

The American newspapers announce that, after appearing in nine more pictures, Mary Pickford will retire. It is stated that the sum paid for these nine pictures exceeds £500,000.

Mr. George Welch has stepped into Mr. Phil Smith's role in "Maytime." Mr. Welch, by the way, will have a congenial part in the J. C. Williamson pantomime, "The Sleeping Beauty," at Melbourne Her Majesty's at Christmas.

Mr. Fred Collier, basso with the J. C. Williamson Opera Company, is entitled to wear one of the famous "Melba" pins (enamelled "M." with a diamond). He toured with the diva during her recent visit to Australia.

"The Country Girl" is being actively rehearsed by the Palmerston North Amateur Operatic Society, for early production.

The Bert La Blanc Revue Company had a happy send-off at the Opera House on Saturday night after a nine weeks' season. Flowers and other gifts were sent galore from friends in the audience, and Mr. La Blanc said a few words in appreciation.

Miss Rita Kirkpatrick, a daughter of Mr. John Kirkpatrick, the well-known architect, of Sydney, is among the Sydney girls who have signed on for a six months' engagement with the Frederic Shipman concert party. She is a pupil of Miss Nellie Stewart, who thinks highly of her talent.

The J. C. Williamson management in Melbourne claim for "Lightnin'" that from the point of view of its qualities as a play and its popularity with audiences, the American comedy-drama is "Struck Oil" and "The Silver King" rolled into one. "Lightnin'" is the rage of Melbourne.

The new tenor of the J. C. Williamson Grand Opera Company, Walter Wheatley, hails from Joplin, Missouri, U.S.A. While still very young Madame Nordica advised him to take up an operatic career. He sailed for France in 1906, after having had considerable experience in operatic and concert work in New York and Chicago. He made his operatic debut at Covent Garden, London, as Turiddu in "Cavalleria Rusticana," under the direction of Campanini. Mr. Wheatley sang four seasons at Covent Garden and five seasons with the Royal Carl Rosa Company, appearing also in concerts at the Queen's Hall and Crystal Palace, London.

"Young singers are too keen to sing songs," said Mr. Harry Dearth to an interviewer in Christchurch. "When I commenced my studies under Garcia he would not allow me to sing a song for twelve months. Practice, practice, practice on methods, was his motto. Well, he was right, and I believe most young vocalists realise that there is only this one royal road to success. The trouble is that so many considerations affect one's course of action. It is no doubt hard from day to day to keep to the one true course, but it is a fact that there is only one way. Apart from this, development on other lines, interpretation and so forth, is essential; but there, every-one knows that."

Mr. Harry Dearth, says the Christchurch "Star," is a distinct personality, full of energy and possessing a certain magnetic quality. He is something more than a singer. He is, indeed, a first-class story delineator, and his clear enunciation enables his hearers to catch every little point of a song. Mr. Dearth said that all through his singing career, whether as student or concert performer, he had always realised that a song was only half sung unless the words were distinct and the meaning clear. "I tell the story of a song," he said. "Take, for instance, Hedgecock's 'Mandalay'—Hedgecock, by the way, is the organist at the Crystal Palace. That song does not require to be sung. You want to speak it. Of course a singer must sing, but the point for the young and aspiring vocalist to keep always in mind is that a listener wants to hear the words, that he may know what a song is all about. Stand behind a pianist and listen to the accompaniment of 'Mandalay,' and I believe you will agree with me that no song could have a more natural accompaniment—it is so constructed that one can speak the word. That is what I do."

Miss Maude Fane will make her first re-appearance with J. C. Williamson, Ltd., in "Theodore and Co." on her return to Australia.

"Oh, you lucky people," said Miss Helen Carson, the American Chautauqua leader, on hearing that Miss Emelie Polini was coming to New Zealand. "She is the most delightful and natural actress I know in America. There is so much life in her work, so much naturalism, that it does not seem that she is acting at all, and yet she is so entirely different in every play."

When "Katinka" was played in Melbourne by the J. C. Williamson Royal Comic Opera Company a record was set up that was thought would stand for a long time to come. "Maytime," at Her Majesty's, however, has knocked a hole in that record. The exquisite musical romance is packing Her Majesty's nightly, and the consensus of opinion is that a more delightful musical production has not been staged in Melbourne for a long time.

It is an interesting fact that "Lightnin'" was almost lost to the speaking stage, and just missed the movies by a margin of £150. "I had thought about the character of Lightnin' Bill Jones for twenty years," said Frank Bacon, the actor-author, in a recent interview. "Finally I put him in a vaudeville sketch which I later elaborated into a play and showed to Winchell Smith. But the story was too loosely told to be effective, so finally at Los Angeles one summer I sold 'Lightnin'" to a moving picture concern for £150, with the agreement that it would be the next play produced. On the following day, learning that Winchell Smith was in town, I went over to the hotel where he was staying and told him I had sold the old play. He appeared greatly upset, and said I had made a dreadful mistake. He said he would like to produce it, and asked me to get it back. The picture man was not ready to produce it, so I had a good excuse. Winchell Smith and I then got to work on the script again, and the result was 'Lightnin'" as it is staged at present."

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Here are some of the songs that Mr. Harry Dearth is singing during his New Zealand tour:—Cowen's "Onaway, Awake," Handel's "Honour and Arms," "To Anthea," Sander-son's "The Company Sergeant-Major," Clarke's "The Blind Ploughman," Hedgecock's "Mandalay," "The Fortune Hunter," "The Little French Baby," "Old Barty," "The Port of Many Ships," "Trade Winds," "Stone Cracker John," "Dinder Courtship," "Jenny's Ways," "Crown of the Year," and many other new and delightful ballads.

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