

Descriptive Music.

"It's your benefit, you know," said the stage manager to the leading lady. "You just tell me what you want done here and I'll get it done for you."

This was in the days when summer stock companies were almost unknown, but at the Central Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers a munificent Government provided a theatre, a company of players, and even a hotel for them to live in. At the end of each summer one or two favourites had benefits, for which they chose the plays themselves.

The leading lady had chosen "Leah, the Forsaken," and the question at this moment under discussion concerned the choice of the music which should accompany her last entrance. It was the final rehearsal, and it was late in the afternoon, and very hot. The leading lady looked wearily at the stage manager, and said, "Oh! I don't know. Something descriptive that will give me time for a little pantomime." She turned to the leader of the military band, who was also the leader of the orchestra. "You just choose something that will give me time to show my feelings at getting home; she's dying, you know, and she's almost crazy."

"All right," said the leader.

"Just something appropriate," said the stage manager. "The wanderer returneth"—that sort of thing. She's been away a long time, and the mob's stoned her down here near where she used to live, and all that. See?"

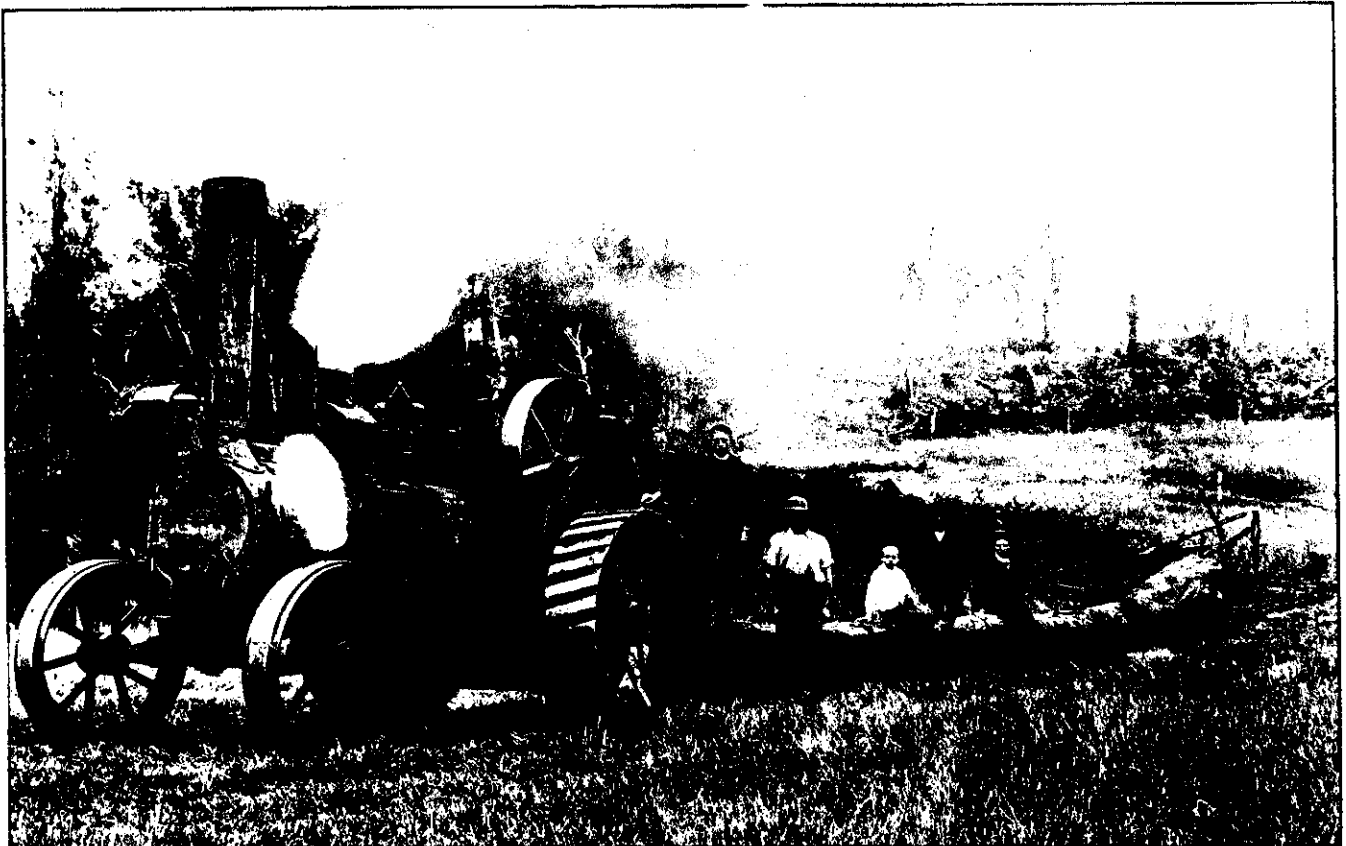
"All right," said the leader.

That night the benefit was a big success. The leading lady was very popular; the house was crowded both with townspeople and with soldiers, and the enthusiasm made acting easy. The leading lady stood in the entrance, elaborately ragged, and with her dishevelled hair about her shoulders. The moment for her great last entrance had come; she stood poised for its weariness, awaiting the first bar of the descriptive music. The leader lifted his baton, and there burst upon the air the melody of his choice. It was, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home."



THE HARP OF ERIN.

Executed in butter by Mrs. George Hand, and exhibited at the Hawke's Bay Autumn Show, where it created much interest.



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HAULING LOGS FROM THE BUSH AT TUAKAU.