

# GREENROOM GOSSIP.

[By PAUL PRY.]

Mr and Mrs (Miss Maud Beatty) J. Milburn have been paying a visit to Auckland during the last week.

Mr Scott Leighton, who has departed for Sydney, has several engagements in view, and on arrival on the scene of action will go into harness at once.

Miss Mariott Watson left for Sydney on Tuesday. It is more than likely that the lady will join the Bland Holt's on their return to Australia.

To-morrow (Friday) the Auckland Amateur Minstrels will give their first performance in the Opera House. The programme to be presented is a very attractive one, and patrons are promised an entertainment of exceptional merit. As I mentioned last week, the funds resulting from Friday and Saturday's performances will be devoted to sending out good things to Auckland's members of the contingents now in South Africa.

The Pollards have been playing at Gisborne—a place they have not visited for a long time. The company arrives in Auckland on Sunday, and will have a week's rest before opening at the Opera House on Easter Monday. Everybody will be glad of the rest, for the one and two-night seasons to some of the smaller towns in the North Island have necessarily entailed a lot of hard work.

Mr W. S. Gilbert is a martinet at rehearsals, and it is a treat to see him instructing the ballet how to execute the steps of the dances. During the rehearsals of the last Gilbert and Sullivan production, one of the principals who had not previously met Mr Gilbert in business remarked facetiously, "Why, Mr Gilbert, I had no idea that you could dance." "No," returned the dramatist, "I am not often caught tripping."

A joint tour in America is being arranged for Madame Sarah Bernhardt and M. Coquelin. Definite choice has been made of two plays for their combined repertoire. In "Cyrano de Bergerac" Coquelin will be supported by Bernhardt as Roxane, while, in "Hamlet," he will good naturedly respond with a new and, it may be hoped, unedited Polonius. For a third play, and a novelty, a new drama by M. Moreau (Sardou's collaborator in "Sans Gene") is spoken of. This presents the infamous Judge Jeffreys as the centre and pivot of the action, and bears the quaint title "Lilliburlero," the name of the famous political ballad attributed to Thomas Wharton (a violent Whig partisan at the time of the Revolution), which it precipitated if indeed it did not actually "sing James II. out of three kingdoms." "Lilliburlero" is now being put into rehearsal at the Porte St. Martin, where M. Coquelin will produce it early in January.

Mr Charles Arnold, the well-known actor, who has been in South Africa for some months past, has written a letter to his manager in Australia, Mr L. J. Lohr, describing the wild scenes of excitement that were presented in Capetown when the news of the relief of Kimberley was received: "Crowds rushed through the streets singing 'Rule Britannia,' bunting appeared on nearly every building, every caddy tied a Union Jack to his whip, men wrapped themselves in bunting—wore red, white, and blue ties and rosettes. The crowds rushed along, cheering in front of every public building and hooting in front of the Dutch newspaper offices. All this comes as a great relief after the gloom of the past month. Everyone you meet wears a smile—no, not everyone; there are those to evidence who have been 'bearing the market,' others (the Dutch) who don't like the British victory; it is easy to distinguish them in the crowd. I am now wiring Kimberley to try and arrange for my company to play there next week. If I can get through, I shall combine business with pleasure, and take several truck loads of fruit with me to distribute on the way. My 'Fruit Fund for the Troops' has reached £440 in two weeks, and I am sending two to four tons of grapes per day to the troops at the front. I am not forgetting the Australians and New Zealanders. I am sending a couple of tons per week to them. I am told they were in the relief of Kimberley. I trust they got through without heavy loss. We are sailing for Australia on the Damascus on the 8th March."

On Monday night the first of a series of three concerts, under the direction of Mr George Maurice was given in the Auckland Opera House. A good attendance rewarded the promoters, and throughout the evening the listeners applauded the various artists with much fervour. Mr and Mrs Hamilton Hodges were the stars of the evening, and they delighted everybody with their artistic delivery of their songs. Mrs Hodges first gave the "Jewel Song" from Gounod's "Faust" very charmingly, and, in response to a strong demand, sang "Swanee River" with delicacy of expression and much sympathy. Mr Hamilton Hodges sang Lohr's "Margarita" with very considerable effect, and, as an *encore*, pleased the audience with a dainty little gem, "Good-bye, Sweet Day." In the second part Mr and Mrs Hodges were very enthusiastically received, and their singing of the duet "Flow Gently, Deva," drew great applause. Miss Maud Howard sang "The Old Lark," "Carnival," and "A Woodland Serenade"; Miss May Dudding gave "Fiona" and "The Old Countess," and Mr A. L. Edwards scored in "I'll Sing Thee Songs of Arabi" and a pretty little thing called "Only a Rosebud." Miss Howard was given a warm welcome each time she came on the platform. The Bioscope pictures, and the Japanese Medley and Amazon March by Miss McIlhorne's pupils, were greatly appreciated. During the evening Mr Alf. Bartley acted as accompanist.

There was an excellent attendance on Saturday night at the Valdares' Summer Theatre, Emily Place, near the Auckland Museum. The opening performance was to have been given on Friday, but as the Te Anau did not arrive until late in the afternoon the opening had to be deferred till Saturday. There is no doubt about the marvellous ability of the Valdares as trick cycle riders. They have studied the question of balance deeply, and their display shows how perfectly they have mastered it. They ride their wheels in all sorts of ways some of their attitudes being seemingly impossible until the cycles are on the move, and then every method of propulsion appears to be remarkably simple in accomplishment. The Valdares are so graceful that their feats look easy, but a minute's consideration will prove that the artists' ability is really wonderful. They work upon a very small stage, and throughout the performance their exhibition is marked by taste, skill, and confidence. In addition to the bicycle riding the Valdares' perform some wire-walking of an admirable character. Miss Marie Rayford and Mr Frank Bayston, who were popular favorites at the City Hall a few months ago, are with the company. They had a warm reception from many old friends, who were pleased to see the pretty dancer and her partner in fun once again. Professor Godfrey's menagerie of trained dogs, monkeys, cockatoos, etc., by their quaint antics, amused the audience vastly. The cleverness of the animals reflected the greatest credit upon their mentor. Mr James Mooney (well-known here for his high-kicking), Miss Ida Holbein, Mr Tom Powers (who, as a tramp cyclist, caused any amount of fun), Miss Flo Barnes, and Mr John Tudor—all variety artists of ability—added considerably to the evening's amusement.

A record house greeted the rising of the curtain at the City Hall on Monday night, the date marking the anniversary of the opening of the Gaiety Company. Every seat was occupied and a double row of sight-seers lined the walls of the auditorium and the back of the dress-circle. The performance from start to finish was an excellent one, and the audience, which appeared to be *en rapport* with the artists, appreciated every item that was put on at its full value. There was scarcely a turn that was not vociferously encored, and if the apparent desires of those present had been fully met, I am of the opinion that the entertainment would be still going on. A new first part was stayed, the set being entitled "H.M.S. Gaiety." All the members of the company were in yachting costume, and the general effect produced was very pretty. Mr Rivers' patriotic songs, the Misses Marlow and Bodin's serio-comic selections, and the turns by Frank Yorke, Johnny Collins, the Williams Sisters, and Lennon, Hyman, and Lennon were all enthusiastically received. The second part was equally interesting, several new turns being introduced. The entertainment concluded with a laughable farce entitled "The Photographer."



THE VALDARES, THE FAMOUS TRICK CYCLISTS.

After the entertainment was over, arrangements were speedily made for the supper which was tendered by Mr Dix to the company, members of the Press, and a number of specially-invited guests. At 11 o'clock all was ready, and between seventy and eighty ladies and gentlemen were seated at the tables, which had been arranged on the stage. A sumptuous repast had been prepared, which was thoroughly enjoyed by those present. The toast list included "The Queen," "The Press," "The Ladies," "The Management," and "Our Visitors." Mr Dix was presented with a handsomely-mounted umbrella, and in the course of his reply very happily expressed the hope that it would prove more useful for sunshiny weather than for rainy days. Mr Macconachie also received a presentation, from Mr Dix, of a handsome gold Albert and pendant. Shortly after 12 the hall commenced to fill with those who had been invited to the ball, and dancing was kept up until an early hour on Tuesday morning. Altogether the affair was a complete success, all present enjoying themselves heartily. I hope that Mr Dix will enjoy as great a success during the current year as heretofore. He cer-

tainly deserves it for his enterprise and untiring energy.

The St. George Kinematograph Company has been meeting with much success in the southern towns of the North Island. At Hawera, Wanganui, Feilding, Palmerston North, and Masterton the pictures of the Spanish-American war, the Transvaal war, and other subjects, have been much appreciated. The show has proved very popular, and return visits to the various towns are spoken of.

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