

Music and Drama.

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The
BROUGH COMEDY COMPANY,
FAREWELL APPEARANCES
IN AUCKLAND.

OF
MR AND MRS BROUGH,
Prior to their Retirement from the
Australasian Stage.

TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 31 AND JANUARY 1,
"THE MAGISTRATE."

A Farce in Three Acts,
By Arthur W. Pinero.

THURSDAY, FRIDAY, & SATURDAY,
JANUARY 2, 3, and 4,
REAPPEARANCE OF MRS BROUGH,
First Production in New Zealand of
**"LADY HUNTWORTH'S
EXPERIMENT."**

An Original Comedy in Three Acts,
By R. C. Carton.

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at 8; carriages at 10.6.

Children Under Six NOT ADMITTED.

"The Second in Command," the military play with which the Brouchs commenced their farewell season in Auckland, is the antithesis of the sensational melodrama and the musical comedy on which Northern theatre-goers are wont to feed. For that reason alone there is no doubt that many will prefer the spiced meat of the one, and the whipt cream of the other, to the wholesome interest and stimulation of Captain Marshall's clever comedy. But to those whose dramatic palate is neither crude nor degenerate, here is a drama that must appeal. For here are live men and women, instead of mere musical marionettes and impossible heroes and heroines, and here, too, is the realism that is altogether independent of the tricks of the stage mechanism and the calcium light man. The whole thing is delightfully cool and sane in its tone, unmarred by claptrap and exaggeration, and eminently healthy. The admirably conceived and no less admirably evolved little plot is simplicity and naturalness itself, deals nothing in ingenious convolutions of mystery, has no surprises; but depends for its hold on the audience on the skillful handling of such a dramatic incident as might happen in any of our lives. In the most quiet, unobtrusive way the story draws us into a charmed circle, and by the time the curtain has fallen on the first act we are, almost unconsciously, responsive to its most delicate influence as the needle to the magnet. It begins by mildly interesting, by amusing us. It ends by thrilling us in a way one could hardly have expected. It brings us in touch with a play of ennobling sentiment and passion; it leaves us better men and better women, with a higher appreciation of the depth of sterling worth that lies concealed in human nature. The military setting of the play—the barrack yard, the smart uniforms, the tramp of men, the bachelor luxury of the mess, the preparations for the war, the bugle calls, and the scenic appendages of the drama generally—must have credit for much. They give just the atmosphere in which the action of the play shows to most telling advantage. Mr Brough, as that most loyal of souls, though far from the most brilliant or successful of soldiers, Major Christopher Bingham, fills a role in which his very mannerisms are a distinct aid. In that final scene, where he feigning sleep hears the reconciliation between his lost Muriel and Colonel Anstruther, and later receives the Victoria Cross from the hands of the Duke, the audience remains spellbound. It was an admirable piece of silent acting, a triumph of repression on the part of Mr Brough; and no better evidence of the success of his entire impersonation of the noble-hearted "Kit" was required than the absolute appreciation of the strong situation which the house dis-

played. Mr Brough took so much of the sympathy of the audience that perhaps Mr Ward, as Colonel Miles Anstruther, hardly got his fair share of praise for a convincing study of a none too easy part. A trifle too stiff in his soldierly bearing sometimes, in attitude, tone, expression, he allows the workings of his storm-tossed soul to reveal themselves through the barrier of a strong and reserved nature. Miss Temple, always good in whatever she essays, is natural to the last degree in the role of Muriel Manning. It is a role that might easily be over-acted, and the chief praise that could be given the lady is that she never falls into that trap. Where the more subtle humour of the play might fail to reach a section of the audience, Mr Leslie Victor, as the Hon. Hildebrand Carstairs, comes to the rescue with a broader fun. With his mother, Lady Harburgh (Miss Susie Vaughan), he can claim most of the laughter of the evening. Miss Vera Gibson, as Nora, was fresh and charming, and the other roles were all ably filled. To sum up one's impressions of the play, it is absorbingly interesting, and holds the mirror up to phases of human nature which one cannot contemplate without feeling the better for it. It is an excellent play, excellently acted.

This evening (Tuesday) "The Magistrate" will be produced, and on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday there will be produced for the first time in New Zealand Carton's famous comedy "Lady Huntworth's Experiment." Mrs Brough will re-appear in the latter play.

The Pollards have no intention of giving New Zealand up for a considerable time to come. Bookings are arranged far ahead in all the main cities, including Dunedin for a five weeks' season in January, 1903.

The Wilson Barrett Company will open in Auckland on February 5th, playing during the season "The Sign of the Cross," "Man and His Makers," "The Manxman," "The Silver King," "Virginius," "Hamlet," and "Othello." The company commenced their New Zealand tour at Dunedin last Saturday.

Lily Mowbray, who was for a long time leading dancer with the Pollard Opera Company, and recently a member of the Holloway Dramatic Organisation, has (says Sydney "News-letter") decided to go in for vaudeville altogether. She has "doubled" with Ellie Mowbray, and the pair make a petite and graceful team. They are now appearing at the Brisbane Royal, where their "turns" have become a leading feature of the performance. Local critics say that their equal has not been seen there.

Advance agent L. J. Lohr, so well known on these coasts, now keeps a hotel at Anderson's Inlet, about seventy miles from Melbourne.

Some twenty-eight characters have roles allotted to them in "A Message from Mars," which the Hawtreys Comedy Company now in Christchurch are playing. An American critic says of "A Message from Mars":—It raps selfishness of every sort and kind severely over the knuckles. It points a dozen morals and adorns a pretty tale. It's a dramatisation of Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," in short, made for everyday use. Dickens' Scrooge is transformed into young Horace Packer, a conceited, grasping, self-centred young Londoner, who refuses to take his pretty fiancée to a dance because he doesn't want to go in the snow again. After the girl has departed, chaperoned by her aunt, in the highest dudgeon, young Packer falls asleep in his easy chair and is visited by a messenger from Mars, who puts him through such a set of paces that by the time the pretty girl comes

home again he is a completely transformed character. It would be spoiling a good night's fun to enter into further particulars of the plot. It is one of those rare comedies which, while it keeps the front of you shaking with laughter, manages meanwhile to keep cold-chills running up and down your back.

When Charles Arnold revives his old piece "Hans the Boatman" at the Palace Theatre at Christmas, an important member of the cast will be "Lord Harry," the champion St. Bernard dog of Victoria. This massive creature weighs 14½ stone, and was considered the most savage dog at the Victorian bench shows; but Arnold took him in hand, and trained him so skillfully that now "Lord Harry" romps with the children, and even allows them to ride on his back. He also leads poor blind Hans about. Arnold agreed to purchase him if he succeeded in training him, but when the owner of the dog saw him art declined to part with him, so Arnold has borrowed him for his Sydney season.

The Wellington Amateur Operatic Society is again allowing the public to choose its own opera for production next year. The operas to be submitted to the ballot are "Les Cloches de Corneville," "Dorothy," "The Grand Duchess," "The Mountebanks," "Ruddiger," and "The Yeoman of the Guard."

"Florodora" will soon celebrate the conclusion of a year's run in New York. The occasion will have special honour, and the composer, Leslie Stuart, will conduct the orchestra.

Mrs Patrick Campbell, the famous English actress, will make her first American appearance in New York early in January.

We are all acquainted with Punch's advice to the person who was about to marry: "Don't!" Now comes the English actor-manager, George Alexander, who is idolised by the English matinee maidens, with these bits of sage counsel to the stage-struck:—Don't—unless you can rough it. Don't—unless you can wait. Don't—unless you can eat your heart. Don't—unless you can weep—and win. Unless you can accept as your portion disappointment, delay, weariness, travel, travail, opposition, malice, neglect, and the thousand natural shocks that (stage) flesh is heir to, why—I would din it into you—don't!

"The Thirty Thanes" is the title of a new and very successful English production, the Australian rights of which Mr Musgrove has just secured.

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Graphic Santa Claus' Toy Distribution.

THE CEREMONY AT THE CHORAL HALL.

No doubt all our juvenile readers, especially the "Graphic" cousins, and those who dressed dolls for the competition, will be interested in hearing of the exhibition of dolls, and of the distribution at the Choral Hall on Christmas Eve. Well, then, to begin at the beginning. The arrival of the dolls at the "Graphic" office is not a thing Conna Kate or those helping her is likely to forget. How they did pour in. The office boys seemed to be doing nothing else but running up and down stairs carrying the carefully packed gaily dressed children. For almost all of them were dressed as children. Curiously enough there were only two boy dolls sent in, and one little girl with a turn for humour had made hers a "new woman," with bloomers and a riding jacket. What a work it was ticking off the names and entering them and the ages on a list, and then placing on each doll a number, so that those judging should have no idea of who the competitors were. Every now and then those doing this work had to stop to admire some more beautifully-worked dress than usual, but the most satisfactory part of the whole competition really was the remarkable evenness of the work. The dresses were all so good that it seemed almost impossible to conceive how the judges would get through their work, and, as will be seen later on, they found their task difficult enough. Once all the dolls were unpacked they were taken in huge baskets to Messrs. Philipps & Son's window in Queen-street, and as many as possible were there displayed, and, as all Auckland children know, attracted an immense amount of admiration. Then on Tuesday afternoon all were removed to the Choral Hall, and arranged along the long tables, which were covered with purple cloth. It is a pity all the children who dressed dolls could not have seen the show as the dolls stood out with their dresses all carefully buffed out and arranged by a committee of ladies. All the colours of the rainbow were represented. Pink dolls, blue dolls, yellow dolls, dolls of all colours and of all ages, most beautifully and most neatly dressed. Two of the very best were two babies, one in long clothes, most exquisitely finished by hand, and the other also in long clothes, but machine made. Every detail was complete, one even having her bottle. Then, again, one family of three sisters sent a set of nurse, cook, and housemaid. All were beautifully done. The nurse was a regular hospital professional, and had two medals, a little note book and a pencil, the red cross badge, and a tiny little thermometer for taking the patient's temperature. The housemaid had a little silver with cards and letters for the "Graphic" and was most cleverly dressed in black, with the neatest of