

**AUSTRALIAN HAPPENINGS.**

(From Our Sydney and Melbourne Correspondents)

After the rush and bustle of the last two weeks the J. C. Williamson companies settled down on Easter Saturday to the usual state of quiescence which attends the holiday season. The only one unaffected by the change so far has been "Our Miss Gibbs," and as some one graphically expressed it some little time ago, "it does not look as if we could dig her out with crowbars. She has rested on the harbour side since September 24 last year, and is still apparently as full of "go" as ever. It is credibly reported, however, that the last nights are to be announced shortly, unless, of course, the little lady plays up as she did on three former occasions, when the same announcement was looming in the future, and resolutely refused to be shifted. Her companion now is "Jack and the Beanstalk," which opened to a tremendous house at Her Majesty's Theatre last Saturday, and began a career that, judging by the enthusiasm, is likely to equal, if not exceed, the record season the big extravaganza put up in Melbourne. In Melbourne the New Comic Opera Company began its season with Viennese opera, and the popular organisation was welcomed back very heartily by a contingent of their many admirers in that city. Theirs will only be a short stay, however, as last Saturday saw "The Merry Widow" go up once more with Miss Florence Young as Sonia, Frank Greene as Danilo, Reginald Roberts as Jolidon and W. S. Percy as Baron Popoff.

In the engagement of Mr. Harry Roberts and Miss Beatrice Day Mr. William Anderson has secured two very popular artists to lead his new dramatic organisation on its tour of New Zealand. The initial production, which will take place in Auckland on May 6, will be Walter Howard's successful romantic drama, "The Prince and the Beggar Maid." Mr. Roberts and Miss Day will be supported by a strong company.

A tremendous rush of applicants for chorus work in the Melba Grand Opera Company has set in, and Mr. Henry Bracy is being kept busy hearing voices. Three days last week were given up to the sopranos alone, and there are some really fine voices amongst those who can sing.

On learning the sad news of Mr. Max Maxwell's death Mr. Bland Holt cabled his attorney in Melbourne to extend to the young actor's widow every assistance in the matter of continuing the comprehensive tour already entered upon by the popular actor-manager. Mr. Holt's cable from Paris expressed his great sorrow for the untimely death of Mr. Maxwell, who was for many years associated with him.

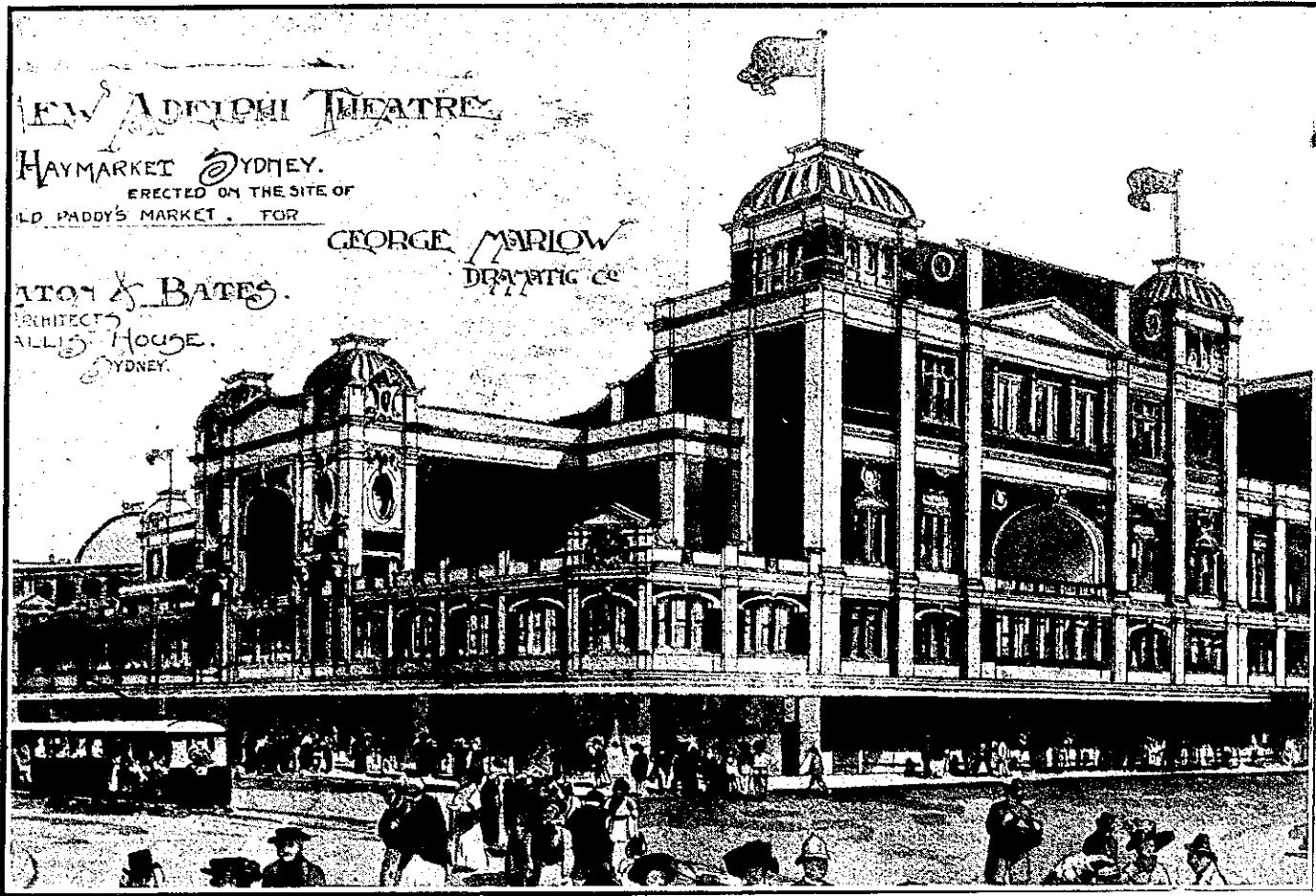
A fine new American drama of Western life is to be produced at the King's Theatre, Melbourne, as an Easter attraction, with Mr. Harry Roberts and Miss Beatrice Day in the leading roles. The play is written by a well-known American playwright, Mr. Edward Peple (author of "The Prince Chap"), and is said to be of exceptional power and to possess a very strong cast. An American contemporary, in speaking of the play, said:—"It is a living, breathing story of the Golden West, where the trails of men are dim and far apart. It is the best play of Western life we have witnessed for the past decade. It is a heart play and should live forever."

William Anderson's pantomime company, in "The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe," has just concluded a very successful tour of the small towns of New South Wales, and is now en route for Queensland, a season being played at Newcastle on the way.

With the advent of Mr. William Anderson's new dramatic organisation, who open a season at Auckland on May 6 in "Prince and the Beggar Maid," with Mr. Harry Roberts and Miss Beatrice Day leading, New Zealand playgoers will be treated to a fine dramatic season. The company supporting these two popular artists is exceptionally strong, and will include Miss Ethel Bashford, Miss Florence Ritcher and Mr. Herbert Leigh.

At the Princess' Theatre, Melbourne, on Saturday, Miss Katherine Grey opened her season with Eugene Walter's powerful play, "Paid in Full." During the season one or two novelties are promised, including the long looked for Shavian comedy, "Arms and the Man."

A very important and interesting engagement in connection with the forthcoming Melba Grand Opera Company is that of Mdlle. Axerine, the young Russian prima donna, who has rapidly come to the fore and is now known as the Russian Melba. She



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