

REPERTORY, MUSIC AND DRAMA.

Playwright Who Lived In Auckland

Death of Reginald Berkeley, Author of "The White Chateau"—Easter School of Drama in Christchurch — Thespians Producing Play by Author of "The Ghost Train."

The following brief summary of the life and work of Reginald Berkeley, the eminent playwright who once lived in Auckland, was written for the "Radio Record" by Victor S. Lloyd, the well-known Wellington producer.

FORTY-FIVE is too young for such a brilliant man as Reginald Berkeley, who died last week, to leave a world of literature that needs him so much; it seems a sad mistake, but in passing on he has left well defined footprints which are ineradicable. He was

born in London on August 18, 1890, and attended Bedford Modern School. Later on he came to Auckland, and finished his education there. He was called to the bar and then went Home, where he became a barrister-at-law of Middle Temple.

He served in the European War in a Rifle Brigade, the 11th Service, and afterwards in the First Regular. He was demobilised in 1919 and joined the League of Nations staff, first as Editor of Pamphlets and later as Director of Propaganda. Later he joined the League Secretariat. As he wished to stand for Parliament he resigned from the Secretariat and became a Member for Nottingham. In the meantime the pen of this prolific and brilliant man was never idle. He had begun his literary career as early as 1911 with contributions to the Auckland "Observer." His first play, "French Leave," was begun in the winter of 1916, during a short spell of illness in the Fourteenth Corps rest station. It was produced in 1920 at the Globe Theatre, and was an immediate success. It was transferred to the Apollo and ran nearly a year.

In 1920, "Eight O'clock," which had actually been written in 1913, was produced at the Little Theatre. Then came "Mango Island" and "The World's End." In 1924, "Unparliamentary Papers" was published. In 1925, "The White Chateau" idea was first given expression in a short form for broadcasting on Armistice night, and in 1927 this well-known full-length play was produced at the Everyman Theatre, where it played for two weeks and was transferred to the St. Martin's Theatre—it is probably one of the best war plays that England has so far achieved. Other plays by the same author are "Mr. Abdulla," "The Quest of Elizabeth," "Listeners," "The Lady With the Lamp," "Prince Consort," "Miss Adventure" (from the French), "The Man I Killed" (adaptation), "Machines" and "O.H.M.S.," which was written in 1931. Of these, "The Lady With the Lamp" (based on the life of Florence Nightingale) is probably the best known to New Zealand readers. It was produced at the Garrick Theatre in 1929, and is an exceptionally fine play, and was one of the outstanding successes of that year. "Dawn," a novel based on the life of Edith Cavell, was published in 1928.

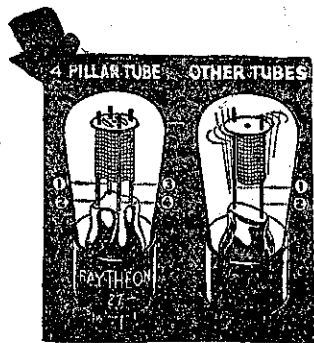
MOST New Zealand theatre-goers will remember the very successful tour of this country which was made some years ago by a J. C. Williamson Company presenting "The Ghost Train," a thriller by Arnold Ridley. Though that play is its author's chief claim to fame in this country, he is known in England as a playwright of considerable ability, and Wellington audiences are shortly to have an opportunity of judging his versatility for themselves, when the Thespians Society present his farce "Third Time Lucky." The play is to be presented dur-

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