

Opera House is putting on a specially tempting bill-of-fare for the benefit of holiday audiences. Nat Clifford is one of the "Stars," and the Co., taking it all round, is a very strong one. The Picture Theatres are all announcing special bills. The repertoire of the Moving Theatre Co. (already referred to), is a really good one. The opening performances will be "The Fatal Wedding," to be followed by "Robbery Under Arms," with the "Sticking Up" of the coach, and the adventures of "Starlight," all as realistically produced as possible. The season commences to-morrow (Saturday). The Nellie Stewart season ends on November 12, and on November 23, Allan Hamilton's Co. opens at the Royal. Late in December the MacMahon Co. puts in a season at the same house, and Julius Knight will probably supply our Boxing Night show at the ditto, ditto.

Greenroom Gossip.

"Mr Preedy and the Countess."

I learn from my old friend John Youlin Birch, formerly in charge of the New Zealand Herald literary staff, and now press representative for George Willoughby, that the latter's English Farical Comedy Co., will open a twelve night's season at His Majesty's Theatre, Auckland, (going through New Zealand afterwards), in "Mr. Preedy and the Countess" on Monday, December 5 next. Mr. Birch himself will arrive in advance of the "show" by the Maheno, on November 20 next, to attend solely to the press work in connection with the season. "Mr. Preedy and the Countess" was produced for the first time in Sydney at the Criterion Theatre on Saturday, October 29 last. Referring to the production the "Sun" said:—"Mr. Preedy and the Countess," a farical comedy which was staged for the first time in Sydney at the Criterion Theatre on Saturday night, is one of those plays, so rare nowadays, where honest humour springs from genuine literary merit. Like most of the plays written by Mr. R. C. Carton, it is true to life, yet unconventional in its treatment. There are no prettily-posed curtains at the end of each act with limelight effects. Indeed, the effect in the first act of "Mr. Preedy and the Countess" is the reverse of limelight, for the curtain falls on an empty stage plunged in darkness as Mr. Preedy switches off the light and goes out through the front door to seek a night's lodgings in a cabman's shelter. The comedy bristles with epigram, and there is a scintillation of wit from start to finish. The story is interesting to high society, middle-class society, and society below stairs, for it is woven round people in these three classes, and the characters are natural with all the desire to create a scandal when opportunity comes their way, and to infer scandal in the actions of others when there is the least grounds of suspicion."

Prince of magicians.

Mr. W. J. Robey, touring manager for the Hassan Company, writes me that they are still touring New Zealand to big business. The company are now in the Whangarei district and go from there to Taranaki, opening on the 14th inst. for two nights, and thence proceeding to Hawke's Bay.

Williamson and Ward.

Mr. Hugh Ward is retiring from the stage in June, and entering into partnership with the firm of J. C. Williamson.

A Clever Young Vocalist.

Miss Valerie Collins, the talented young singer, who made such a favourable impression when she gave a concert in Auckland last year, has been making exceptionally rapid progress with her studies in Sydney. Miss Collins is one of Madame Christian's most brilliant pupils, and her many friends in New Zealand and Auckland particularly, will be pleased to learn that Miss Collins will shortly pay a visit to the Dominion, where she intends giving a series of concerts in the different centres.

"Sweet Nell's" Tour.

At the close of the Dunedin season, Miss Nellie Stewart, with a specially-organised company, will undertake an extensive tour of the provincial towns with "Sweet Nell of Old Drury." Paul Kester's delight-

ful comedy will be staged in the same complete manner as the city production of the piece, and for that purpose they will employ a full number of stage hands and full orchestra. The combination will number 32 people. The following tour has been booked:—Gore, November 29; Balclutha, November 30; Oamaru, December 1; Timaru, December 2; Ashburton, December 3; Greymouth, Westport, Hokitika, Reefton, Nelson, and Blenheim will be played from December 5 to 23; Masterton, December 24; Palmerston, December 26; Marton, December 27; Wanganui, December 28 and 29; Stratford, December 30; New Plymouth, December 31 and January 2; Hawera, January 3; Feilding, January 4; Dannevirke, January 5; Napier, January 6 and 7; Hastings, January 9; Gisborne, January 11 and 12; Hamilton, January 16; Paeroa, January 17; Waihi, January 18; Rotorua, January 20; Cambridge, January 21.

"Why Men Love Women."

"Why Men Love Women" has turned out to be one of the most popular pieces in the repertory of the Allan Hamilton-Max Maxwell Company. The principal parts in the melodrama are played by Miss Vera Remeé, Miss Nellie Strong, Mr Max Maxwell, and Mr Richard Bellairs.

"The Chocolate Soldier."

An entirely new company will be brought out to play "The Chocolate

Arthur Conquest, and Mr Harry Lupino, the dancer. Dolly Castles commenced her stage career in her native land as a member of the Williamson Repertoire Company in the Gilbert and Sullivan Comic operas. Eileen, the third of the singing sisters, is now in Paris studying singing under M. Bouhy, who taught Amy and Dolly.

A Famous Dancer.

By the Orsova there arrived in Melbourne last week, Mdlle. Chistie Mulniah, a well-known Continental dancer, who has come out from Paris to appear with Clarke and Meynell's Comic Opera Company. The English equivalent to Mdlle. Mulniah's name, which is Russian, is "pure lightning." At the Folies Bergere, Paris, she made something of a sensation with a representation of "Faust" by means of dancing, assisted by facial expression and a clever arrangement of the lightning. Previously Mdlle. Mulniah, who was taught in the Italian school of the elder Espinosa, presented this dance at the Palace Theatre, London, and on various English and Continental circuits.

Miss Mary Laing-Meason.

Miss Laing-Meason, who is appearing as Mrs Hippen in "Wireless Telegraphy," at the King's, was until recently in New Zealand with Clarke and Meynell's "Pete" Co., where she has a large circle of friends. Miss Laing-Meason was also recently a member of the J.C.W. Knight Co.,

the character of the Spider, is a fine testimonial to the adaptability of the lady—for in her private life it is said "she would not hurt a fly." As for the Spider, she is out for the fly all the time, and as merciless in pursuit as is the insect whose name is on the bill. The story is a simple one, and all the difficulties of the heroine and her hero arise out of the unfortunate marriage of the latter to an adventuress, in Lola Grey, who he is finally led to believe is dead.

Harry Roberts and His Movements.

Harry Roberts and his wife, Maggie Moore, through their business manager, Mr J. L. Cathro, have completed arrangements for appearances which will run well into next year. Mr and Mrs Roberts, commenced a season at the King's Theatre, Melbourne, under Mr William Anderson's management, on November 5. "The Shadows of a Great City" is the piece which has been selected for Maggie Moore's return to the stage. The popular actress will play her original part—Biddy Rooney, November 24 is to be the closing night in Melbourne. Under their own management Mr and Mrs Roberts will commence a three weeks' Sydney season at the Palace on November 26. Then the company will go on tour.

Her First Visit.

"This is my first visit to Australia," said Miss Toby Claude, the latest importation of the J. C. Williamson firm.) You want to know how and why I came. Well, it began this way. I was quit of the stage just at the time, and had started on a tour round the world in an automobile. You call them motors," said Miss Claude, with an explanatory wave of the hand. "I just had a suit case with me, and we had travelled hundreds of miles from the east to the west; then went across to Honolulu. From there we decided to visit Japan. I was all packed, ready, when some friends said, 'What about going to Australia?' I cried, 'Oh, yes! that is where all the kangaroos are hopping about.' We came right away. Of course, I expected to see kangaroos, and aboriginals, too. Why, do you know your Australia is the worst advertised place in the world? More than half the people in America have not the least idea what it is like. However, I got the engagement to play the principal part in "A Knight for a Day." I had created the part in New York, and also in London. It was put on at the end of the season in Sydney for a fortnight, and went like wildfire. I was told Australians did not like Americans, but they have treated me very well."

FULLERIAN ENTERPRISE.

THE KING'S THEATRE.

The King's Theatre, which is being erected in Upper Pitt Street, Newton, adjoining Karangahape Road, for Messrs. John Fuller and Sons, is now approaching completion, and it is expected that it will be sufficiently advanced at the end of this week to permit of its being opened on the 21st instant. The theatre, which will be the largest in Auckland, will contain seating accommodation for about 1640 people. The spacious dress circle will seat nearly 700, the orchestral stalls about 230, the ordinary stalls about 321, and the pit over 390. The area covered by the theatre measures 144ft. by 72ft., and the highest point of the building is 64ft. from the footpath level. The theatre will be well-appointed in every respect, and special provision has been made for fire and other emergency exits. From the lower floor six exits will be made use of, the total door width being over 54ft. Ample provision is also being made for exits from the upper floor. An asbestos curtain will be provided and the main building is also being lined throughout with asbestos. The decorations will be very effective, the proscenium opening, wing walls, balcony fronts, vestibule entrance, etc., being treated with fibrous plaster. The theatre was designed by Mr. E. Bartley, and the contract for the building is being carried out by Mr. W. E. Hutchison.

Instructions have also been given by Messrs. Fuller and Sons for the remodelling of the Auckland Opera House. This work, which will be carried out shortly after the completion of the King's Theatre, will increase the seating accommodation of the building by about 500. An improved fire escape will also be provided.



A Popular Member of the Graham Comedy Company—MISS NELLIE DENT.

Soldier." the Australian rights of which have been secured by Rupert Clarke and Clyde Meynell. "The Chocolate Soldier" has exceeded the boom created by any other musical play of recent years. It contains a waltz which, it is said, is the most persistent and ear-haunting melody that ever clung to the memory.

Mr Willoughby's Ventures.

Mr Geo. Willoughby has purchased the Australian and New Zealand rights of Willard Holcomb's dramatic version of Mrs Augusta J. Evans Wilson's novel "St. Elmo." The actor-manager has also secured the rights of "A Fool There Was," which is now being played in America. This piece will be seen in Australia early next year. The third play which Mr Willoughby has on his little list is "The Woman in the Case." It was in the last-named piece that Miss Tittell Brune got her opening in London.

"Jack and the Beanstalk."

For the next Drury-lane pantomime the story of "Jack and the Beanstalk" has been manipulated by Mr J. Hickory, Mr Frank Dix, and Mr Collins. The part of principal girl will be taken by Miss Dolly Castles. Others who have already been engaged are Messrs. George Graves, George Barnett, Harry Randall, and

and prior to that for a considerable time in the fine dramatic organisation of the late Herbert Flemming.

The First Sporting Drama.

The production of "The Whip" at Her Majesty's brings to mind the first sporting drama in which a race-horse figured on the stage. This was "The Flying Scud," by Boucicault, which was put on at the Holborn Theatre, London, in 1866, and ran for over two hundred nights, and this at a time when long runs were more the exception than the rule.

A Thrill to the Second.

Messrs. Hamilton and Maxwell's new production at the Palace (says a Sydney journal) runs about a thrill to the second, and there are more sensational happenings in the three hours in which "The Spider and the Fly" are engaged than could enter in the lifetime of a man of mature years—off the stage. There is, of course, a woman at the bottom of all the troubles of the hero and heroine of the play, and she is the very wickedest sample of the sex who has ever strutted her little hour or two in this theatre—she has all the character of a fiend in drapery, and talks murder and sudden death just as casually as the usual woman talks afternoon tea, with tattle accompaniment. The acting of Miss Strong, in