

which will fall on Lady Killone, and promises to withdraw the bill.

The last act takes place in Janion's offices in the East End district of London. Here the author indulges in some humorous exposures of the methods of the "new" journalism, a story which is found to be too broad for a religious journal owned by Janion being transferred to another publication called "Happy Homes." Janion has already announced in his paper the withdrawal of the Wages Bill, and is exulting in his success when Lady Killone calls, and, in a passionate scene, endeavours to soften his heart. Janion is proof against her entreaties, and when Trevena arrives he holds him to his bargain. Lady Killone protests earnestly against the sacrifice of the bill to her interests, and finally, as a last stroke, says that unless Janion will withdraw the announcement of the abandonment of the bill, and unless Trevena promises to continue his advocacy of it, she will make her sin and Janion's mean action in the matter public. Janion cannot face the risk of exposure, and gives in; and the Wages Bill is gone on with after all.

The Truth About Caruso.

Caruso's condition has been the subject of much discussion in operatic circles since his recent indisposition began. This moved the New York Metropolitan Opera Company to make reply, and the management issued this statement: "In order to set at rest the misleading rumours about the vocal condition of Mr. Caruso, the managing mentor of the Metropolitan Opera House announces that his non-appearance is due to the fact that he is taking a brief rest. Mr. Caruso is acting in accordance with the wishes of his physician, Dr. H. Hoolbrook Curtis, who states that the tenor is suffering only from a slight attack of laryngitis. Mr. Caruso has informed the management that he will surely sing before the end of the season."

Caruso's Opinion of Himself.

In view of the fact that he has been suffering from nervous exhaustion, it is interesting to recall Signor Caruso's own opinion of his art, as given in an article by him in a foreign newspaper. "Nervousness seizes me," he wrote, "and the anguish of it alone makes my voice what it is. There is no personal merit in the matter. This fever of fear transforms itself for the public into mysterious and moving effects; but let the public know that Caruso on the boards is no longer responsible for the pleasure he may give, and that all the credit for that is due to the great god Funk." While no one will agree with Caruso's modest estimation of himself, the above-quoted words show the tremendous and continual nervous strain to which a leading operatic singer is subjected, and cause one to wonder less when a breakdown comes to cause a retirement from active work. Happily, in Signor Caruso's case, a complete cure is almost certain, and when he next makes his appearance he is assured of a phenomenal reception.

The Praise He Prizes.

"Caruso is a great artist," a critic has written, "of that there is no doubt—but aside from his place in the lyric world, he is a funny little man who turns a child's serious face to the big outside world." It is just because he is a "funny little man," with the most genial of natures, that the tenor is so popular. While he was staying in Naples some time ago, he was almost idolised on account of his bonhomie. He would enter a little restaurant and sing in the most glorious manner, between the courses, songs for of pounds. The cook used to come from his kitchen, the padrone from his office, and all the women-folk of the place from their various occupations, and would stand round enraptured, and sometimes with moist eyes, listening to the wonderful notes. After the applause one day, Caruso turned to a friend, saying "That is the praise I prize. If I can draw tears from the eyes of the man who cooks my macaroni, then I am sure I am in voice. Women will weep because it is Caruso who sings, but the cook will only do so if his heart is really touched."

A Narrow Escape.

Like most artists who have afterwards achieved fame, Caruso met with a great deal of parental opposition to his desire to become a singer. Indeed, Caruso senior, absolutely forbade his son to go to the theatre at all, which caused the future tenor to resort to many subterfuges. One day Enrico came near to be-

ing drowned, through trying to find a two-franc piece to pay for his admission to an opera he particularly desired to see. His sister, who sided with his father, had thrown the money on to a table in a dark cellar. Young Caruso jumped into the cellar after it, upset the table, and went splash into a well, the existence of which he had not known. Luckily, the table fell in too, and helped him to keep afloat. When his father heard of the accident, and learned that there was no real danger, he told the bearer of the news to let his son stay in the water a little longer. Eventually Enrico was rescued, in a pitiable condition. "But," says he triumphantly whenever he tells of the incident, "I got that two-franc piece!"

"That's London"

The tenor has told an amusing story of one of his London experiences. "One evening in London," he said, "I was dressing for 'Pagliacci,' a man walks into my room, taps me on the shoulder, and says: 'Give me £140.' I look at him and ask: 'What for?' He replies: 'Income-tax.' I say: 'Come again; I haven't got the money.' He shows me a warrant for my arrest. The manager pays the man the money, and what do you think the man says? He says: 'Now I'd like to have a seat to see the show.' And he gets it. That's London!"

Madame Tetrazzini.

Madame Tetrazzini, whose recent illness caused a great deal of anxiety among her numerous friends, is one of the most remarkable singers alive, and her reception by the London critics and public, when she made her first appearance at Covent Garden, was almost phenomenal. She may be truthfully called Melba's rival. The great singer's life story is extremely interesting. Born in Florence, she comes of a very musical family, and from the time when she was quite a child she loved singing. Her desire to become a vocalist was resented by her mother, but at last she was allowed to study at the Liceo Musicale in Florence. When Signor Cecherini, who had taught her elder sister, heard her sing, he turned to the examiners and said, "Why, this is an artist; she is not a little girl at all!" Later on Tetrazzini made her first appearance at the Teatro Verdi, in Florence, in Meyerbeer's "L'Africaine," and after singing in many roles in Madrid, Lisbon, St. Petersburg, etc., she came and conquered London in 1907. Madame Tetrazzini's favourite part, by the way, is Lucia in "Lucia di Lammermoor."

The Penalty of Fame.

Naturally, Madame Tetrazzini has been unable to escape from the numerous trials that invariably beset those who have climbed the ladder of fame. She has received probably more letters making strange requests from unknown admirers than any other prima donna, and the demands for her autograph have reached many thousands. One of the most curious letters she received was from a man who sent her some wrist-cuffs with the request that she would write to him "telling me their faults and their good points, and, in fact, all you think of them." He ended his epistle by stating, "I have a guitar 200 years old. Would you buy it? You would easily learn, and could accompany yourself on the stage with it." Another unknown genius asked madame to set up as a music publisher with him—she to supply the capital, while he would write the songs and music. His surprise when she declined the offer was almost pitiful. One of the most extraordinary of fame penalties in Madame Tetrazzini's case was the report which was circulated some time ago to the effect that she was a kind of second "Trilby" who could not sing unless she was hypnotised. Of course, there was not a shadow of truth in the statement, and madame said that she did not believe in any form of hypnotism, except that emanating from the audience.

Sauer's Narrow Escape.

Emil Sauer, one of the finest of living pianists, who played with great success at a philharmonic concert in London last month, had a very narrow escape from gas asphyxiation late in the month of February. He was sleeping at the house of a friend in Bordeaux, where he was playing on the afternoon of February 21. During the night Mr. Sauer awoke with a feeling of suffocation, and had only just sufficient strength to leave his room and call assistance. It was then discovered that the "geyser"—a gas machine for heating water—in the

bath room adjoining Mr. Sauer's room had developed a leak, and it was really a great miracle that Mr. Sauer was not overcome by the fumes.

Auckland Orchestral Society.

The second Orchestral concert of the season was given on Thursday to a crowded house, which afforded ample proof of the undeniable popularity of these concerts, and the good work of the Society, under the conductorship of Herr Wielandt. The best number of the evening was the Symphonic Prologue to Shakespeare's "Othello" (Arnold Klug), which was given a realistic rendering in the portrayal of the unreasoning jealousy of Othello, the protested innocence of Desdemona expressed in a beautiful melody for the oboe, and the horror of the bedchamber scene, where after stifling his wife, Othello becomes aware of her innocence and stabs himself. The orchestra obtained some fine climaxes, their rhythmic work being particularly good. The clarinet players deserve especial praise. The "Funeral March" of Chopin was taken at a quicker tempo than we are accustomed to hear in the readings given by celebrities who have visited these shores. It was robbed thereby of some of its impressiveness. This march, originally written for the piano as a movement in the great B-flat minor Sonata, was afterwards orchestrated and played on great occasions of state, notably at the funeral of Her Majesty, the late Queen Victoria. The Society achieved a much better result in the "Leonora No. 3" overture of Beethoven, which received a dramatic rendering, and excellent ensemble. The first violins showed some finished work in what was a wholly impressive number. In some of the other items the renderings were faulty, and the leading strings were not supported by the other instruments in the excellent manner evident on former occasions. In the "Impromptu" of Schubert arranged with doubtful advantage for strings, and the familiar "Air for G string" (Bach), there seemed to be some little misunderstanding between the organ accompaniment and the strings. The only soloist of the evening, Madame Wielandt, was in splendid voice, and scored a pronounced success in her first number, Recit and Romance for "Mignon" (Ambrose Thomas).

"The Belle of Mayfair."

The production of "The Belle of Mayfair," which enjoyed a run of over four years in England, was successfully made by the Meynell and Gunn combination at the Opera House last week. Its popularity as a musical comedy is undoubtedly deserved. The music, by the well-known composer Leslie Stuart, of "Floradora" fame, is bright, sparkling, and original, with catchy songs. The dresses were imported from London and Paris, and the audience is introduced to the fashionable world of Mayfair, with all its gaiety and glitter. The charm of the production lies in its superb mounting as much as in its wit and haunting melodies. The artist's hand is revealed in every detail. Incidental to the piece are a number of novel features, of which the famous Gibson Girls and "Merry Widow" waltz are not the least among many alluring items.

Forthcoming Productions.

The concluding six nights of Messrs. Meynell and Gunn's successful English comic opera season at the Opera House will be devoted to the first production in New Zealand of the original Dutch comic opera, "Miss Hook of Holland." The piece attained a phenomenal run of 400 nights in London, whilst it enjoyed equal popularity in Melbourne and Sydney for 11 weeks each. The music is by the well-known composer Mr. Paul Rubens, and the words by Mr. Austin Hurgon. "Miss Hook of Holland" is described as a great Dutch comic opera, and as such is said to be full of quaint melodies and harmonious choruses. The present principals, who are appearing with such marked success in "The Belle of Mayfair," will sustain the following roles:—Mr. William Cromwell, Slinks, a loafer; Mr. Edwin Brett, Mr. Hook; Mr. Harold Thorey, Bandmaster Van Vuyt; Mr. Tom Payne, foreman of the Distillery; Mr. Phil Carlton, Captain Paap; Miss Ruth Lincoln, Sally (Miss Hook of Holland); Miss Emmaline Orford, Mina; Misses Easie Perrin and Dora Denton, Frels and Clara Voos, etc. The first act takes place in the Market Place on the borders of the Zuyder Zee, and the second in the Distillery at Amsterdam.

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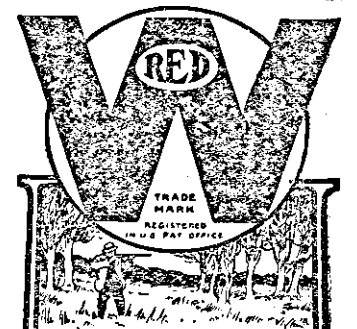
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