

CHRISTCHURCH NOTES.

My Christchurch correspondent writes:—

The Williamson Dramatic Company are beginning what promises to be a most successful season at the Theatre Royal. Opinions differ as to their presentation of "The Taming of the Shrew," but in "The Thief," produced for the first time here last night, they have scored an unmistakable triumph. The piece is one of the most powerful as yet staged in Christchurch, and too much praise can hardly be accorded to the principals for their magnificent work. Miss Humphreys as Marie exhibited dramatic ability of the highest order, and has certainly never appeared to better advantage. Mr. Kolker, too, surprised the critics by his fine acting, and the piece held the attention of the audience from the rise of the curtain to its fall. Saturday will witness a revival of the ever-popular "Silver King," with Mr. Kolker as Wilfred Denver and Ola Humphreys as Nellie. The season, regrettably brief, terminates on the 11th inst., when "Zira" goes on.

The Wide World Pictures continue to delight large audiences nightly, and Mr. Rud. Petersen is proving himself the right man in the right place as business manager of the show.

The continued indisposition of Mr. Geo. S. Titheradge, one of the stars of the Williamson Dramatic Company, is viewed here with the deepest regret, and we all hope to hear speedily that the popular artist is himself again.

The Cherniavskis commence a return season at His Majesty's on the 8th inst. They are sure of a warm welcome.

West's capital pictures have left us for fresh fields. They were well patronised here, but, of course, the opposition picture shows have to be encountered now, and Mr. West has no longer the field to himself, as he had a few years ago.

Wonderland City still remains a most popular playground in Sydney. The Amateur Boxing competitions are arousing considerable interest. The popular Australian all-round athlete, Bowly Baker, is in charge of proceedings.

General Wolfe realised the power of sentiment embodied in poetic form when he recited in subdued tones to his men, on the night of their ascent of the Quebec Hill, Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" and ended by stating that he would rather be the owner of that poem than take Quebec. Possibly it was the deep-rooted love

of peaceful home life permeating those verses that found an echo in the heart of the young English soldier, and possibly it was this very love of home and country which thrilled through every fibre of his being, and spurred him on through the darkness of that night to win a victory, even though he himself met with a soldier's death. Of quite a different calibre is the song which Mr. Bert Gilbert is now singing with such dash and vigour at Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, appealing as it does directly to the martial spirit of the young Australian, and ending with a chorus that is a direct appeal to them to defend their "Bit of the world," even with their own lives if necessary. The song is one which rouses the big audiences to an intense pitch of enthusiasm, and Senator Pearce, who attended the theatre on the first night of its introduction into the pantomime, wrote to Mr. Williamson and told him that he considered the latter was doing patriotic service in thus stimulating enthusiasm towards this end, and also that his visit had been a real pleasure.

William Anderson's dramatic organization will re-open in Melbourne in "The French Spy," a sensational drama, that gives great scope for dressing.

The Widow who resides in the Shoe at Her Majesty's Theatre had a birthday last week (writes Mr. George Tallis), and the occasion served to show her how much she was thought of by the other members of the company, who showered presents upon her and all sorts of good wishes. The children who live in the Shoe presented her with a gold-mounted cigar-holder and a silver case, with the words: "To the Widow Cobble, from her children," inscribed thereon, while amongst other articles which took the form of birthday gifts were a case of pipes and a flask—hardly appropriate presents for a woman, though, of course, the Widow may be one of those up-to-date females who indulge in the luxuries of a "nobbler" and a smoke now and then. The Widow's own way of marking the auspicious occasion was to tell a series of new stories about McKay, which caused much merriment. Then on Sunday the Widow, who is in real life "Jimmy" Campbell, and Miss Stella Gastelle, gave the children a picnic to Aspendale, where they thoroughly enjoyed not only the outing, but all the goodies which were provided for them, and it is needless to say that the "dame" and the "principal boy" are more popular

WOLFE'S SCHNAPPS

The family stimulant.

than ever with the youthful members of the company.

William Anderson has made arrangements for the use of the late Alfred Dampier's script of "For the Term of His Natural Life." The piece was produced on Saturday, March 6. Mr. Walter Baker appeared as the Rev. North, Vivian Edwards as Rufus Dawes, Bert Bailey as Mr. Mockin, and Edmund Duggan as Gabbett.

In Sydney, at Her Majesty's Theatre, on Saturday, February 27. "The Dairymaids" went up for a fortnight's revival in succession to "The Duchess of Dantzic." On March 13 the new Gaiety piece, "Havana," will take the place of "The Dairymaids," and though its run will be necessarily a brief one, it is having all the care and attention bestowed upon its rehearsal by Mr. Spencer Barry that would be given to it were it likely to have as much time at its disposal as any of the other popular musical attractions. The English papers have spoken in the highest terms of this new piece, both as regards its music, its setting, and its plot and declare that "never for a moment was there a lull in the shout of appreciation."

"Jack and Jill" is meeting with such marked appreciation from Melbourne audiences that it is loth to leave Her Majesty's Theatre, and arrangements have been made for the popular pantomime to remain on for some time longer. In consequence, Miss Tittel Brune will not be able to open in that city in "The Girl of the Golden West" on the date originally arranged for her, but will have to postpone taking her farewell of Melbourne. She leaves for London in May next, after a visit to West Australia.

William Anderson's company at the King's Theatre, Melbourne, has been strengthened by the engagement of Albert Norman, who did such notable work in heavy characters with Bland Holt.

At the Sydney Theatre Royal on March 6 Mr. Julius Knight and his company appeared for the first time in Australia in "The Duke's Motto," a stirring drama by Justin Huntly

McCarthy, of the time of Louis XIII. The central figure of the piece is Henri de Lagarderes, who constitutes himself the guardian of the infant daughter of the Duke de Neveres, who is killed by the ruffian Conzague. The latter's aim, after killing the father, is to gain possession of the daughter, as she stands between him and the possession of certain estates. Lagarderes, however, is faithful to his trust, and guards his ward from all danger, though at times there are some very thrilling scenes and hairbreadth escapes. In the end, Conzague meets a well-merited fate and Lagarderes triumphs in the cause of right and justice, and is rewarded by the hand of his ward (now grown into a beautiful woman) in marriage.

If present arrangements are adhered to—and it is almost certain that they will be—"The Englishman's Home" will be produced in record time, its premiere being listed for Easter time by J. C. Williamson. The play, about which the London correspondents of all the Australian papers have just now so much to say, was secured by cable before it had been "on" three days, and its MS. description of scenery, lighting, etc., were posted by Mr. Malone the same week. Not only so, but he cabled out a long message giving particulars of their characters, their number and type, the scenes, and so on, in order that work might be at once begun on this side. And it was for a cast was tentatively selected, and everything preliminary that could be accomplished was put in hand. There will, therefore, be an interval of barely two months between its first night in England and its first night in Australia.

There is a good story told by Mr. G. S. Titheradge, apropos of the care with which English managers select their cast, and, conversely, of the wide field they can draw on for that purpose. Pinero once wanted a dissipated young man for one of his dramas. He found exactly what he wanted—an actor who had been living not wisely but too well, and showed it in his face. He was promptly engaged, and began to swell round on the strength of being chosen for a Pinero piece. But his friends urged him to put himself right, and, thinking that perhaps he had been going the pace, the young man "swore off" everything, and turned up at the first rehearsal looking clean and wholesome. "Good heavens!" cried Pinero when he saw him, "you've spoiled the character. Go away at once and be dissipated. Go and get back your pimples."

THE FOX

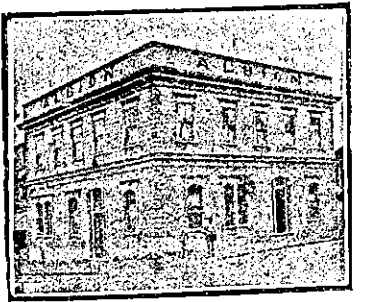
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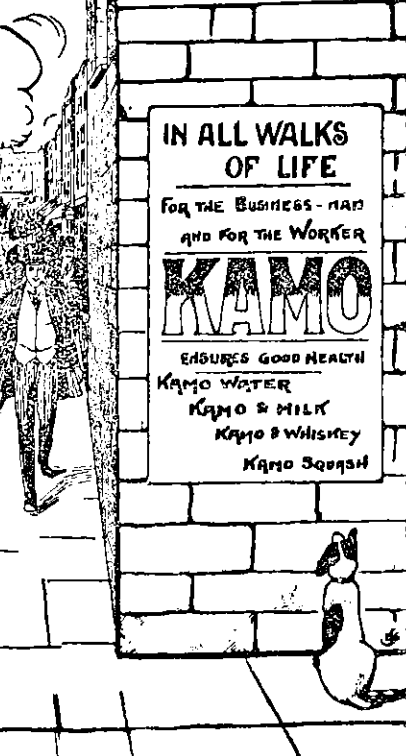
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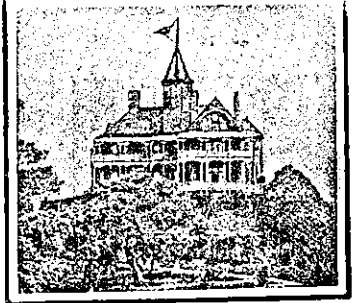
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