

open on Saturday next, March 28, and will continue for a period of seven nights, and two afternoon performances will be given. The location will be on the reclaimed ground, Freeman's Bay, which should prove an excellent spot now that the trams are making this point one of their stopping-places.

The Steele-Payne Bellringers have arranged the following date for the Waihati tour:—Rotorua, March 26 and 27; Cambridge, March 28 and 30; Te Aroha, March 31; Karangahake, April 1 and 2; Waihi, April 3 and 4; the Paeroa and Thames to follow.

Miss Fitzmaurice Gill's Company is at present playing at the Opera House, Wellington. After leaving Auckland the company played New Plymouth, Stratford, Hawera, Wanganui, and Feilding to big business. In these towns the company put on "Man to Man," "The Christian," and "The Sign of the Cross." Miss Gill has several new attractions, which will be produced shortly.

The Steele-Payne Bellringers, who have been playing in the smaller towns of the North Island with much success, are now touring the Waikato district. They will return to Auckland and give a sacred concert on Good Friday night.

An exchange says:—Mr Allan Hamilton describes the farce "Are you a Mason?" which has been staged by the Broughs at Calcutta with great success, as a "screamer," which eclipses "Charley's Aunt." Mr. J. C. Williamson holds the Australian rights of the piece, and intends producing it at the Palace Theatre, Sydney, at Easter.

The Westminster Abbey Glee and Concert Party, who are to visit Auckland, is representative of the original body, and was selected by the organiser, Mr Edward Branscombe, not only for their excellence as solo vocalists of assured position in England, but noted also for that perfection of blend, sympathy and expression in ensemble singing, which is so difficult to attain or to find, and which stamps the but men of eclectic taste, artistic polish, and refinement.

These delightful singers will appear at Abbott's Opera House, in a secular programme, on April 6, 7, 8. Assisting them will be Madame Marie Hooton, the eminent and charming London contralto, and Mr. Dudley Causton, one of London's most celebrated humorous entertainers, also Mr. Percy Coward, who sings alto. He was the favourite Alto Soloist of our late Queen, at St. George's Chapel Windsor Castle. This combination has just concluded a tour over 180 concerts in Canada and the United States, where enormous popular enthusiasm was aroused by the delightful programmes of old English glees, madrigals, and catches, together with the national ballads of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.

Miss Lizzie Kirk and Mr Frank Leon, two artistes well known in New Zealand, were appearing at two London halls on February 9, namely, the London, Shore-ditch, and the Metropolitan, Edgware road.

Worth Bros., circus and managerie are due at Melbourne on the 28th inst. They have greatly added to their menagerie. Among their new purchases are four lions, two bears, and six baboons; and Mons. Ragoul, the lion tamer, is preparing an act which will include three lions, a dog, a pony, and a goat; it is expected to be more sensational than the famous tiger act.

From an Exchange we learn that "The greatest organ in the world has just been installed in the cathedral at Seville. It was built by a Spaniard, Senor Aguilino Amezua, and is of truly gigantic dimensions. There are four metal flute stops, each 16ft long, such as no other organ in Europe possesses. It is also the only organ which has bass-bourbons which give thirty-two vibrations a second and produce a deeper tone than the organ in Muscia, which has hitherto been the deepest-toned organ in the world. There are altogether 200 independent stops and five bellows worked by electricity. The cost was £6400.

M. Robert Planquette, the celebrated composer of opera-bouffe, died suddenly at his residence, Boulevard Periere, Paris, at the age of 54. M. Planquette was a Parisian, and, after one year passed at the Conservatoire, his talent asserted itself in the composition of popular melodies. His real debut, however, was "Les Cloches de Corneville," which had a run of 400 nights at the Folies Dramatiques, and has been playing continuously in England for the last 27 years. M. Planquette, who was born in Paris in July, 1850, and educated at the Paris Conservatorium under Duprato, is known not only by the opera named, but also by "Rip van Winkle," "Paul Jones," and "The Old Guard." Among the operettas, besides the above, which have enjoyed much popularity are "Surcouf," "Mamzelle Quat Sous," and "La Cantiniere." The composer became also a regular provider of ballets for the London Alhambra.

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

"A MESSAGE FROM MARS."

The attendance at His Majesty's Theatre was good on Monday evening when the Hawtrey Comedy Company revived Ganthony's clever play "A Message from Mars." The revival met with warm approbation, and, as on the first production of the play here, a genuinely meritorious performance was presented. "A Message from Mars" is a play that should not be missed. The plot is novel and striking, and its untavelling is attended by some excellent scenic effects somewhat out of the ordinary. The dialogue is unusually smart and witty. Mr. Gregan McMahon takes the leading part as Horace Parker, and showed an admirable versatility in his



MR. W. F. HAWTREY.

portrait of the star student and would-be man of science, who is passionately in love with himself, and who even tells his fiancée that he loves her in a "scientific way," and not by any means the least success he achieved was in the quiet-toned awakening of Horace in the last act and the transformation in his character that results. Mr. Hawtrey's impersonation of the inventor-tramp was all that could possibly be desired, and was characterised by some really fine acting, in which the tramp showed that if he had seen better days he had also not quite forgotten them. Mr. Heggie, in his old part of the Messenger, was as impressive as ever, and nothing could be more natural than the irritating influence such a monotonously cold-blooded moralist has on the nervous sensibilities of a man of the Horace Parker type. Miss Winifred Austin makes a charming Minnie Templar, all her work being natural and graceful, while, as Aunt Martha, Miss Emma Branton's performance is also to be commended highly. Mr. C. P. Hammond, as the intruding Mr. Dicey, acts well his part. Mr. Olly Deering has a light task as a medical practitioner, and all the other minor characters are ably sustained—in fact, the all-round merit of the company is very noticeable, and the mechanical effects and the carol-singing are well managed.

Our Wellington correspondent writes under date March 20.—That Fuller's Entertainers are doing phenomenal business at the Choral Hall for their first week. The place has been packed each night, and headed by that quaint Yorkshire Comedian, Denis Carney, has set the ball rolling in good style. One of his best songs, "Look at me looking at you," is more than a favorite, and his dancing is sure of a big round of applause. The whistling comedian, Jack Steele, is also a very big favorite. The Driscoll Bros. also supply some very neat song and dance work, which is well done. The Phillips Sisters also do double work of the serio order in good style. Dr. Rowe is a conjurer, and if not the best we have seen, he certainly is not the worst we have had forced on us at no very distant date. Cyril Iredale and Miss Annie Ellerslie contribute some excellent ballads. Dix's Gaiety Co. are substituting a musical farce for the first part, in place of the burnt cork circle, and the idea seems to have caught on. On Saturday, Frank May, Irish comedian, makes his first appearance. Frank will draw too, his business never being overdone, his patter clean, and his dancing perfect. Jack Kearns and Geo. Bentley keep the fun going at present, and Ida Rosslyn and little Vera are warm favorites. Jessie Thorne sings some serio-comic songs in her best style, and with Rosie De Vella gave some very clever leg-mania work. The remaining numbers are creditably given. Frank Thornton closed a fairly successful season on Wednesday last. To-night is the opening of the Fitzmaurice Gill Coy. at the Opera House, with "Man to Man." The booking has been very good so far, and a good season should ensue. The Wellington dates for Mark Hambourg concert season are 4th, 6th, 7th, and 8th of July.

STAGE DOOR NOTES.

Fitzgerald Bros'. Circus opens for a season of seven nights on Saturday next.

An attractive programme is drawing good houses at the City Hall.

Mr Bert Royle will reside permanently in New Zealand to look after Mr J. C. Williamson's interests.

The Majeroni Dramatic Company is doing good business on the West Coast of the South Island.

Auckland friends of Miss Violet Mount will learn with interest that the young soprano has been selected as soloist for St. Patrick's, Sydney.

The New Plymouth Amateur Opera Club gave two performances of "Les Cloches de Corneville" during last week, which were a great success.

The Steele-Payne Bellringers, who are touring the Waikato at present, and whose photo we give in our present issue, are having a very successful time, after an absence of two and a-half years. The company have been strengthened since their last visit, by the inclusion of Miss Maude Payne (of the original Payne family), and Miss Agnes Rahilly, vocalist and elocutionist (champion gold medalist of Ballarat South Street Competitions). The Hawke's Bay "Herald" says of these two ladies:—"Miss Maude Payne met with an enthusiastic reception on her reappearance after several years, and her violin solo, "Fantasia on American Airs," proved that her hand had lost none of its skill, and her playing of the "Moving Bird" stamped her as a finished artiste. Miss Agnes Rahilly, an artist new to these parts, but whose fame has preceded her, as a singer of coon songs, made a big hit with "Honey stay in your own Back Yard" and this was deepened by her dramatic rendering of the recital "Woman of Mumbles Head," and generally proved herself a decided acquisition to the Company. Auckland music-lovers will have the pleasure of hearing this talented Company in one of their Grand Sacred Concerts, at Abbott's Opera House, on Good Friday Night.

From Paris comes the announcement of the death of M. Robert Planquette, the composer of "Les Cloches de Corneville." M. Planquette was in his fifty-third year.



LITTLE VERA KEARNS, the popular little child artist at present with Dix's Gaiety Co. at Wellington.