

The new trio of acrobats at Mr P. R. Dix's show, Messrs Johnson, Riano and Bentley, had a great reception (says a Southern scribe). The act in which they appeared, "The Farmer and the Monkeys," enabled them to show their abilities as gymnasts, and to greatly amuse the audience. Made up as monkeys, two of them were chased by a farmer, himself a gymnast and tumbler, and the ludicrous attitude the monkeys assumed and the extraordinary position in which they placed themselves convulsed the audience.

It is stated that Mr George Musgrove some years ago offered £10,000 down for a sixteen week tour of Australia by Sir Henry Irving and Miss Ellen Terry.

"In the Soup," which has been produced at the Palace Theatre Sydney, has only served to enhance the reputation of the Hawtreys Comedy Company. "In the Soup" is a farcical comedy depending for its success upon smartly represented comical situations.

Messrs Wm. B. Parkyn and John Bromley, society entertainers from London, opened a four-night season in the Opera House on Wednesday evening. They have just concluded a season in Sydney, where their entertainment was favourably received by the critics. Mr Parkyn, "The Cornish Entertainer," gives a series of unique sketches, rustic dialect tales, songs etc. Mr Bromley is a tenor who has appeared in the Albert Hall, St James' Hall, Queen's Hall, Steinway Hall, London. Referring to Mr Parkyn the "Era" has the following:—"We may say at once, and without reserve, that Mr Parkyn is a thorough artist in all that he does. He never strains after effect, and he makes all his points with admirable ease and unconsciousness. Very delicate and refined is the way in which he differentiates the personages whom he represents. He is familiar with various dialect and keeps them quite distinct in his deliveries. His Cornish farmer, his horsey man, his Wiltshire yokel, his Frenchman, his old American, are firmly characterised, but the characterisation never approaches caricature. It is the same with Mr Parkyn's make ups. Each of these is evidently a study from life, and each is finished carefully and convincingly. It is as agreeable as it is novel to find an artist who appreciates what we may call the finer shades of rusticity, and can depict them with an assured, yet light and dainty hand. We have nothing but warm praise for Mr Parkyn's work." "Amphion's" comments on the entertainment will appear next week.

Under the heading "A Broad Minded Bishop" a Queensland paper has the following:—"Among those who witnessed the final presentation by the Hawtreys Comedy Company of the "Message from Mars," at the Theatre last night were his Lordship Bishop Barlow, and his suite. Apparently, his Lordship quite enjoyed the play, and it is unfortunately so rare in Townsville that a dignitary of the Church can attend a theatrical entertainment with the consciousness



The Grousselle Studios, Ltd., Sydney.

MISS CECILE LORRAINE

One of the attractions of Mr George Musgrove's Grand Opera Company.

that his presence is not liable to misinterpretation, that this morning he was asked by a representative of the "Star" if he would express an opinion on the subject. His Lordship replied in the following terms:—"If I had gone to see this play last Saturday night instead of the last night of its production, I would have been better pleased. Having had a good deal of experience in London in earlier years, and some idea of artistic things, I can safely say that the play has a really strong, edifying, healthy influence. It is truly artistic. A visit to the theatre on such an occasion is calculated to send men back in a strong, moral, and elevated spirit. When I think of the comparatively small population of Townsville, the fact the theatre has been attended

night after night by large and appreciative audiences, I feel gratified, for it all shows refinement and taste. I said to myself this morning, if I had seen the play on Saturday night I would not have hesitated to introduce a commendation—a strong commendation of it—into a sermon. I was very pleased indeed with it all, and very glad to have been able to go." We think that his Lordship's remarks will be warmly applauded by the citizens of Townsville.

Old musical friends of Lieutenant Wynyard Joss will be glad to read the following cutting sent me from a London paper:—"The New Zealanders contingent had a cyclist corps of fifty men, wonderful fellows, under a marvellous leader, Lieutenant Wynyard Joss, who when not cycling over impossible treks and carousing for three-score miles in a day, devoted his leisure to trapping insects and reptiles. I don't mean the smaller class of insects, they are easily obtained; but gigantic locusts, grasshoppers, with beetles and tarantulas as big as cricket balls. He has made a discovery that the baboon is inordinately fond of the tarantula. The monkey-fied creatures seize them with avidity, tear the spider demon's hairy legs off, and devour the body as a great dainty. I have seen Lieutenant Joss with a pet chameleon upon his wideawake, a tame tortoise upon a string, and a stock of dead and live stakes stowed away upon his person or in his cart. These cyclists of his used to carry despatches daily between Plumer's camp and the thirty-five miles distant post of Commissie Drift. I can cycle a bit myself, but I would not attempt what they did."

MR GEO. MUSGROVE'S SEASON OF GRAND OPERA.

At the Opera House on Monday night an important historical musical event in the history of Auckland will eventuate, and that is the visit of the long looked for Musgrove Grand Opera Company. Verdi's great work, "Il Trovatore," will be the opening piece. The season is limited to eighteen nights, and the operas which will be produced during that period will be "Faust," "Carmen," "Bohemian Girl," "Il Trovatore," "Mignon," "Maritana," "Lohengrin," and "Tannhauser," all of which will be rendered in English. All these plays are to be put on, Herr Benno Scherek, who is acting as Mr Musgrove's representative, informs me on a scale of lavishness which will be a revelation to New Zealanders. The chorus will consist of fifty voices, and the orchestra will be proportionately strong. There are over 100 people in the Company, which is so strong in "stars" that no artiste appears on more than two nights in the week. The company is essentially cosmopolitan in its composition, as no less than six nationalities are represented among the leading performers. Madame Ella Russell is the only member of the original company which has toured Australia who will not visit New Zealand. Her engagement with Mr Geo. Musgrove was for eight weeks only, and she had to return to the old country to fulfil important Oratorio engagements. In a recent interview Mr George Musgrove, speaking of the N.Z. tour said:—"In Madame Slapoffski, Madame Jansen and Madlle Cecile Lorraine, the New Zealanders will hear *prime donne* capable of singing either the most florid or the most dramatic music; in Signors Salvi and Barthald they will find tenors who will captivate their hearts with their sweet singing and realistic acting; Mr Max Eugene and Mr Tilbury are baritones of exceptional quality; while Messrs T. H. Pringle and Mooney are basses of the first rank. It is worthy of mention in passing, and a fact that will deeply interest all colonials, that Mr Pringle is a native of Tasmania, being a son of Mr Pringle, who was best known to New Zealanders by his *nom de theatre* of Templeton, and

who was the baritone of several companies that went down to your colony. Mr T. H. Pringle has had a marvellously successful career. He came to the front five years ago as a member of Madame Albani's company that toured Canada; and since that time he has sung with conspicuous success in almost every European capital. He is simply great as Mephistopheles—at least that is the universal verdict—and makes an ideal teneor in "Carmen." The prices fixed for admission are 6s, 4s and 2s, and the box plan is open at Wildman and Lyell's. Future New Zealand arrangements are:—

- Wellington, a three weeks' season, commencing August 12th
- Christchurch, two weeks, commencing September 2nd.
- Dunedin, three weeks, commencing September 16th.

In reviewing the company's tour in Australia a distinguished Melbourne musician and critic penned the following complimentary remarks:—"This week has been the close of the second season of Mr George Musgrove's Grand Opera Company. There has been a repetition of many of the works which they have secured the greatest success, and with the alternation of principals in some of the leading parts, the interest of novelty has been maintained. In looking back over the record of performance, we cannot fail to be struck by the high measure of excellence attained. Among Wagner's masterpieces Lohengrin, Tannhauser and The Flying Dutchman have been presented with a completeness and accuracy of detail which would win favourably enconium in any city. The repertoire has also been exceedingly varied, and has included many different schools of music. Composers, French, Italian and English, have been represented, as well as the great German master. Faust, Mignon, Carmen, Trovatore and Maritana have been given with admirable effect. The company in its second season, has been greatly strengthened by the inclusion of Miss Ella Russell, Mr Pringle and Mr Barron Berthald, though this observation casts no shade of reflection on the ability displayed by other members of the company who had previously established themselves as favourites. Madame Slapoffski and Miss Jansen have not suffered in comparison, and M. Arena has left behind pleasing memories which will not easily disappear. No one has worked harder or more efficiently than Mr Slapoffski, the conductor, under whose direction the orchestra has done wonderfully well. The enterprise displayed by Mr George Musgrove has placed the musical community under a debt of gratitude."

Now that the question of fire escapes and fire alarms is the theme of general conversation, people interested in the question cannot do better than make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the merits of the "Castle" Electric Fire Alarm Bell System, a full account of which appears in our advertising columns. The "Castle" Apparatus consists of Automatic Contacts and Alarm Bells. The contacts are distributed throughout the passages and rooms, and are opened simply by breaking the glass. Immediately the glass is broken on any one of the contacts, all the alarm bells commence ringing, and cannot be stopped except by the proprietor or some authorised person. As "seeing is (in the majority of cases) believing," we would recommend our readers to call at 135 Queen-street, and see a sample apparatus. A trial of the "alarm" was given last week in the presence of Messrs Graves Aickin, M. Casey and P. E. O'Neal, members of the Auckland Licensing Committee; Captain Field, of the Salvage Corps; and Mr John Mowbray, who were greatly interested in the apparatus. Mr James McDermott is interested in the invention, with Mr Castle, the inventor.



Photo by the Edwards' Studio, Auckland. "Watching the Play" MISS EMMIE OWEN of the stage.