

[BY PAUL PRY.]

"Paul Pry" will be glad to hear from those managers of theatrical companies touring New Zealand who desire that the public shall know the movements of the companies. Any information as to dates, etc., will be acknowledged in these columns, as well as any other items of interest to the theatrical world. All letters should be addressed—"Paul Pry," SPORTING AND DRAMATIC REVIEW, Vulcan Lane, Auckland.

As announced last week, Mr Donald Macdonald, the brilliant, Australian war correspondent, who went through the grim and eventful siege of Ladysmith, will open his lecturing campaign at the Opera House this Thursday evening, under the direction of Mr Edwin Geach, and his series of lectures should be as largely attended as here they have been wherever delivered. His success in Melbourne and in the Victorian provincial centres was phenomenal, and so appreciated were his lectures in Sydney and Brisbane, each of which attracted a bumper audience, that he was prevailed upon to bill himself for extra ones in each city. Mr Macdonald is a man of strong individuality and commanding appearance, and though his career as a lecturer has been a very short one, his style and delivery far surpass that of many professional platform speakers, and the consensus of expert opinion is that, were he to keep to the boards, he would, without the slightest doubt, soon occupy as exalted a position among lecturers as he now does in the ranks of journalism. Admirable as Mr Macdonald's articles on the war have been, his lectures are said to be in structure and material even better. They contain the cream of all he has written, with a great deal more anecdote superadded; and whilst they necessarily deal with the grim side of war in a fashion which arouses dread and deeply stirs the emotions, they sparkle throughout with humorous allusions, and arouse the audience to almost continued laughter and applause. Mr Macdonald's powers of mimicry are of a high order, and his method of delivery is so easy and natural that he does not appear to be practising any art, when in reality he is putting forth his most artistic efforts to please. As one writer remarked, "His manner is most simple, and he talks to you and not at you." I am sure Mr Macdonald's advent among us will be awaited with keen anticipation, and predict that the Opera House will be found totally inadequate to accommodate the numbers of admirers who will roll up to see and hear the man whose graphic letters from Ladysmith enthralled their interest so thoroughly. The season terminates on Monday night next.

I have received from Mr Charles Fanning a picture of the Fanning Family. The youngster appears to be a hearty little chap. Mr Fanning played fourteen weeks at Dunedin, and is now going great guns at Christchurch. A Dunedin exchange, referring to the departure of the Fannings, says:—"Goodfellowship is the prevail-

ing feeling between the popular manager of the Alhambra Theatre and the artists who come out under his engagement. Prior to their departure for the north, Mr Ben Fuller presented Mr Charlie Fanning with a gold sovereign purse and Mrs Fanning with a greenstone brooch. "Ben" was made the recipient of a handsome cigar case. On Sunday afternoon the wharf in the vicinity of the Moura was one swaying mass of wayward humanity. The attraction was the departure for the north of Mr Charlie Fanning and Miss George Devoo, two of the most popular of the many popular artists with the Fuller Bijou Company. Cheer rang out upon cheer for the favourites, and were most heartily returned. About 300 young bloods, disregarding the sanctity of the Day in their eagerness to show their feelings, filled their lungs and yelled forth "The Sheeny Coon" as the boat left its moorings.

On Monday the Deaf and Dumb and Blind Entertainers left for a tour in the Waikato district.

Mr Harold Ashton has taken a long lease of the Brisbane Opera House. He intends to keep up a succession of visits from the best companies touring Australia. Whatever is worth having he intends to secure for the Brisbane folk.

The Pollards were at Nelson on Monday last. After the visit to the "Garden of New Zealand," the Company will journey down the West Coast of the South Island.

Mr Charles Arnold will commence his New Zealand tour at Dunedin on November 8 with "What Happened to Jones."

Mr Harry Conor, who is back again in New York, has an engagement with Mr William A. Brady. Later on Mr Conor comes to Australia with a company of his own.

Miss Edith Crane and Mr Tyrone Power will shortly tour New Zealand. They make a commencement next November.

Miss Nance O'Neill's tour of New Zealand starts early in the New Year.

The box plan for Mr Donald Macdonald's lecture season is now open. Seats may be booked at Messrs Wildman and Lyell's.

The Choral Hall was crowded last Friday night to welcome the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Entertainers. We have had blind performers here before, but this is the first occasion on which deaf and dumb artists have appeared, and their portion of the programme deserves the highest praise. The three systems, manual, sign, and oral, used by them to communicate with each other were illustrated, and "The Charge of the Light Brigade" was rendered by them in an exceedingly novel manner. Mr Morgan, though a deaf mute, gives recitations with sufficient distinctness to be thoroughly understood, and quite astonished everyone with his wonderful lip reading. Mr W. Taylor is a wonderfully clever lightning sketch artist, and his pictures drawn in chalk upon a large blackboard are executed with bewildering rapidity. Miss Woodward appeared as Britannia in some very pretty tableaux, and was re-called for her Al exhibition of club swinging. The humorous sketches of Messrs Morgan and Taylor, although all in dumb show, created roars of laughter. The blind members of the company have all considerably improved since their last visit here. Mr Solomon is a most accomplished vocal and instrumental musician, and at

the same time a character actor of quite uncommon powers. His humour is undoubted, and his comic songs fairly convulsed the audience, and in his musical turn with Mr Irwin his novel instrumentalism was quite a revelation. Mr J. Irwin's musical ability is of a high order, and he was deservedly encoored for his horn solo and for his rendering of the "Yeoman's Wedding" song. Miss Drummond's song "The Spanish Gipsy" was quite a treat. The programme throughout was splendid, and cannot be too highly spoken of, and it is certainly the most unique entertainment we have ever had in Auckland.

Mr George Grossmith, the well-known English entertainer, has recorded in his memoirs that on one occasion when he was asked to sing the Lord Chancellor's patter song at Sir Arthur Sullivan's, he found himself unable to recall it, but Lord Hopetoun, who was one of the guests, quickly came to the rescue and sang it one bar ahead of the carefully pursuing comedian.

Mr Charles Arnold is back again in Sydney after an absence of five years. "What Happened to Jones" is delighting the Palace audiences.

On October 3, 4, and 5 the Auckland Amateur Minstrels hold sway at the Opera House. Baby Denton will do a lot of swaying. New music, new songs, new talent, and a screaming new plantation farce are going to make things very lively during the season.

L. J. Lohr, "the genial," sends me word from the Sydney Palace that business is phenomenal, and advance booking enormous. This is the result of "What Happened to Jones."

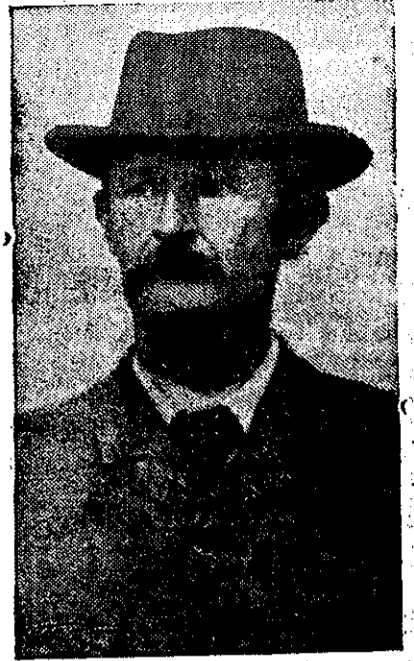
"The more the merrier," is Mr John Fuller's cry, as the crowds roll into the Agricultural Hall night after night. On Saturday night it was quite impossible for any show to have received more enthusiastic appreciation. On Monday the same spirit prevailed. Miss Lily Vernon, a very prepossessing young lady, made her appearance, and scored a decided success by her cultivated and tuneful singing. She has a soprano voice of great purity and exquisite expression. Her song, "Only a Violet," pretty and simple, won the praise of all who heard it, and she was twice encoored. Mr John Fuller gave "My Pretty Jane" with great effect, and of course had to respond, for one cannot have too much of John Fuller's dainty exposition of tenor singing. His other song, "When a Little Time Has Flown," is a gem, and the "silver tenor" gives it a very tasteful setting. Miss Eva Wilson, with "She's Nice" and "Of Course," has gained fresh friends every night; of course she ought to, for she is so nice. Miss Wilson is clever and piquante, and the Agricultural Hall audiences appreciate her highly. I have not the space to give every member of the Bijou Company her or his just due, but each and all must take the will for the deed. There is not a better show on earth for the money, and very few half so good at four and five times the price.

On Friday, September 14, a complimentary benefit will be tendered to Mr Martyn Hagan, at the Auckland Opera House. The play will be that rollicking piece of humour "Fun on the Bristol." Mr Hagan will play the Widow O'Brien—Mr Johnny Sheridan's famous part—and as he was in the rôle of the Captain to Sheridan's Widow for some four years, and has himself played the Widow all over the colonies, the representation should be vastly enjoyed. Miss Lucy Fraser—Mrs Hagan—will be the Dora, and the other leading characters will be filled as follows:—Nora, Miss Adèle St George; The Count, Mr W. P. Denton—won't "Baby" revel?—the Captain, Mr Horace St George; Bella, Master Jack Hagan; Tommy Cranby, Mr Albert Simmins; and Jerry, Mr Will Cramp-ton. Mr Albert Lucas and Mr A. L. Edwards will also assist to make the bill of fare as attractive as possible. There will be a good orchestra, and the etceteras will be quite up to date. Speaking of Mr Hagan's interpretation of the Widow, an Australian paper says: "The part of Widow O'Brien has been so long associated with Mr Johnny Sheridan that it may be considered as belonging solely to him, but Mr Martyn Hagan has proved that Australia has a comedian who can cope with all its difficulties." Mr Hagan's press notices are extremely favourable, and there is no doubt that on Friday week Aucklanders will have an opportunity of seeing a mirth-provoking piece enacted by some very capable artists.

My advice to everybody: Go and hear Miss Lily Vernon at the Agricultural Hall.

Little Eileen Boyd, at the City Hall, is a great draw. She has the voice and *abandon* of an artist of twenty-one, yet she cannot be more than fourteen. She is undoubtedly clever, and must be seen to be believed. The other newcomers, Messrs Adson, Craydon, and Holland, are three very amusing patter and variety artists. There is a little more "higher art" than we are accustomed to in this clever trio, and therefore the turn is to be much admired. The songs they sing are cleverly worded and set to up-to-date music, the dancing is neat and clever, and their "gags" are good. The chestnuts among them will all bear repetition. Last night (Wednesday) the Leslie Brothers, who have just terminated their engagement with the Fullers, were back again at the City Hall. Another new turn was that of the Andrews Sisters. There are three of them, and their Christian names are Mabel, Maie, and Rose. Next week I shall be able to say more about them. Arthur Hahn, the *basso*, has gone below—I mean down South. He made his last appearance here last night. The Elmore Sisters are, of course, going great guns.

Sentenced to death! the doomed man stands To die in prime of life,  
No shade of hope, no outstretched hands,  
No friend except his wife;  
She heeded not the doctor's voice,  
"His cough would kill him sure,"  
She saved his life, and did rejoice,  
With Woods' Great Peppermint Cure.



MR DONALD MACDONALD, SIX WEEKS AFTER THE RELIEF OF LADYSMITH.

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