

GREENROOM GOSSIP.

Just think of it—the Christmas theatrical season of 1915-1916 was one of the busiest on record. We are indeed a wonderful people!—"London Opinion."

"I have come to the conclusion," says James C. Bain, one-time rival of Harry Shine for single comedian honours, "that I would sooner draw a salary on Friday night than have to pay a lot of salaries away to other people. I have had my share of theatrical trials as a manager, and now I am going to sing my little songs and let the other fellows do the worrying." James C. Bain goes back to vaudeville as a performer after many years as a manager. He is now appearing on the Fuller circuit, and in his new act will have the assistance of an agile and able young daughter.

Her Majesty's Theatre in Sydney is known as the Soldiers' Club, so popular is "So Long Letty" with the boys in khaki. Miss Dorothy Brunton is the Letty of the production.

Hobart has decided, by a majority of 420 votes, in favour of a continuance of Sunday picture shows.

A Sydney paper recalls the fact that "Arrah-na-Pogue," dear to Irish hearts, bore the sub-title of "The Wicklow Wedding" in its early production. Its first performance was at the Dublin Theatre Royal on November 7, 1864. It reached London, at the Princess', on March 22, 1865. In these productions the author, Dion Boucicault, played Shaun the Post, and Mrs. Boucicault was seen as Arrah. The author played Shaun in Australia some 30 years ago. At the London Adelphi in August, 1876, J. C. Williamson and Maggie Moore took the leading parts. In later years in Australia Miss Moore had the play in her touring repertoire, and used to sing such songs as are now usually heard from Shaun.

"Arrah-na-Pogue" had an appreciative revival in Sydney, with Mr. Gerald E. Griffin as Shaun the Post, and Miss Ethel Buckley (Mrs. George Marlow) as Arrah.

Mr. George Marlow is preparing a big war chest matinee to take place at the Adelphi Theatre, Sydney, on March 31. Artists from the J. C. Williamson, Fuller and McIntosh managements will also assist.

Mr. Charles Berkeley is managing the Brisbane season of "Mother Goose" pantomime for J. C. Williamson, Ltd.

There is one notable artist who never suffers from wounded feelings over what the newspapers say about her performances, so says a Melbourne correspondent. This is Miss Myrtle Tannehill, starring with Hale Hamilton in "It Pays to Advertise." She never reads the newspaper notices of the productions in which she appears. Not that they ever contain much that might hurt Miss Tannehill's susceptibilities, or give her cause for depression. But Miss Tannehill has for years made it a practise, after first night performances not to read the newspaper critics' reports. She confesses that her supersensitiveness is the reason. "If the papers say nice things about me, all right," she said. "If they are otherwise, well, what the eye doesn't see the heart doesn't grieve for!"

Miss Thelma Raye, one of the new stars of the Tivoli Follies, who will tour New Zealand again very shortly, is a London girl, who made her first successes on the concert platform. Then the late George Edwardes engaged her, and after a while she came to Australia. Her success with the Follies eclipsed any achievement she has ever made in musical comedy. It is a success of personality, a triumph of womanly charm and grace. Miss Raye, in private life, is everything that the vaudeville star is expected not to be. She is of a retiring disposition, of studious habit, and is an enthusiast of the East.

When "The Merry Widow" is played in Melbourne by the Royal Comic Opera Company, Leslie Holland will be Danilo. Mr. Holland was originally approached by the J. C. Williamson management to come to Australia to play this part, but, being unable to obtain a release from his London engagement, Andrew Higginson was sent instead.

TRAINED SEALS IN THE CIRCUS.

CAPTAIN HULING'S METHODS.

Captain Frank Huling, whose troupe of performing seals is such an attractive item at Wirths' Circus, which is at present showing in Auckland, near the Hobson Street baths, tells some interesting things about seals.

These animals inhabit the rocky parts of the coast of California and live exclusively on fish. They are exceptionally fine swimmers and can catch almost any fish. The average life of a seal under natural conditions is from 50 to 75 years, and some grow to a weight of over a ton. Netting these animals is quite an industry on this coast.

"When they are first caught," says Captain Huling, "they are very ugly, and are all the while waiting to bite and to injure you. This goes on for about four or five months, and when they have become accustomed to you and are used to being handled, their education commences. Sometimes they take even longer and sulk. I

Huling. "I have a letter here written to one of the papers in Nancy, France, by Mdlle. Marguerite Mangan, the president of the Society for the Protection of Animals. She says, 'I have much pleasure in announcing that owing to the way in which you present and treat your animals, your act is really a treat to watch. I have never seen animals better trained than those, and they seem to have a great affection for you.' That is one of the points I insist on—kindness."

"I was touring Texas at one time and we were on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico at Galveston. One of my best seals, a very valuable animal, was sick, and the only way I thought of to save him was to let him go. I took him down to the beach and put him in the water. He swam out until he seemed but a fly speck on the sea, and I thought he was gone. He came back, however, and crawled to my feet and I fussed him, bade him good-bye and drove away. The manager of the theatre undertook to look after him, and for a time after I had gone I was told he was doing well, but one day I got a wire saying that he was dead. He was a fine animal, but I knew that was his only chance of living—freedom—and I took it."

A COUNTRY FOR THE SHOWMAN!

MR. HUGH D. MCINTOSH AND NEW ZEALAND.

"When I ran through New Zealand last year," Mr. Hugh D. McIntosh recently told an Australian interviewer, "I found many things to impress, and many to surprise me. First of all, of course, was the country itself, full of lessons and stimulus for a weary Australian. A fertile country with an almost perfect scheme of land settlement, and no droughts worth talking about. A country so solidly prosperous that I sought in vain for a single case of destitution throughout the whole length of it. And what a country for the showman! The New Zealand cities, happily for New Zealand, are not bloated and overgrown. The population of the Dominion is splendidly distributed. On the main lines of railway one runs through village after village and a succession of small thriving towns. All the New Zealanders have money, and all of them love the theatre. People who don't approve of the theatres go to picture shows. Everybody goes somewhere. I suppose that, in proportion to population, the percentage of regular theatregoers must be higher in New Zealand than anywhere else in the world. Give New Zealanders the right stuff, and they'll come and come again."

"So I can't afford to neglect New Zealand. Last year I sent over a big and expensive company at short notice on a sort of trial trip. I expected that with ordinary luck I might clear expenses, and in the end, despite some serious handicaps, the tour proved reasonably profitable. The reorganised Follies are going to New Zealand this year straight from their recent record runs in Sydney and Melbourne, and my firm is going to make a lot of money on the trip. That is the best of New Zealand. One can reckon on it. It is a solid coun-



MR. G. W. DESMOND, the talented comedian and eccentric ragtime dancer with the Royal Strollers, who open at His Majesty's Theatre, Auckland, on Wednesday next, March 29.

knew one seal that refused food for 50 days. This is only a short way on the road though, for they are about the most difficult animal to train and present that I know of. They have a keen brain, but they seem to be all the while using it to kind of take a rise out of you, but if you treat them kindly you can get along with them all right. It takes about two years to break them in for performing before the public."

"Yes, I believe in kindness to my animals. I don't think much can be done by cruelty," continued Captain



LIEUTENANT HALAHAN (on right) and COMMANDER HORTON (on left), two British submarine commanders who have figured prominently in operations in the Baltic, which has become so "unhealthy" for the German Fleet.

try. So far as I am able to discover, it never fails to support a company that is worth while.

"But there is more than that in my idea or scheme for regular New Zealand tours. I think that a yearly trip to the Dominion does the Follies a lot of good. They get the snap of a New Zealand winter into their blood, and are invigorated for all the long summer on this side. There's no mistake whatever about the New Zealand climate. It literally does put new life into a man from Australia."

"Australia is every day coming into closer sympathy and touch with New Zealand. There used to be a certain antagonism of the parish. It has disappeared. New Zealanders and Australians have fought side by side on those shell-swept bloody hills at Anzac, and they will be brothers for all time after the war. We hear far too much talk of New Zealanders and Australians as separate peoples. In point of fact, we have common interests and common aims, we are Australasians all. After all, what do a few leagues of intervening sea amount to. How many leagues there are between us and the Motherland, but we are one with her in heart and purpose. We British can't afford to make a bug-bear of the sea, since, for the good of all the world, we own it. I believe that in the future Australians and New Zealanders will be drawn to closer and closer recognition of the Imperial bond that binds all sons of the grand old mother; one blood, one faith, one destiny. For my part, when I'm in New Zealand I know that I'm still at home."

WONDERFUL ACTIVITY IN THE VAUDEVILLE BUSINESS.

WHAT MR. BEN. FULLER SAW IN AMERICA.

"I wanted a winter and went to America. I got it, and do not want another for 30 years; in fact, I will never grumble about hot weather any more."

Thus Mr. Ben. J. Fuller, governing director of the Fuller Vaudeville Circuit, expressed himself when interviewed by the Sydney "Evening News" on his return to Australia last month. He said he had no idea that the winter could be so cool, and explained that for days at a time the thermometer was from eight to 12 degrees below zero. Mr. Fuller went to America on a business and holiday tour. He had a good time, both ways, and by the end of June will have no less than 100 new vaudeville acts to present to Fuller patrons. Mr. Fuller was surprised to find how the news had travelled in America about Australia and New Zealand as a theatrical field.

"I was at home at once," he said, "and, of course, it was a good thing from my point of view. Returned artists to the States were loud in their praise of Australasia."

The Australian entrepreneur was struck by the wonderful activity in the vaudeville business. It was booming, he said; in fact, so was every branch of the theatrical enterprises, while the pictures held great sway. Actors were leading the strenuous life, and as a compensating set off men receiving high salaries. He secured some of the latest comedies and novel acts, in addition to the vaudeville turns.

"NOT THE KAISER'S FRIENDS."

Speaking of matters generally, Mr. Fuller remarked: "Everybody seems to be at work in the United States. The country is prosperous all the way through. It is, indeed, a wonderful place. One thing which pleased me more than another was to find how strong was the pro-Ally sentiment. There are, of course, a few isolated centres where the Germans prevail—in Chicago, for instance, where the majority of the people are Teuton, or of Teuton origin; but as a whole the nation is on our side. On the stage, for example, reference to the Allies—and particularly to the French—is enthusiastically cheered. Whenever the monarchs or rulers were depicted on the screen, the Allies came in for the greatest cheering. The Kaiser finds no friends among the audiences at the American play houses."

Mr. Fuller travelled 26,000 miles, and says that while he benefitted by reason of the knowledge gained he has come home again more than ever impressed with the greatness of Australia.

"I would just like to add, even if it is a business reference," concluded Mr. Fuller, "that our representative in America, Mr. Murphy, a young Australian, is doing fine work in more ways than one."