

GREENROOM GOSSIP

John Amadio, the gifted flautist, who was last here with the Cappelli Concert Company, intends leaving Melbourne for England and America. He was given a farewell complimentary concert in Melbourne last week.

A message from London announces the death of Lionel Rignold (Rignall) the actor, and a cousin of the late George Rignold who died in Australia in 1912. Coming from a famous theatrical family, he made his first appearance on the stage as a child and his first London appearance as a young man in 1883. In later years he was popular in comedy roles and made a great success of Ebenezer Honeycomb in "The Gay Parisienne" and in "What the Bather Saw."

Mr. Abel Rowe, who is touring with E. J. Carroll's cinematograph presentation of "The Sentimental Bloke" and whose singing of the appropriate number, "Doreen," has given great pleasure everywhere, is well known in musical circles, especially in Auckland and Wellington. In Auckland, Mr. Rowe was for many years connected with the Amateur Operatic Society there, and appeared in the tenor roles of many of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas produced by the society.

Mr. Frank Harvey is said to give an outstanding performance as the unkempt beachcomber in "The Bird of Paradise." It is a clever, careful and painstaking study, full of wonderful detail. Never once is it relaxed. Throughout the whole of the time the actor is on the stage the audience are watching him, attracted by the wonderfully realistic little details that go to make up the character. Mr. Harvey, it is generally conceded by Australian critics, has never done anything better since he first appeared in the leading role in "The Man Who Stayed at Home."

A writer in "New York Theatre" illustrates copiously the large number of famous, or near famous, players who have chosen, or have been blessed with aliterative appellations, and the part a well-sounding name plays in an artist's success. He starts with Sarah Siddons, probably the greatest actress in the history of the stage, and ends with Charlie Chaplin. Then he cites: Joseph Jefferson, Lillie Langtry, Grace George, Blanche Bates, Isabel Irving, Mary Mannering, Minnie Madden (now Mrs. Fiske), Harry Houdini, Violet Vanbrugh, Madge McIntosh, George Grossmith, Billy Burke, and Margery Maude.

Mr. Allan Wilkie believes that the Dominion of New Zealand offers an extensive enough field for the operations of a stock company, and it is his intention to attempt the venture with his present company. Having gone thoroughly into the matter he has calculated that such a company could play for eight months continuously without visiting any one town twice, and that given sound performances and a change of repertoire he believes that the idea is commercially possible. "Of course," said Mr. Wilkie, "a new repertoire would be necessary for every tour, but that would not be difficult to arrange. Indeed, I have already a great many plays in the box which I am sure New Zealand playgoers would like to see, and am negotiating in England for the rights of other new plays. Then, as you see, we would not be tied down to any one class of play. Our present repertoire includes Shakespearean plays, melodramas, old English comedies, modern problem plays such as 'Hindle Wakes,' 'Mrs. Warren's Profession,' and 'Candida,' the two last by George Bernard Shaw, so you see our taste is as catholic as the public we hope to please."

Muriel Starr and George Barnum, the producer, stopped over in Hawaii long enough while on their way to Australia from America recently to get "local colour" for the production of "The Bird of Paradise," which is to be Miss Starr's second production in Auckland. The action of "The Bird of Paradise" takes place in Hawaii. It is the story of a white man who falls under the spell of a Hawaiian girl, and allows the lotus life of the islands to draw him away from the interests of his own sphere of life. Miss Starr appears as the Hawaiian maiden Luana.

Eardley Turner, who plays Abe in "Old Lady 31," has had a very successful career in Australia. In the J. and N. Tait series of repertory matinees, he has displayed remarkable talent. According to a Melbourne authority, he was the first to realise the humorous possibilities of Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonnington in "The Doctor's Dilemma," and he made a great success of the derelict cabman in Galsworthy's "The Pigeon." Also, the one performance given of "The New Sin," by Basil Macdonald Hastings, was conspicuous for his excellent rendering of David E. Davids, J.P.

Miss Muriel Starr had an exceedingly interesting time in Hawaii when on her way to Australia, she spent some time amongst the islanders to study the hula hula and other dances and ceremonies performed by the Hawaiians. A native chief, by arrangement with the American authorities, took her in hand, and the princess and family honored her as their guest. "I was never more surprised in my life," says Miss Starr, "at the sumptuous hospitality they accorded me, the refinement and charm of their manner of living and the affection and sentiment that characterised the family circle. In America, where I appeared as Luna, in "The Bird of Paradise," I was taught the native dance by the producer, but here, where I appeared as Luana, in Hawaii, and took the opportunity Mr. Barnum, the producer, accompanied me, and the result you will see in the wonderful colour and atmosphere."

The Williamson Grand Opera Company is due in Auckland on December 22. In addition to front-rank English artists, the company includes distinguished representatives of the United States, Italy and Australia. There are three complete sets of principals, and when an opera is re-



SCENE FROM "THE MAN WHO CAME BACK," the sensational drama to be presented at His Majesty's Theatre, Auckland, on December 4, with Miss Muriel Starr in the lead.

peated the cast is changed. Mr. Walter Wheatley is a dramatic tenor who was trained both in France and Italy. To-day he is master of a comprehensive repertoire of operas, both classic and modern. Mr. Alfred Valenti, who is English born, is a basso, and his repertoire runs to 125 operas, most of them in two languages. Mr. Carl Formes is a dramatic baritone who has been engaged for some time with the leading grand opera organisations of America. Mr. Raymond Loder is a lyric baritone, who received his training in Italy, where he made his debut in "La Favorita." The prima donna of the company, Miss Amy Castles, is assured of a welcome when she appears in "La Boheme." During the last few years Miss Castles has built up for herself an enviable record on the Continent, in England, and in the United States. Miss Castles is only one of the Australians of the company, which also includes Misses Leah Myers, Gertrude Johnson, Gladys Verona, Strella Wilson, Vera Bedford, Elsie Treweek, Thelma Carter and Rosa Carrodus. There will be a complete operatic orchestra of 40 selected musicians. The chorus is a trained organisation of 50 singers. It is claimed that the productions are perfect as regards scenery and costumes. During the season the following operas will be presented: "Cavalleria Rusticana," "Pagliacci," "Romeo and Juliet," "Tales of Hoffman," "Faust," "Carmen," "Rigoletto," "Madame Butterfly," "La Tosca," "Il Trovatore," and "Lucia di Lammermoor."



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agerie. Mr. George L. Petersen, the energetic advance courier of the show, arrived in Wellington by the Moeraki. The Dominion tour will commence about December 9, at Wellington, and at the present time Mr. Petersen is busy trying to find a site that will suit all sorts from north to south of the city. The menagerie is to leave Melbourne by the Tahiti and the performers come along by the Manuka. It ought to be an eventful tour, because we have not seen a real circus for some years now.

Mr. Bert Tate, treasurer with the Allan Wilkie Company, is a returned "digger," having gone through the "stunt" in Flanders without mishap.

MUSIC NOTES.

(By "G" String.)

At the close of her Australasian tour, Miss Amy Castles, who visits New Zealand with the J. C. Williamson Grand Opera Company in a few weeks, will return to America for a series of 60 concerts in Uncle Sam's land and Canada, under the direction of the Wolfson Bureau. Several of the concerts will be with the New York Choral Society, the Chicago Choral Union and the Boston Symphony.

Under the heading "Impressions of a Great Singer," the "London Echo" gives high praise to Miss Rosina Buckmann, the New Zealand singer, who has made a name and a place for herself in London and the English provinces as a leading artiste. Miss Buckmann had been asked to sing at one of Mr. Vicker's concerts, but was unable to do so, as she had been asked to take Dame Melba's place in "La Boheme" at Covent Garden. "This signal honour," says the writer, "a recognition as it was of native operatic singers by a management which had relied almost exclusively on foreign artists, was a welcome result of the war, and of Sir Thomas Beecham's wonderfully successful seasons, for as his prima donna Miss Buckmann had long made name for herself. She subsequently appeared in several other royal productions, and scored great successes. It was not surprising, therefore, that when she appeared in Liverpool the Picton Hall should prove much too small to hold all those who wished to hear her."

"Lohengrin" was composed by Wagner in 1847, and was first produced at Weimar, in 1850. The first production in London was given on May 8, 1875.

Gabrielle d'Annunzio is aged 55. His stirring orations demanding Italy's intervention in the war had a national effect in 1915.

WELLINGTON NOTES.

(By "Lorgnette.")

WELLINGTON, December 8.

The Allan Wilkie Company are showing to splendid business at the Grand Opera House, and I anticipate that it is a find in opening a real good stock company to tour the Dominion. Mr. Wilkie has got a combination of artists around him that at any odd time he can go from tragedy to comedy, with melodrama thrown in. If New Zealanders want a high-class performance at a fair tariff, now is the time to get in and get busy and help the management out by patronising the show.

From a theatrical point of view, New Zealand will be well catered for during the next three months. On Boxing Night the J.C.W. New Comic Opera Company will open a tour at the Wellington Grand Opera House with "Yes, Uncle!" after which follow revivals of "Going Up," "Canary Cottage," "High Jinks," and "The Only Girl," or "So Long, Letty." The Muriel Starr Dramatic Company open at Christchurch on Boxing Night with "The Man Who Came Back," to be followed by "The Bird of Paradise." Then we have the Grand Opera Company, the New South Wales State Orchestra and Wirth's Circus coming along, so that Dominion playgoers have no cause to feel out in the cold.

After a long wait, some three years, we are at last going to have a visit from Wirth's circus and men-