

ridiculously, serious vein underlying the whole situation and laughed uproariously right through to the third act, until the old man Brown was led out by the invaders and summarily shot. There was no mistaking the attitude of the audience. They treated the first two acts of the play as though it were a musical comedy, and not a few went away with the impression that the author, after providing such excellent humour, let them down rather badly by finishing the old man and his family off so tragically. The bombardment of the house, the boom of distant guns, the scream of the shells followed by the explosions, the ceaseless rifle fire, and the constant shouting of orders, gave melodramatic flourishes to the action and thrilled the house with enough sensations to last them for a month. The realities of the third act woke the audience up to the fact they were witnessing a tragedy. The final scene, however, when the skirl of the pipes is heard, and a mixed assemblage of Highlanders, bluejackets and troopers rush in and make a sort of tableaux representing a glorious conquest for the British Army, simply destroyed at the psychological moment the whole moral of the play. It was a piece of theatrical jingoism designed for the special benefit of the gallery, and for which the author was not responsible.

Major du Maurier shows a characteristic lack of insight into the real condition of his own country. He is dominated entirely by the military point of view—which takes little or no regard for the social and industrial conditions under which the great bulk of the British public live. Mr. Brown and his family are no more characteristic of the Homeland than a gentleman in a red shirt and a slouch hat is typical of New Zealand. They are at best caricatures of a grotesque and entirely laughable type. It is almost ridiculous to think that any intelligent playwright could picture such types as characteristic of a great army of people, who work ten, twelve and fourteen hours a day in factories, offices and shops; to whom the struggle for existence is one continual grind and rush. To expect these people to undergo the rigours of military training whilst the hours of labour are what they are in Britain is only to show the height of ignorance. The picture of the typical Englishman's Home, which colours the pessimism of the author at every turn, is merely a signpost of his imagination. There is no typical Englishman's home. There are a variety of places in which people live, such as the Park Lane mansions, the country seats of peers, and retired manufacturers, the Baywater mansion, or the Bloomsbury boarding house. There is for the middle class of England numerous suburban villas around every great centre, but for the millions of Britain the homes are mainly crowded tenement dwellings and flats, miles of depressing rows of brick houses and great areas of slum properties, wherein filth, disease, social degeneration and infant mortality are rife. Far from presenting any realistic state of affairs, Major du Maurier's play is simply a caricature of types that exist chiefly in a popular imagination fed by shoddy stage and music hall productions and cheap comic journals. His representation of the British volunteers as typified in Captain Finch, was conceived much in the same vein. He is evidently too much of an officer and a gentleman to touch on a matter so delicate as the alleged efficiency of his brothers-in-commission, and their prototypes who so conspicuously adorned the field in South Africa as they do Piccadilly and Pall Mall to-day. The satires are, to say the least, not happily chosen. The overwhelming sense of caricature dominating the whole production could only overcome a colonial audience with laughter and wonder why such a play could have excited such interest in England. It must not be forgotten in this connection that the Mother Country is made up of distinct classes and clear-cut political types. There are many people there who think, with the author, that it is high time compulsory military service was introduced and musical hall songs and football crazes done away with, quite regardless that these evidences of thirst for popular pleasures are largely the reaction of the public mind against the depressing and wearying conditions under which the bulk of the people are compelled to live and work. It is, moreover, traditional with Englishmen to satirise the British volunteers. "Punch,"—that organ of popular prejudices—has been doing it for years. It is a highly debatable point whether the so-called inefficiency of the citizen soldier is as lamentable as it is represented. Major

du Maurier, in his conception of Captain Finch and the Blinkshire Volunteers, is little better than "Reggie Brown," against whom all his thinly veiled bitterness is hurled. He has to descend to caricature in order to try and drum it into the British imagination that there is only one thing that can save England, and that is conscription. However foreign this idea may be to the Anglo-Saxon conception of liberty, there is no doubt there is a considerable section of a British public who dearly love a military drama. When you add to that a furious bombardment lasting through two acts, make your invaders unmistakably German, and, lastly, have your play boomed by a powerful and jingoistic press, it is easy to understand the tremendous success of "An Englishman's Home" in Britain. So far as the Australasian colonies are concerned, the play only confirms what has already been shown, and that is the popular successes of the day in England can be by no means certain of an overwhelming reception from a colonial audience. The class prejudices of the Old Land soon die in the cosmopolitan environment of the colonies. Major du Maurier's play is essentially one teeming with class prejudices. Hence its reception at the hands of colonial audiences.

The Performance at His Majesty's.

The characterisation by the Williamson Company was on the whole fairly good. The "Geoffrey Smith" of Mr Aubrey Mallalieu, "Reggie Brown" of Mr Thos. H. E. Foeter, and "Captain Finch" of Mr. Leslie Victor were capital representations. Mr George Chalmers (whom I cannot help regarding as one of the most promising members of the company) made an excellent Col. Sergt. Harris. Mr Winter Hall's "Mr Brown" was a decidedly vigorous and determined old gentleman, who stood in effective contrast to the strong, though somewhat melodramatic characterisation of Captain Prince Voland by Mr Sydney Sterling, Mr Julius Knight had quite a minor part as Adjutant Lindsay to what he usually takes, and it fell on his shoulders with all the ease and grace of the accomplished actor. Miss Beatrice Day, with Miss Lempriere and Miss Wilson, gave effective renderings of their respective parts. The characterisation of the women in the play by the author, gave but little scope for prominent acting.

The play was preceded by a fine one-act curtain-raiser from the French entitled "The Sacrament of Judas"—a thrilling piece, beautifully balanced, and excellently staged. Mr Julius Knight, as the priest who had forsaken his vows, gave the character a powerful reading, and was well supported by the four other members of the company who took part.

Grieg and His Music.

A few years ago Mr. Henry T. Finck contributed to the "Living Masters of Music" series a monograph on Edvard Grieg. The volume now published is practically a second edition of that work in an extended form, the most interesting additions being the letters, now printed for the first time, which the author received from the lamented composer. Some of these relate to business matters, and need not be quoted here, and others are chiefly interesting where, incidentally they throw light on the writer's musical sympathies. Thus, in one letter, a reference to Mr. Finck's book on Wagner prompts the following utterance: "You are, like myself, one of the greatest admirers of the incomparable master, but not one of the Wagnerites. In my opinion this rabble constitutes his worst enemies!" Then, in another letter, this, of Brahms: "For me there is no doubt concerning Brahms. A landscape, torn by mists and clouds, in which I can see the views of old churches, as well as of Greek temples—that is Brahms. The necessity of placing him by the side of Bach and Beethoven is as incomprehensible to me as the attempt to reduce him ad absurdum. The great must be great, and a comparison with other great ones must always be unsatisfactory."

Although emphasis is laid by the biographer on Grieg's modesty, the composer would seem to have been not a little sensitive to criticism. "Believe me," he writes on one occasion, "I have hitherto nearly always fared badly with the so-called critics. Where there was sympathy there was no comprehension, and for so-called comprehension without sympathy I do not give a penny." More especially does the musician appear to have resented the charge frequently—and unjustifiably—brought against him

that he derived most of his inspirations from his country's folk-music. In this connection Mr. Finck's remarks deserve quotation: "Only about five per cent" (of the songs, he points out, "were thus borrowed, and even these were adorned with harmonies entirely his own, though, like his own melodies, redolent of Norway. Many of the critics who charged him with borrowing did so not from malice, but from insufficient information. I myself did not know till he told me that of his songs only one, 'Solveig's Lied,' is based on a melody not of his own creation."

Incidentally, we find in the book a pleasant little anecdote, which tells how one day at Bergen, Grieg went out fishing in a small boat with his friend, Frants Beyer. After a while a musical theme came into his head. He took a piece of paper from his pocket, quietly jotted it down, and put the paper on the bench by his side. A moment later a gust of wind blew it overboard. Grieg did not see it, but his companion did, and picked it up. He read the melody, and after putting the paper in his pocket, whistled it. Grieg turned like a flash and asked, "What was that?" Beyer answered nonchalantly, "Only an idea I just got." Whereupon Grieg retorted, "The devil you say! I just got that same idea myself."

But Mr. Finck's volume does not deal largely in anecdotes. Rather has the author been content to set forth in straightforward fashion the various phases in the musician's somewhat uneventful life, and the salient features of his artistic career, both as composer and pianist. The latter part of the biography is devoted to a consideration of his works, and although the author writes himself down an ardent admirer of Norway's most representative composer, his opinions are not open to the reproach of being merely those of an indiscriminate hero-worshiper. Among some critics there has been a tendency to disparage Grieg on the ground that, as a worker, in the main, on a small canvas, he could scarcely claim a place among the great musicians. Judgment of this kind, based on comparisons, never can be satisfactory, and in the case of a composer like Grieg, of rare originality, freshness of outlook, and an extraordinarily deli-

cate feeling for atmosphere and poetry, the result must inevitably be to do him something less than justice. The strange thing about Grieg is that, enormously popular as some of his music has become, that which is really widely known represents a very small proportion of the whole. His songs are among the loveliest things of their kind ever bequeathed to the art. Yet, save for the few which have become what is called hackneyed, they remain unhonoured and unsung. Grieg, in a word, has yet to come completely into his own, and if the volume under notice helps to that end it will not have been published in vain.

Caruso is Cured.

Caruso, the great Italian tenor, was reported in America recently to have lost his voice completely. Latest advices from Milan say that he is cured.

Caruso is cured. To-morrow the public at Ostend, where the king of tenors has undertaken to give three concerts, for which he will be paid £2,000, will have the pleasure of enjoying the first notes of his marvellous voice since the operation on his throat.

The operation was particularly delicate and difficult. Professor Della Vedova, under whose care Caruso placed himself, gives some curious and interesting details regarding the affection which, for a time, seemed to threaten the termination of the great tenor's operatic career. The malady from which he suffered was a nodular growth on the right vocal cord, which it was necessary to extirpate.

For ten days after the operation Caruso had to maintain the most absolute silence. On the tenth day the surgeon permitted him to speak in a whisper, and ten days later still the great singer was able to try his voice. It was an anxious moment, but the result of the trial gave immediate certainty that the cure was perfect. The timbre of the various notes displayed all its former marvellous purity. Then Caruso signed a contract which was proposed to him for three concerts at Ostend. While Caruso was on the way to Paris, Mr Gatti Casazza, director of the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, concluded with him a new contract for three years. Caruso is thus engaged to sing in New York until 1914.

Our Illustrations.

A BOY ATHLETE.

AMONGST our illustrations on page 25 will be seen a picture of Master David James Pinton, 13½ years of age, and a pupil of the Port Ahuriri School, H.B. He is a promising young athlete, and his record includes the following:—Winner H.B. Schoolboys' championship, 1909; winner Hastings Schoolboys' Race, 50yds, 1909; winner Port Ahuriri Schoolboys' Handicap, 35yds, gold medal and silver cup, 1909; winner Napier Schoolboys' Handicap, 50yds, 1908. He gained the N.Z. Amateur Swimming Association's certificate for swimming 800yds, 1909, and also holds the N.Z. certificate, 1908, 440yds, Napier Carnival gold medal, 1908, and prizes for numerous other events. Thus it will be seen that this boy holds an uncommon record for his age.

DIAMOND WEDDING AT CARTERTON.

Mr and Mrs Seth Hart, of Carterton, celebrated their diamond wedding on September 12. The Methodist Church of Carterton, of which they are members, commemorated the event at a public function on September 13. Mr Hart was born in Birmingham, and brought up in Manchester, and as he was born in 1828 he is now 81 years of age. He emigrated to Australia in 1839, where he followed the pursuit of mining for over 20 years, and in 1864 he came to New Zealand. He resided for a short time in Hokitika, and then removed to the Wairarapa, where he lived as a farmer. He has been a member of the Methodist Church for 75 years, and was a local preacher for 55 years. Their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren number about 70, and, needless to say, the old folk are held in very high esteem.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR.

The biennial convention of the Council of the New Zealand Christian Endeavour

your Union took place in Wellington last week. Our illustration shows the delegates who took part in the convention. Their names are as under:—Front row: Mr A. H. Fowles (Wellington), Rev. E. Bandy (Dunedin), Rev. Kerwood (Auckland), Tr C. R. Mackie (N.Z. Secretary), Rev. J. T. Pinfold, M.A. (President), Mr J. S. Wilson (Treasurer), Rev. K. Ewen (President Wellington Union), Mr A. B. Chappell, Mr E. Hampton. Second row: Misses Hall, Binley, Williams (Wellington), Mrs Heit (Oamaru), Miss Bilman (Auckland), Mrs Eggers (Wellington), Mrs Griffen (Wellington), Miss Packer (Wellington). Back row: Mr Heit (Oamaru), Mr G. J. Clarke (Wellington Union Secretary), Mr L. J. Clark.

One simple dish
is a feast when
seasoned with

MELLOR'S

GENUINE WORCESTER

SAUCE!