

ONE REASON FOR FAILURE.

"More than thirty years ago," writes the well-known actor, Mr J. H. Barnes, in "The Nineteenth Century and After," "that master of stage-craft and dramatic productions, the late Dion Boucicault, in the course of conversation, made use of the sentence in my presence—'Ah! When young men get tired of writing clever plays, perhaps they may write successful ones,' and I was greatly interested to see, quite recently, that an up-to-date dramatist raises the same point in another way after all these years. Is this the correct reading of the conditions affecting the successful production of plays, or is it not? I contend that it was, is, and ever will be, the only solid basis to go on."

No one will contend otherwise, unless it be that section of playgoers and critics who maintain that the stage must be a medium of education, and should take up the missionary role of raising audiences to the doubtfully higher mental plane affected by the deadheads and critics. The playgoing public will not be so educated and raised. If they want sermons they will go to the churches, and if they find the sermons not to their religious taste, they will stay away. If they want amusement, entertainment, recreation, they will go to the "playhouse," and when the plays cease or fail to amuse or entertain, the place of amusement will cease to attract, and playgoers will spend their leisure hours at variety entertainments or elsewhere. "The Theatre," to quote Mr Barnes, "is not the place to lecture on social subjects, or to argue on hereditary ailments or sordid problems. On the one hand, what are practically all the plays that have made successes and big money? Why, theatrical plays, through and through. On the other hand, how many of the modern, so-called clever, brainy, psychological, insight into characters, non-theatrical plays have made anything for their writers or anyone else? No one is more competent to judge of this point than a working actor like myself. A few years ago one could hope that after rehearsing for three or four weeks, one could count on a reasonable run; to-day it is becoming quite common to rehearse four or five weeks and get, in return, one or two weeks' salary.

Pollard's Opera Company, now touring West Australia under William Anderson's direction, has just concluded a highly successful Perth season. A visit to the Goldfields follows. The pieces in the Company's repertoire are "Bluebell in Fairyland," "The Isle of Bong Bong," and "The Gay Huzzar."

No less than three J. C. Williamson attractions, running during the present month either in Melbourne or Sydney, are set in the last decade of the 18th century. "The Scarlet Pimpernel" and "The Duchess of Dantzic" are both dated 1792, and "The Lady of Lyons" period is 1795, only three years later. "The Prisoner of Zenda" is 1773—this is so far as its prologue is concerned.

William Anderson's "Squatter's Daughter" Company is doing good business in New Zealand. Its great Australian success is being repeated. The Company is now at Christchurch. A tour of the West Coast follows. A return trip is to be made through both islands with "The Village Blacksmith," and probably "The Midnight Mail."

"The Jewel Gag" with actresses is well known, but Madame Ada Crossley the other day in Perth had an experience which was much akin to the old time fiction about "Miss So and So's Diamonds Stolen," which was once a running headline in the American papers. When dressing for dinner in Perth the night she arrived she discovered to her horror that the most valuable portion of her jewels had been left behind on the "China," then within half an hour of her sailing time from Fremantle. But Dr. Muecke was equal to the occasion. Borrowing a motor car at a minute's notice he flashed down to the port and caught the liner just as she was moving off, recovering the missing property in the nick of time.

"Romeo and Juliet" is being got into readiness for early production by William Anderson's famous dramatic organisation at the King's Theatre. George Darrell, the celebrated actor-author, is stage managing the production, and magnificent new scenery is being prepared by Rege Robins.

During the space of some three months, the number of performances given by the Royal Welsh Male Choir, has been something over 100. They have travelled many hundreds of miles as these performances have been given in South Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. The management hope to keep the choir in this part of the world until March or April next year, that is if they can put off an engagement to tour America.

There seems to be no doubt (writes "Prompter" in the "Canterbury Times") that Christchurch playgoers have been during the last two years slowly, but surely, developing into a blessed state where manners are not needed. The sin of arriving late can be excused under the heading "Laziness," but that of talking during the currency of a scene is still unpardonable rudeness. I do not attack the people who make whispered communications during a play, but those who, with a delightful disregard of the feelings of others, converse in loud tones and generally behave as if a tea-fight were in progress instead of a play. They seem to forget that in a theatre one is expected to listen, not talk. One naturally raises no objections to a laxity of manners in the

should be done, and done quickly and firmly.

The Royal Welsh Male Choir's tour through Australia has proved how popular they are. Everywhere they have met with the same wonderful success and it has really proved no easy task for Messrs J. and N. Tait who are directing their tour, to arrange for their return visits to country centres which have been previously favoured with a visit. In some of the towns, not only one return visit, but two have been necessary and it has only been by postponing visits already arranged, that the management has been able to gratify the friends these choristers have made in different country centres. It is quite unnecessary to say that the Choir enjoys this kind of reception, and were it not that they feel the heat of the Australian summer, they could be kept going for some considerable time in that continent. The management, however, think that our New Zealand climate will be found preferable in the hot months of the year and the choir may be shortly expected to commence a short tour of the Dominion.

Mr Charles Parnell, late musical director for the Fuller Proprietary in

Choir, had something of a feeling of novelty about it as the performances were given in a building hitherto never used before for concerts. The Glaciarium Building, proved particularly suitable for concerts of this sort and the attendances, numbering some 20,000, proved how popular it was.

The claque has developed a novel activity in the Whitechapel district of London. One Isaac Camelhaar was charged on remand recently with assaulting Maurice Waxman, actor and manager of a Jewish company performing at the Pavilion Theatre. The lawyer for the prosecution said the company had been giving plays in yiddish at the Pavilion Theatre, Whitechapel, and had been subjected to much annoyance by what the prosecutor called a "gallery gang," who had formed a claque to applaud or the reverse as they were paid by individuals. The prosecutor received anonymous letters threatening that unless money was given, the "boys" would stop the performance. When he left the theatre he was assaulted by the prisoner. The prisoner called two witnesses, who, however, were said to be two of "the boys." He was sentenced to three weeks' hard labour.

Mr Reynolds Denniston, last here with the "Scarlet Pimpernel" Company, was recently married to Miss Valentine Sidney, late of the "Peter Pan" Company.

Mr Harry P. Muller, the well-known theatrical representative of Palmerston North was married recently to Miss Dorothy Sheath, of the same town.

A writer in an English journal describes as follows a theatrical show at the local halls:—"A few nights ago, at the village hall, the play was 'Boscobel,' and we went and got all we wanted for our money. The stage being a very small one, there was no room on it for a tree, and Charles, in fleeing from his pursuers, found that there was none for him to climb. Making the best of the position, he squatted down behind what appeared to be the trunk of a tree, but there was no room for his feet. The Parliamentary leader, hurrying in pursuit, not seeing the feet, went head over heels over them, doing considerable damage to his nose, which came into contact with the floor. Picking himself up, and holding his nose in his hand, he said to his followers. 'He has eluded us.'"

Mr Charles Loder, the German comedian with "The Prince of Pilsen" Company, has an inexhaustible supply of yarns, which, for better effect, he tells in the dialect he handles so well on the stage. For example:—"My friend Schmitt has got a fine, smart boy. Der udder night he was saying his prayers, und he said, 'God bless grandma, God bless mama, und little sister. Amen.' His mother said, 'Why, Willie, you forgot to pray for papa's safety.' Willie replied, 'Holy Gee! Has pop got a bicycle, too?'"

Judging by the record season in Wellington of the Royal Pictures, playgoers in that centre have almost a depraved taste for moving pictures. For twelve long months the Royal Pictures have been given seven entertainments weekly at His Majesty's Theatre there, and it seems if the company is desiring to emulate the brook. Not only has Wellington been well exploited, but Christchurch and Dunedin and the provincial towns in the South have all been played for lengthened seasons, and now Auckland is to be tried. The Royal Pictures have arranged a lease of the Royal Albert Hall and will commence its season on Boxing Night, when all that is latest and best in the moving picture line is promised. Mr Alfred Linley, who is representing the syndicate, arrives in Auckland next week to herald the combination.

The following are the bookings for His Majesty's Theatre, Christchurch: 1908—December 7, 8, and 10, Musical Union; December 11 to 23, West's Pictures; December 26 to January 8, 1909, J. C. Williamson; January 9 and 11, J. C. Williamson (Ada Crossley season); January 19 to 23, E. Branscombe; February 8 to 27, West's Pictures; April 10 to 21, Catholic Bazaar; April 22 and 23, Madame Melba; May 20 to June 5, Meynell and Gunn; July 26 to August 7, Meynell and Gunn; August 9 to 21, T. Pollard; November 5 to 13, Alan Hamilton.



MR. GREGHAN MCMAHON IN "DIANA OF DOBSONS."

pit, and only a small voice against talking in the stalls, but when the dress circle of a city theatre, the aristocracy of the auditorium, descends below the minimum manners, the limit is reached and passed. It would indeed be a just penance to find a management posting in the circle numerous signs to the effect that "silence is requested"; but something

Madame Ada Crossley is to visit a number of "the inside" towns in Victoria and New South Wales on her way through from Adelaide on her return from West Australia to Sydney for her Xmas night concert there.

Amongst recent passengers from London for the East were Mr Albert Goldie and his wife, nee Miss Dulcie Deamer, the talented young authoress. Mr Goldie has gone to join Mr Hugh Ward, and act as business representative of his Comedy Company for the tour of India, Ceylon, and the East, and Mrs Goldie will carry out an ante-nuptial arrangement entered into with the Lone Hand Magazine to deal with certain phases of the woman's question in the East.

Mario Majeroni is in the cast of "Jack Straw" at the Empire Theatre, New York. He shares with nearly all the members of the cast the distinction of hereditary dramatic fame. A son of Madame Emily Soldene is also appearing, and it is said that no other production has ever brought together so many artistes practically born to the purple of the stage.

Wellington, is about to attempt a new world's record for continuous piano playing. The present record for this kind of endurance test is 51 hours 5 minutes, established at Sydney by a Mr Freeman. It was intended by Mr Parnell to attempt the feat at Wanganui, but these arrangements have been cancelled, and he has now contracted with the Royal Pictures Syndicate (of Wellington) to make his attempt at Auckland on the 29th, 30th, and 31st instant, partly in conjunction with the syndicate's moving picture show, which opens in the Royal Albert Hall on Boxing night.

Mr C. M. Berkeley, the touring manager of "Mrs Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," tells of a unique experience in the early history of Madame Melba in Australia, when she was singing, unknown to fame, as Mrs Armstrong. The company arrived in Orange, Mr Berkeley being in advance, and opened to the magnificent sum of eighteen shillings. Whilst the company were debating as to whether sufficient inducement offered for the future prima donna of the world to sing, a gentleman in the audience offered to give £5 to the Hospital if Mrs Armstrong would sing "Home, Sweet Home." She consented to do so, and then other offers were made of various sums, with the result that £25 was collected in aid of the funds of the local Hospital.

The recent short farewell season of some four concerts given in Melbourne by the Royal Welsh Male