

Music and Drama

William Anderson's Dramatic Company opened at His Majesty's Theatre on Monday night with "The Squatter's Daughter." The piece has been well patronised, and shows the popularity of sensational melodrama.

The Scarlet Troubadours opened their Auckland season on Monday night to a large audience. The entertainment is bright and refined, and much of the singing is excellent. Indeed, the popularity of the company during their Auckland visit was assured from the outset. "The Song of the Strolling Players" practically serves the purpose of introducing performance and performers, each member of the company advancing and singing a few bars of a merry refrain. This was succeeded by an amusing duet, "Follow On," and Mr. Fred. Waltham then gave "The Song of the Anvil." He has a fine bass voice, which he uses well. Miss Gottrude Parker's solo was prettily sung, and its effectiveness was heightened by the imitation of the fireflies dancing about in the rear of the stage. The exhibition of exaggerated affection by Miss Maud Pore and Mr. Sydney Mannerling in their duet, "Our Canadian Canoe," was intensely amusing. Mr. Alfred Cunningham's singing of "The Toreador's Song" is worthy of praise. He has a fine baritone voice of considerable compass. Mr. Edgar Warwick caused great merriment with his various contributions. In the second part a short nautical sketch was given, and several good songs were introduced. The season ends on Saturday night, and the combination will doubtless prove a strong attraction during the week.

Harry Lauder denies that he is to get £1000 a week for his American tour. After indemnifying the theatres with which he had to break engagements in Britain, he asserts that there will be very little left for himself. To a "Chronicle" man he said: "I assure you that with the indemnity I have to pay at Glasgow, I have not got a fat thing at all. My real object is to familiarise myself with the people and the towns of the United States and Canada, and if I can do that this year I shall hope to go again and catch on." In this connection it is interesting to recall that during the musical-hall strike that occurred in London the winter before last lists were published of what purported to be the salaries earned by the most popular artists about that time in London, nothing being said about the provinces, where the stars as a rule are much better paid for a single turn. According to the lists, Mr. Harry Lauder, Mr. George Robey, Mr. Wilkie Bard, and Miss Marie Lloyd received £120 a week each, to cover performances at two or three halls each night. Little Tich was put down at £150. These were among the highest salaries paid at that time to individual artists. In America, Miss Marie Lloyd, Miss Vesta Victoria, and others have recently earned four times their London salaries, and Miss Vesta Tilley when last over there must have drawn nearly as much as Mr. Lauder is to be paid.

A correspondent writes: "After reading in your column of Saturday's issue, re the reported approaching marriage of Miss Marie Studholme, some controversy has arisen on the subject, and if you could answer the following question we should be very grateful: Is Marie Studholme the mother of the Misses Phyllis and Zena Dare of post-card fame? Marie Studholme, who was just 35 last September, could scarcely be the mother of the sisters Dare, Zena being 21 last February and Miss Phyllis eighteen on the fifteenth of last August. The Dare sisters are the daughters of Mr. Arthur Dones, Judge's assistant, and were educated with extreme care in a convent school in Brussels, but appeared at various times on the stage from a very early age, both showing extraordinary grace and precocious talent. Miss Studholme did not appear

on the boards till 1892, and achieved her first success when understudying Letty Lind. She took that artist's parts in "The Artist's Model," in 1895, "The Geisha" 1899, and "The Greek Slave" 1908.

Mr. J. M. Barrie's new play, produced in London last month, and hailed by the critics as a great success, is entitled "What Every Woman Knows." What she knows, according to Barrie, is that men are merely big babies, who want women to look after them. In this play, in pressing home his subtle lessons, he is just as audacious and whimsical as ever, actually making fun—who will believe it?—of Scotland and Scotchmen.

Henry Bernstein, the author of "The Thief," in which play Miss Margaret Anglin will be seen in New Zealand, has written another striking play entitled "Samson."

It is not generally known that some years ago a Mr. J. O. Armstrong, of Montreal, realising the wonderful possibilities of "Hiawatha" as a drama, had it translated into the Ojibway language and dramatised. It was first produced at Desbarats, in the heart of the Ojibway country, for the edification of Miss Alice Longfellow, the poet's granddaughter. Then it was thrown open to the public, but the place was too far away for the average tourist, and for several years it has been played at Ya-Way-Ga-Mug, which in ordinary English means Pound Lake, near Petosky, Michigan, where a large number of tourists see it played every year.

Some of the most interesting experiences of Mr. Frank Thornton in his professional career were those at the Savoy, where he was for seven years, and under study to Mr. George Grosmith. As these were the days of the Gilbert and Sullivan partnership, he had the opportunity of seeing how the distinguished collaborators produced their pieces—the interest they took in every detail, and how Gilbert cheerfully gave way to Sullivan, or Sullivan to Gilbert, when it became necessary to cut from the dialogue or the music for greater effectiveness. It was Gilbert's practice to arrange his characters on a cardboard stage, each person in a scene being represented by a piece of cork ticketed with the name. With the assistance of these mimic figures, he was able to plan out whole scenes beforehand, so that when he came down to direct rehearsal he knew exactly what he wanted—a tremendous saving of time to singers and everybody else. One of Mr. Thornton's treasured possessions is a diamond ring given him by Mr. Doyle Carte, engraved "Iolanthe, Savoy Theatre, November 25, 1882." Mr. Thornton played the original Major Murgatroyd in "Patience," and was the Lord Chancellor when "Iolanthe" went on tour in the provinces.

Mr. Tom McNaughton, manager for Miss Alice Lloyd, states that she is leaving for New York on Saturday to appear at the New York Theatre, Broadway, at a salary of £500 a week, "the largest ever paid an English music-hall artiste in musical comedy." The contract is for forty-two weeks a year for two years, a record contract for either England or America.

You can no more hope to comprehend Mr. Shaw in one performance than you can hope to grasp the "Origin of Species," or the "Psalm of David" after three hours' reading.—"New Age."

"I suppose you sometimes shed real tears at the theatre?" said the admirer. "I am tempted to," answered Mr. Storming Burnes, "when I look over the box-office statement."

The much-heralded play by Jerome K. Jerome, "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," was produced early in September at the St. James's Theatre, London, and bids fair to be a great success. The play, we were told, was to be a dramatic answer to the question "If Christ came to

London," and many people expected a play that would raise a storm of protest from religious people. But as things turn out there is nothing in Mr. Jerome's piece to cause any religious scandal whatever. One need not discuss any question of reverence or irreverence, either of which might have been so regretfully exploited. The whole thing is just a plain man's sermon put plainly on the stage, whilst so far as the impersonation of the actual Christ is concerned, it may be said at once that Mr. Forbes Robertson represents no more than a vaguely-drawn, kindly stranger who typifies Christ's teaching. There is no more attempt to embody Christ than in the case of a minister of any denomination. The cloths are ordinary modern clothes. The face is the face of Mr. Forbes Robertson, and the words are simple English.

Mr. George Callender, the much-travelled manager of the well-known Kellers Company, is completing arrangements for a tour of the Dominion of this clever organisation. The tour opens at the Wellington Royal on Saturday, the 31st inst. Mr. Callender informs me that his company has a "basket" of novelties absolutely new to New Zealand.

New York periodically has a music hall artistes' popularity competition, for the winners of which the most popular lady receives a gold medal. The last competition was won by Irene Franklin, who "starred" through New Zealand under the Dix vaudeville management, and was billed with the prefix "Dainty."

Theatrical "paper" has set Parisian theatre managers and managersess by the ears. The Society of Authors has drawn up an agreement by which the directors who sign it bind themselves to give no more free seats, except to critics on first nights and to a small number of persons, whose names are to be put down on a special free list. But seven managers or managersess refuse to sign the agreement, and are at loggerheads in consequence with their colleagues who have signed it and with the Society of Authors. The dissentients include Mmes. Sarah Bernhardt and Rejane and M. Antoine, director of the Odéon. "Why," asks Sarah, "should I not be allowed to invite whom I choose to my theatre? Is not my theatre my house; and by what right can outsiders meddle with the arrangements of my house and the list of my guests? Whatever happens, I will continue to suit myself, and my authors will ask whom they like to their plays. Whatever the syndicate of managers may decide, my friends will always be welcome in my theatre," graciously conclude the imperious Sarah.

Another blow to the professional! Gabriele D'Annunzio, who has gained something of a name for eccentricity in addition to his deservedly great reputation as a poet, intends to write a series of works in semi-dramatic form, to be recited simultaneously with the showing of the action by means of cinematograph films. He declares that the cinematograph has a great future before it as an educative influence, and he is convinced that by its means he will be able to reach a far larger public than is attainable through the medium of literature pure and simple. Moreover, he hopes that the cinematograph will enable him to realise imaginative effects which would be quite impossible in the theatre.

The public passing along the bridge over the Spree, adjacent to the Berlin Bourse, were surprised at seeing a man, apparently unclothed, and in fetters, getting out of a closed cab, climbing the parapet of the bridge, and throwing himself into the water 50 feet below. After a lapse of 30 seconds he rose to the surface, with a triumphant smile on his face, and holding aloft the fetters with which he had previously been bound. It turned out that the man is an American "artist," named Harry Houdini, dubbed the "King of Escapers," whose speciality it is, by the extraordinary adaptability of his muscular system, to free himself from locked chains bound over his neck, arms and wrists, the last being padlocked behind his back. The performance was carefully planned under police permis-

sion, Houdini having stripped and donned a bathing costume, in the presence of medical and police experts, in the Circus Busch, close by. Houdini relates that he felt a moment of anxiety when disengaging himself from the fetters at the bottom of the river, as the mud was thicker and slimmer than he had anticipated.

Micha Elman, who has been engaged for a tour of the Commonwealth and New Zealand, was playing in the English provinces last month. In a concert at New Brighton Tower, at the end of August, he played the Mendelssohn Concerto. Says the "Musical Standard": "The playing of the famous Russian youth has gained both breadth and depth, and he caresses his instrument with evident affection, and at the same time does not hesitate to demand of its strings a spacious volume of tone. His inner playing in the course of the slow movement was very fine, and as regards intonation and velocity of wrist action, Elman has no superior and few equals."

Our Sydney correspondent writes that Mr. Percy Grainger, the well-known pianist, now in Sydney with the company which is headed by the distinguished contralto, Madame Ada Crossley, is thinking of collecting Maori songs during his visit to New Zealand, and making a permanent record of them. He has done a great deal in collecting the folk-songs of England, using a phonograph for the purpose, while travelling about amongst the peasants of Lincolnshire, where there are some noted folk-singers. The task of collecting these was not difficult, of course, for the people had merely to sing into the phonograph; but the hard work came afterwards, when the sounds were to be committed to paper in the form of musical notation. However, Mr. Grainger has compiled a lot of information about these songs, and has published the scores, whilst the phonograph records are now on the market in England. It will be extremely interesting if he does something of the same kind for the Maori songs. The legends and folk-lore of the Maori people have been collected by industrious workers; but so far as is known there is no permanent record of their songs.



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