



[BY PAUL FRY.]

"Paul Fry" 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 come parties. 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 Fry," SPORTING AND DRAMATIC REVIEW, Vulcan Lane, Auckland.

The Georgia Magnet, who achieved a great triumph in Sydney, has lately been attracting tremendous audiences to the Melbourne Bijou.

The censor of plays in the Lord Chamberlain's office has refused to issue a license for the production in England of the Biblical play "Joseph of Canaan," written by the Rev George Walters, a Unitarian Minister, formerly of Victoria, in collaboration with Mr George Rignold, and produced some years ago at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne.

The first performance of Mr Stephen Phillips' poetical drama, "Herod," at Her Majesty's, London, by Mr Beerbohm Tree, aroused a feeling of the liveliest interest. Mr Phillips' play contains three acts and one scene only. This represents the entrance to the private apartments in Herod's palace. The entire action takes place in what may be called the Hall of Audience, whence the spectator, looking down from the eminence on which the palace is set, is able to descry the city of Jerusalem. A bridge spans a deep gorge, separating this hill from one visible in the background. In his first two acts the author deals with the tragedy of Mariamne's death; in the last with the madness of Herod himself. Each act contains a special spectacular feature. In the first we have the Tabernacle procession, a picture of extraordinary magnificence, heightened by the presence of numberless worshippers, bringing with them offerings of fruit and grain and carrying palm leaves in their hands. The second act is conspicuous for its wonderful "mob" scene, wherein the infuriated citizens, making a headlong entrance across the bridge, are opposed by Herod's followers. Here we may expect an effect not less striking than that created by the crowd in the forum scene of Julius Caesar. For the third act is reserved a tableau of singular beauty and profound pathos. The mad Herod sits upon his throne in the Hall of Audience, moodily brooding over past events. To distract his thoughts graceful dancers and exquisite singers are introduced, but all to no purpose. Then come artificers from all parts of the world, bringing gold and priceless jewels, emeralds, rubies, turquoises and pearls, designed for the beautifying of the temple, which Herod has promised to rebuild. Yet their endeavors to attract the King's attention are also futile. At last the embalmed body of Mariamne is borne in, and the distracted Herod throws himself on the inanimate form of the woman whose death he had himself contrived.

"Banjo" Paterson's lectures at the Opera House have been very well attended, and the reception given him has been hearty in the extreme.

Mr Paterson has interested those who have attended his lectures immensely, and from time to time he has amused with humorous descriptions of events which have come under his ken. On Tuesday evening his subject was "The Empire's Call, or the New Zealanders and Australians in Action." Naturally this was highly appreciated by Aucklanders, for Mr Paterson repeated all the good things said of the colonials by the various generals under whose command they have served. On Friday the lecture was about "The Ever-victorious 'Bobs' and Fighting Generals," and wound up with "Humours of an Army on the March." Throughout the lectures were illustrated by some capital sketches and kinematograph pictures. Mr Paterson and Mr Smythe leave for Sydney at once.

On Saturday night, Rexo, the great equilibrist, will appear at Fuller's Show at the Agricultural Hall. During the approaching holidays, Mr John Fuller will provide a great and varied entertainment. Plenty of new artistes are booked to appear during the next fortnight.

Harold Ashton has lately been touring in Western Australia with a War Biograph. The pictures he is showing are excellent.

On Boxing Night the City Hall will be gay with the new first-part scenery which has been painted by Mr L. Williams, the scenic artist of Pollard's Opera Company.

Miss Maud Hewson is at the present time touring in Western Australia with the "Two Worlds" Company. Exchanges speak very highly of her singing and acting.

On Monday, December 17, Mr John Fuller, junr., on behalf of Messrs John Fuller and Sons, formally took over the Wellington Choral Hall from the Choral Hall Company, the price paid for the building and grounds being £5250.

Mr Pete Hughes arrived in Auckland last week, and has since been busy talking about the charms and capabilities of Nance O'Neil.

The Hodge and Harper Dramatic Company is now permanently settled at Wanganui. During the Christmas holidays the company will produce "The Octroon." During the past two months the success of the company has been very great.

Good news for all! Miss Nance O'Neil appears here on Boxing night, December 26.

We are promised some splendid war views for next Tuesday night at the City Hall.

Mr Fuller continues to hold the Agricultural Hall with big success. New talent of great merit is coming along regularly. The price of admission to the show is absolutely low, and no wonder the crowds roll up every evening. The "Demons," viz., Lennon, Hyman, and Lennon, with a large number of other favorites have held crowded receptions. The new first part "Ornise of the Sunbeam" makes an effective picture for the opening, and the entertainment all through is deserving of patronage.

Mr Dix is making great preparations for Xmas week, and from the array of talent assisting, there can be little doubt but that great support will be accorded him. The management can certainly not complain of the patronage accorded them of late, and last few days have been no exception. Messrs J. O. Bain, Frank Clark and the other clever artists continue to attract splendid audiences, and one can spend a really pleasant evening with them at small cost. Some first-class new talent is announced; from reports received, Joe Cowan's appearance may be looked forward to with pleasure. The entertainment to be provided on Xmas night should attract a great house, the bill of fare, including Chinese and Boer war views, is of the best.

The Nance O'Neil season promises very well, for already a large number of seats have been booked for the opening and succeeding nights. Wednesday (Boxing Night) is the first occasion on which we shall have the pleasure of seeing the talented American actress. The opening play is "Magda." Of Miss O'Neil's acting in Sudermann's work, an exchange spoke of the first night in Melbourne in the following terms:—Let it at once be said that Miss Nance O'Neil's first appearance was a veritable triumph. The reputation that has preceded her, far from being exaggerated, has by no means done justice to her remarkable histrionic power. Gifted with a presence and a voice, a face and figure, sufficient in themselves to enable their possessor, given only moderate intelligence, to take high rank on the stage, she has in addition that faculty for realizing a character which, in the actor, is genius. Free from the faintest suspicion of staginess, she is the kind of actress that is born, not made. If the promise of her first night in Melbourne be fulfilled throughout her stay, few will deny that we have had the opportunity of seeing, in the flower of her youth and freshness, an actress who is destined to recognition in the world centres as having been born to the imperial purple of the stage.

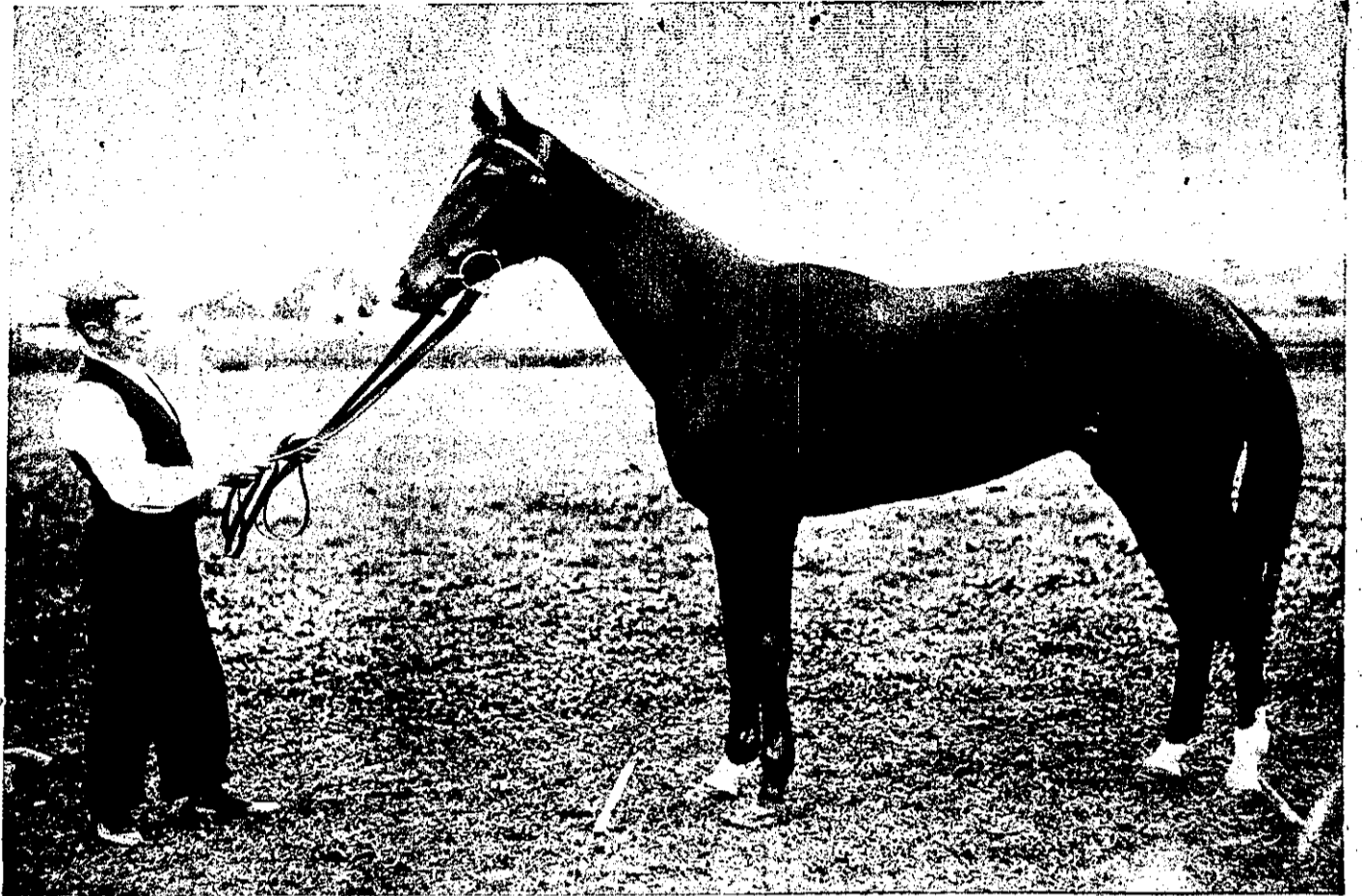


Photo by A. L. Cleave, Ellerslie. MESSRS L. D. AND N. A. NATHAN'S B & BEDDINGTON, 3YRS (BY SEATON DELAVAL—LETTY).—TRAINED BY GEORGE WRIGHT



Photo by the Edwards Studio, Auckland. MR. C. LOVETT'S BR & HOHORO, 4YRS (BY TASMAN—LADY MOOR).—TRAINED BY FRED STENNING.

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