

Messrs. Baker and Talbot, of Melbourne.

This match was mutually agreed upon, and duly drawn up, as far back as May last, and should have taken place this month in either Melbourne or Sydney. It was for a time held up owing to Gotch cabling he had to undergo an operation, which it was further stated would necessitate a 12 months' rest. It transpired, however, that Gotch had met Racevitch, the Italian champion, and defeated him in the interval. Gotch's unexpected return to form prompted Messrs. Baker and Talbot to cable to America, suggesting the necessity of Gotch meeting Hackenschmidt as arranged. To this and other communications the promoters are, however, unable to obtain a definite reply, and, in the meantime, Hackenschmidt is to open a season at His Majesty's Theatre on Monday evening, in his unique athletic demonstrations, supported by Gunner Moir and Herman, together with a specially selected company of London entertainers. Films of Hackenschmidt's recent contests will also form part of this interesting entertainment. The box plans open at Wildman and Arey's to-day.

The inspiring and prodigious physique of George Hackenschmidt fascinated Bergas, the famous German sculptor, to such an extent that he made the mighty Russian many tempting monetary offers to remain in the German capital for a period and sit, or rather stand, for studies of the ancient masters. Bergas completed one heroic statue of Hackenschmidt, as "Prometheus Bound," beside which, it is said, even the classic Hercules no longer appears gigantic. Hackenschmidt's father was German, and his mother Swedish. He was born in the city of Jurief, in the Baltic provinces of Russia, on July 20, 1877. After graduating from the local gymnasium he went to St. Petersburg to study civil engineering at the university, but at this time he defeated Paul Pons, champion wrestler of the world. Since then he has thrown all the Terrible Turks, Ferocious Frenchmen, Itinerant Irishmen, Burly Britons, Doughty Dutchmen, Bulging Belgians, Grinding Germans, Roaring Russians, Insistent Italians, Sly Spaniards and Awful Americans who came to his hands.

Hackenschmidt maintains that to be born strong and keep strong, heavy weight lifting is the only proper method of development. The modern dumb-bell is, in the Russian's opinion, a toy which merely creates a temporary strength, but in the handling of suitably strong weights, natural strength—real power—is established, and is one of the forms genius takes when it expresses itself physically. These and other feasible contentions are thrashed out in Hackenschmidt's work on physical development, just to hand from the London publishers.

THE OPERA HOUSE.

FULLER'S WIDE WORLD PICTURES.

With a programme of exceptional merit being presented, it is not surprising that the Opera House is well filled nightly with appreciative patrons, who thoroughly enjoy the up-to-date pictorial fare provided by the Messrs. Fuller. The principal film shown this week is that of "The Airship Destroyer," an actual motion picture presentation of Mr. H. G. Wells' "War in the Air." The film is of great present day interest, and shows the possibility of the aerial vessel taking an active part in modern warfare. Airships laden with soldiers and ammunition are seen leaving their quarters to proceed to the scene of action, and their evolutions in the air are illustrated in graphic fashion. The film then takes a different turn and a beautiful girl and her lover are seen walking arm in arm along a scenic drive, and on reaching the former's homestead the young fellow asks the father of the girl for his daughter's hand but is met with a refusal. One wonders at this period what this circumstance has to do with aerial war, but this is revealed by subsequent events. The young fellow is the inventor of an airship destroyer, and after the rejection of his suit he returns to work on his invention. War breaking out the airships are seen dropping shells on to towns and wrecking buildings, causing great destruction and loss of life. The airships gliding about and discharging shells form a novel sight, and one which may be perhaps actually realised in years to come. A shell falling on the homestead owned by the girl's father, the house is wrecked, and the young fel-

low displays much courage in rescuing the inmates from the ruins. With the assistance of his mechanic he gets his airship destroyer into position, and firing a few torpedoes at the vessels gliding through the air succeeds in damaging the biggest of them, and the aerial monster falls to the earth a complete wreck. The suitor, needless to say, wins the hand of the girl whose life he has saved. A fine picture presentation is shown of Shakespeare's famous play "Macbeth," the various characters being taken by leading professionals, while the staging is done on a magnificent scale. An exceedingly fine film is presented entitled "The English Clock-making Industry," the modern machinery used in the construction of clocks being an eye-opener. Two pictures of general interest are those of "The Lord Mayor's Show of 1909," and "Rulers of Europe," the latter being an extremely fine film showing the heads of the different European countries. A stirring Indian adventure is depicted in "The Leather Stocking," an exciting fight taking place between a party of red Indians and some white men headed by a faithful Indian. "Nick Carter's mysterious Package," is the title of another exploit of the great detective of fiction, and is greeted with loud applause by the audience. An emo-

ROYAL ALBERT HALL.

PATHE PICTURES.

The Royal Albert Hall has been packed to the doors each evening this week by those wishing to see the special attraction presented by Mr. Hayward in the form of a film showing Lieut. Sir E. Shackleton's dash for the South Pole. Everybody has read of the trials and hardships suffered by the great explorer and his party in their scientific research and now they have the opportunity of not only reading, but of seeing for themselves. The thrilling adventures met with in the Polar regions, their hair breath escapes and great courage, hold the audience as has no other picture yet shown at the Royal Albert. Each and every detail of the expedition, from the departure of the Nimrod, to the planting of Queen Alexandra's flag at "Furthest South" is clearly depicted, together with the good work of the ponies and dogs, a very important item in an expedition. No one should miss spending an evening and witnessing this great work of cinematography, the exclusive rights of which are held by Mr. C. Spencer, of Sydney, who paid £4,000 for the same. Besides this great film other interesting

BORN TO COMEDY.

MR. BERT GILBERT'S INTERESTING CAREER.

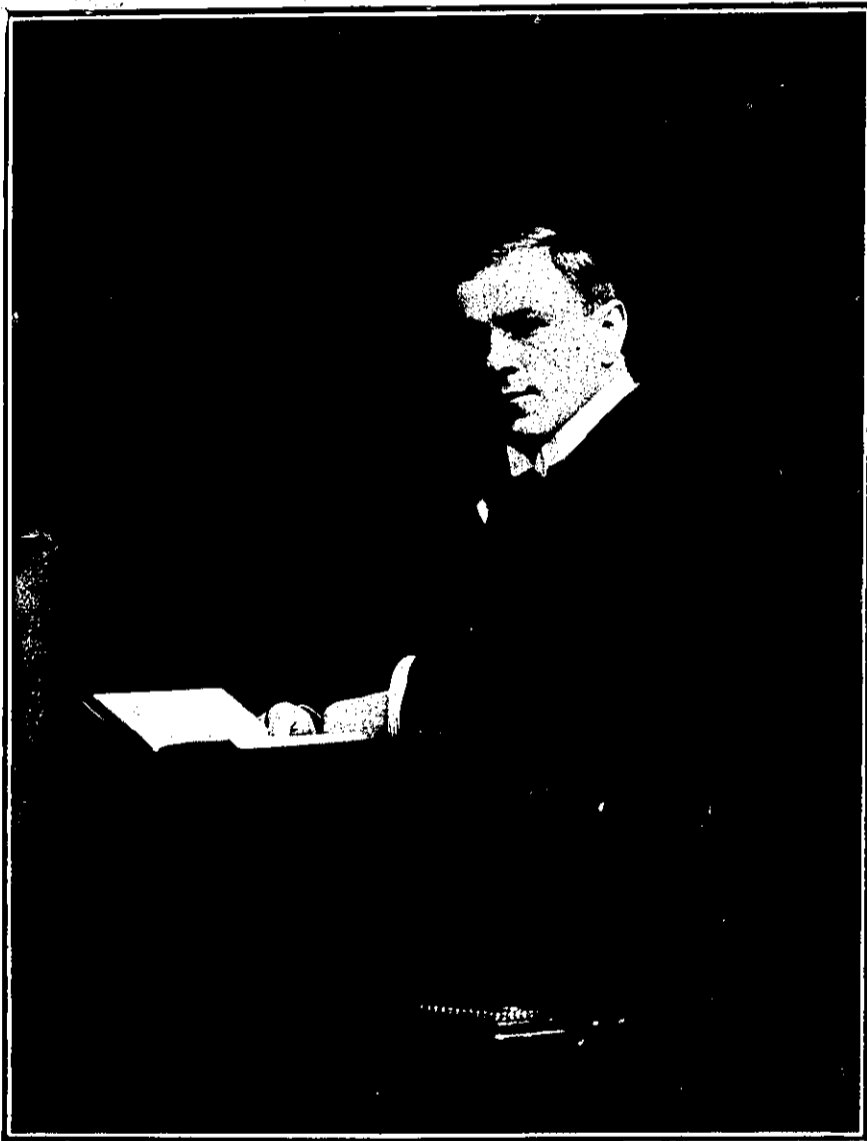
THE WILLIAMSON PRODUCTIONS.

Mr. Gilbert Hazelwood, or give him the stage name by which he is more fully and favourably known, Mr. "Bert Gilbert" has been before the public from his very infancy. He made his first appearance on the stage as the babe in Pizarro, being, of course, carried on. He was then only three months old. On that occasion he convulsed the audience, as he has convulsed hundreds of audiences since, by his behaviour, yelling vehemently at the most critical moment in the tragedy, and covering the leading members of the company with confusion. It was a successful first appearance in its way, but who amongst those present could have dreamt of the many successes that were to follow it in the maturer years of the infantile performer.

Born to the stage and to comedy, possibly best describes Mr. Bert Gilbert's mission in life. Off the stage he is a quiet, mannerly, well-spoken citizen, with the habits, tastes and demeanour of a gentleman, and little or nothing about him to denote the profession he follows. On the stage he is a humorist of the first water, with an infinite capacity for tickling both the eyes and the ears of his audience. He combines the most admirable fooling with an archdeacon's gravity of features and of manners, and has a merry wit of his own that makes him a favourite wherever he goes. "Dull care" takes a back seat, or vanishes altogether, in his presence. He is a man to be admired, esteemed and made much of, because there are so few men like him. It is not too much to say that he is the life of the New Comic Opera Company and that more than half the success of the "King of Cadonia" and of "Havana"—those brilliant musical comedies that have taken Auckland by storm—are due to his genius.

Mr. Gilbert Hazelwood comes of an old and talented theatrical family, well-known in London and the Midlands. His ancestors on both sides of the family were well-known members of the profession. His great-grandfather, Mr. H. B. Edwin, was the original Ezekiel Homespun at the Drury Lane Theatre. His grandfather, on his father's side (Mr. Colin H. Hazelwood), was a playwright of more than ordinary notoriety, who created a record by writing a play a week for the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton, North London, for something like ten years—truly a prolific and unexampled performance. His grandfather, on his mother's side, Mr. Huggins, was proprietor of the Rotherham-Doncaster circuit. In those days, it should be explained, proprietors of companies travelled round the country, visiting theatres in which they had proprietary rights and playing for two or three months at each theatre, hence the word "circuit." Mr. Hazelwood's father, Mr. Henry Collin Hazelwood, was manager of the Highbury Barn Theatre, North London, and afterwards lessee of the West Bromwich Theatre, and also manager for Mr. Brewster at the Star Theatre, Wolverhampton, of which he eventually became lessee. His mother, Ruth Edwin, was a tremendous favourite with London and Wolverhampton theatregoers, and was admittedly one of the finest and most convincing actresses of her day.

When interviewed last week by a "Review" representative, Mr. Bert Gilbert (to again give him his stage name) chatted freely of his past career. He explained that he had made the stage his profession from his earliest days, "walking on" in juvenile parts when quite a little fellow and graduating through stock plays such as "East Lynne," "Little Joe" (the dramatised version of "Bleak House") to the comedy parts he has since made his speciality. That he was doing good work in the Old Country and was highly thought of, is proved by the fact that rather more than two years ago he was selected by Mr. J. C. Williamson as the leading comedian for the Pantomime Company of that year, and that, when he was invited to come to Australia and accepted the invitation, he left behind him engagements for three years, which will have to be filled on his return to the Old Country. He first visited New Zealand with the Humpty Dumpty Pantomime Company two years ago, but unfortunately met with an accident during one of the Auckland performances that placed him hors de combat for the greater part of the company's New Zea-



GEORGE HACKENSCHMIDT, the famous Russian Athlete, who appears at His Majesty's Theatre, Auckland, on Monday next.

tional drama of everyday life is portrayed in the film "A Friend of the Family" in which a husband goes within an ace of breaking up his home for love of another woman. "Plain Mame" is another strong dramatic film, which meets with a popular reception. "Circumstantial Evidence" and "Jones' Burglar" provide the humour of the evening, both being excellent specimens of laughter-making films. Mr. E. J. Burke's orchestra renders a delightful musical accompaniment to the pictures, which is greatly enjoyed by patrons.

According to the latest file of American newspapers to hand, two of the most popular members of the J. C. Williamson "Squaw Man" Company out here have added to their laurels recently in America. Mr. Charles Waldron has made a big hit in "The Fourth Estate" and Rapley Holmes (Big Bill) as the sheriff in the Wild West drama—"The Round Up." In New York "The Climax" is still playing to sound business. It has already put up a record of eight months which is a fine run for a dramatic piece on Broadway and so far there is no word of its withdrawal.

Madame Melba sings her last song in Australia on January 29. She leaves for London on January 31.

films figure on the programme, and the entertainment is certainly the best of its kind yet shown at the Royal Albert.

TIVOLI THEATRE.

NATIONAL VAUDEVILLE COMPANY.

On Saturday evening last the National Vaudeville Company bade farewell to Auckland after a successful stay of several weeks. Pictures made their reappearance on Monday evening, when there was a good house. The management are giving Tivoli patrons a treat this week in presenting "Lieut. Sir E. Shackleton's dash for the South Pole" which is also proving the attraction at the Royal Albert hall, both halls being controlled by Mr. H. Hayward. Numerous other good pictures, including dramatic, scenery, pathetic and humorous are shown, and those who visit the Tivoli during the present week should be highly satisfied with the programme being presented.

The J. C. Williamson management during the year staged 23 pieces in Sydney, twelve of which were new productions—an average of one a month.