exercise the utmost fascination so daringly and neatly are they carried out. Among a host of other attractions, mention may be made of the children's circus by the clever Christies; Marco and his performing Bengal tigers; Miss Phillipine in a wonderful equestrian act; Miss Marziles Wirth and her juggling feats on horseback; John Welby Cooke in a champion jockey act, in which he performs seemingly impossible feats with the utmost nonchalance; Hubert Tomaso in a wonderful exhibition of balancing and table spinning; the Ozzapardi Trio who drive in a dog cart round the ring and perform acrobatic feats the while; Sampeddi Osado, the Japanese contortionist; Major, the dancing horse; Heller and Prior in tumbling feats; May Martin, the flexible marvel; Walhalla, Heler and dummy clowns; and many other good turns. Special mention must be made of the elephants who do all sorts of things in the most knowing way and appear to enjoy themselves hugely, no matter whether they may be playing a

zontal bar performance; the Miles-Savordale quartet the distinguished musicians who were in Australia about four years ago under Mr Harry Rickard's management—they leave London early next month and will travel direct to New Zealand via Vancouver. In addition to these "stars" of the vaudeville world, the company will include Miss Alma Gray, the favourite Australian vocalist and dancer (just returned from England); Irving Sayles—the king of all negro comedians; Leonard Nelson, Miss Lottie Kay, English soprano; Miss Olive Robinson; and several other favourite artistes. In addition there will be an entirely new series of biograph pictures, just received from London and the Continent. Rickards' vaudeville tour will extend over five weeks and five nights only, during which time Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland will be visited. Only one night will be lost in travelling. Mr Allen Hamilton will personally manage the venture, and is due to reach Dunedin on May 20th.

SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO.

Mr Allen Hamilton has arranged with Messrs Meynell and Gunn for a New Zealand tour to commence at Christchurch August 7th. The attraction will be