

THE BELGIAN BAND.

ARRIVAL AT FREMANTLE.

A TALENTED COMBINATION.

The Belgian Band, which is on a tour of Australia under the direction of Messrs. J. and N. Tait, arrived at Fremantle by the Medina yesterday. The combination, which is under the conductorship of M. Philippe Meny, comprises 26 skilled instrumentalists, supported by a number of leading Continental soloists. It was gathered together in England, the primary objects of the present tour, as explained by the conductor yesterday, being firstly to raise funds for the orphans of Belgium, and secondly, to popularise the Belgian school of music in this part of the world.

Both as a conductor and performer on the violin, M. Meny is well known in the English musical world. English critics describe him as a very able conductor, a prominent feature being his remarkable control of the players under him. He stands unique, also, in that he plays his violin all the time he is conducting. "I think I am about the only conductor who follows this practice," he remarked. "It has this advantage, that I am always ready to pick up the little solos." M. Meny holds the diploma of the Brussels Conservatorium, and many other honours. He has been playing since he was six years of age. His father was a sharebroker, and is at present director of the General Steam Navigation Co., and head of the firm of Meny and Co. His parents wished him to follow commercial pursuits, but he was determined to study music. All his earlier

terminated to study music. All his earlier musical knowledge was self taught. Finally he won a scholarship, and for four years he studied at the Conservatorium at Brussels. In order to do this he had to rise at 6 o'clock in the morning, and catch the train from Ostend to Brussels, and return late in the evening. After a hasty dinner he would again take up his violin, and perform at the Ostend Casino. It may be interesting to mention that during his Australian tour M. Meny will use a famous old Italian Panorma violin, which instrument was presented to him some years ago. It bears the date of 1723, and is valued at over £200. When war broke out M. Meny was in Scotland. He immediately volunteered his services, and for a time was attached to the Armee Belge Service de Sante, which is the equivalent of our A.M.C. He is now on six months' leave, special permission having been granted him to come out to Australia with the band.

The soloists of the combination are Madlle. Viceroy, a soprano from the Brussels Opera House; M. Penn, a brilliant pianist, who studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London; Mr. A. Goossens, one of Belgium's leading baritones, who took part in all the earlier battles in the present war, and was wounded at Malines. The others include Mr. Hoogstoel, recognised as one of Europe's leading violinists, and described as the Belgian Paganini; and Mr. Wood, a cornet soloist. The programmes, which have been arranged for the Australian tour, cover a wide range. "You can state," remarked M. Meny yesterday, "that we are going to cater for all tastes, and our audiences will be given an opportunity of hearing all the most modern music, as well as the older classics."

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WELCOME IN PERTH.

PROCESSION THROUGH THE CITY

A large crowd in the city streets and about the main exit of the Perth railway station awaited the arrival yesterday of the Belgian Band. A welcome had been arranged by the committee of the Claremont day and night carnival in aid of the Belgian Relief Fund, and 10 decorated motor cars had been placed at the committee's disposal.

The band arrived a little later than had been expected, but as if to compensate for this slight interference with the arrangements the weather moderated a little, just sufficiently, in fact, to permit of the visitors being installed in the waiting motor cars and taking their departure. They were met on the platform by the Consul for Belgium (Mr. G. F. Payne) and Mrs. P. M. Pyke the honorary secretary, and other members of the carnival committee, who gave them greeting. Cheers were given for the band, and its members stood to attention on the stairs near to the central Wellington-street exit. When the train from Fremantle was pulling up at the island platform, the bands-men looking from the windows beamed their pleasure at the people and waved their gold braided caps in cheery salute. They had not mistaken the nature of the welcome they were to receive. Now halted on the steps, they were eager to be on familiar terms with the citizens at the first opportunity. They presented curious contrasts in face and figure. Some tall, others short, and generously proportioned,

others short, and generously proportioned, many of them were dark and not a few very fair in complexion, but all vivacious, and wearing an air of men on the eve of new and agreeable experiences, they listened with evident pleasure while the cheering was in progress. Mlle. Viceroy, an artiste from the Brussels Opera House, was presented by Miss Dorothy Burgess, dressed for the occasion in a costume displaying the Belgian national colours, with a boomerang wreathed in bouquets and decorations carried out also in red, yellow and black.

M. Philippe Meny, the musical director of the band, thanked the committee of welcome. "I thank you good people," he said, "for the very kind greeting you have given us. We will cheer you later on." The members of the band entered the motor cars drawn up outside the station, and were driven in procession through the city to His Majesty's Theatre. The Police Band, whose members had kindly volunteered to turn out, marched in front of the procession.

During the day the members of the carnival committee continued their collections in aid of the Belgian Relief Fund
