

Plays and Players.

THE Royal Comic Opera Company brought their Auckland, and with it their New Zealand, season to a close on Saturday last. The two final performances were splendidly attended, the piece being 'Pinafore.' One cannot go into raptures over the production of Gilbert and Sullivan's opera on this occasion. None of the characters was supremely good, and Mr Lauri, from whom we expected so much, was a bit of a disappointment as Sir Joseph Porter. He did not seem in perfect touch with his part. The feature of the performance was the singing of the chorus, which was very excellent indeed. On the last night, in addition to 'Pinafore,' the company gave the last act of 'In Town.'

On Monday next 'Trilby' opens in Auckland. The season is limited to five nights, and the prices—notwithstanding a rumour to the contrary—are the usual opera rates. The Company have met with wonderful success in the South, and judging from the interest with which their appearance here is anticipated, there is every reason to suppose that they will do well. We cannot speak here of the play from experience; we shall be able to do that next week; but we may quote a paragraph from the *Canterbury Times* on two of the principal actors:—'In appearance Miss Edith Crane is an ideal Trilby, the animate presentment of the charming figure which Du Maurier's skilful pencil has drawn to illustrate the pages of his famous book. Her impersonation of the character is that of an actress of ability and tact, of a graceful, winsome woman. Her death scene is one of the best ever witnessed on the Christchurch stage, touching but not overstrained, and not, as are many scenes of the kind, too long drawn out. In gruesome contrast is the grim spectacle of Svengali's exit, in which Reuben Fax scores so signal, so terrific a histrionic triumph. No more frightfully effective piece of realism has been seen on the stage. Yet the shuddering spectators may take comfort from the fact that none of them are likely to be called upon to witness a like scene off the stage. Such a death is the death of a Svengali, a fitting close to the career of that wondrous character, but not at all like the end of any person one may expect to meet in real life.'

In Vienna there are more than forty schools of acting and operatic singing, which are crowded with girl stu-



IN THE STUDIO—'TRILBY.'



MISS EDITH CRANE AS 'TRILBY.'

dents. The pressure of young actresses and singers is so great that at thirty the working actresses and singers are regarded as too old for much more use, and are relegated to obscure parts or put off the stage. In the last two years twenty or thirty such actresses have become beggars. A few of them have died on the country roads, along which they have been begging for food.

Speaking of Mr J. C. Williamson an American paper says:—'He is now to Australia what Sir Augustus Harris was to England—the manager of theatres, the proprietor of opera troupes, the importer of dramatic companies, and the joint author of burlesques and spectacles, and we hope soon to hear that he has received the honour of knighthood in spite of his American nationality. Whenever he is tired of the Antipodes a hearty welcome awaits him in this country, which is proud of his sterling integrity, his artistic ability, and his managerial achievements.'

Ovide Musin was billed to appear at the Melbourne Athenæum Hall on the 15th. New Zealanders will welcome the great violinist back to the colony.

Musgrove (says the *Sydney Bulletin*) has measured Nellie Stewart for a theatre and is building it in London. That is what comes of having a beautiful actress on hand; you naturally have to build a theatre round her. Then if she goes away you spend the rest of your life hunting for someone who can wear the building, and it remains a burden on your soul for ever afterwards.

An immense streak of luck, such as even Bland Holt seldom brought to the old Sydney Royal, has so far attended Maggie Moore's 'Trilby' burlesque. On an average night every seat is occupied and the public stands two deep all round the back of the dress circle, and only extraordinary good fortune will prevent Maggie Moore being fined (or in default of payment 30 days, and her hair cut short, and scrub out her own cell) for a serious case of overcrowding. And the possibility of Miss Moore scrubbing out her own cell is altogether too painful to contemplate.—*Bulletin*.

Some of the chief French and English dramatists are said to be in communication with a view of devising some means for the defence of their property rights from the unscrupulous 'adapter.'

Sarah Bernhardt is an occasional contributor to the more or less meritorious periodical issued by her son, Maurice, and called *Nineteen Hundred*.

A new theatre is being erected in London by Beerbohm Tree, to be called 'Her Majesty's.'