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On Tuesday evening, after this paper went to press, the Musgrove Shakespearean Company appeared in what is absolutely unquestionably the most perfect and most magnificent production which has ever been placed on the boards of a colonial theatre. It being manifestly impossible to criticise or commend a thing before witnessing the same, it might legitimately be asked how such an opinion could be here laid down. Knowing that a week must elapse before this paper could comment on "A Midsummer Night's Dream," the critic thereof stunted permission to attend a final rehearsal of the same in His Majesty's Theatre. The very fact of having a full and most rigid rehearsal of the play, which has been running for months now in Australian and English theatres, will indicate the scrupulous and infinite care which has been lavished on the production. Space will not permit of a detailed eulogy—for nothing else is possible—in this issue. The superb completeness of the performance in every single particular is a theme on which one could effectively enlarge for a column or more, but the hucyete, like the tide, waits for no man, and it may not be. Let it then be said briefly and emphatically, and with due sense of responsibility, and dislike of gush, that no finer conception of a most beautiful comedy could be possibly imagined. Miraculous as are the stage effects—and miraculous is the only word—in

acting, and beauty in elocutionary effect, have not been one iota subordinated to them. Exquisite as is the wood scene in the second act, where Titania and her train enter, a scene whose marvels grow and grow on the spectator throughout the act, it is no whit more beautiful than the culture with which Titania speaks her matchless lines of blank verse, or the delightfulness of the beautifully-sung fairy lullaby. The masterpiece, from a stagecraft point of view, is, of course, the famous dawn scene in act 4, which theatrical wonder cannot well be described in a few lines of bald print. Its beauties unfolding themselves in slow degrees to a nocturne of Chopin, really well played by a large and exceedingly fine orchestra, will ever remain in the minds of those who see it, as soberly and literally one of the sights and enjoyments of a lifetime. The acting throughout is as close to perfection as heart could desire, and it may be said without hesitation that anyone who can afford to see this production and does not do so commits a blunder of incredible stupidity. No single company which has ever come to New Zealand has ever attempted such a performance, no company has ever earned from a responsible paper more sincere, more emphatic, or more worthy commendation than it seems the duty of the writer to here bestow.

The Maggie Moore season in Auckland did not open too brilliantly with "Killarney" which proved, on the first night at all events, a weak play—decidedly weakly played. With the single exception of Miss Moore, who also was scarcely up to her usual form, the players seemed either careless, or else ill at ease, and the whole performance, in acting, staging, and general setting, smacked more of the amateur than the professional stage.

Miss Moore retains a marvellous vitality and vivacity, but it must be reluctantly confessed her singing is not what it was, and, after all, one has no right to expect it to be so. "Killarney" was played two nights, and on Tuesday evening, after we went to press, "The Widow from Japan" was to be staged; and that again is to be followed in due course by the ever-popular "Struck Oil," in which Miss Moore is always at her very best.

Mr and Mrs John Prouse and Miss Prouse, of Wellington, were in London when the last mail left. Mr Prouse suffered somewhat severely after his departure from New York from the effects of the heat experienced while he was in that city, and the assistance of a medical man had to be obtained on his arrival in Liverpool, where he had to rest for a few days before proceeding to London.

Recognising the very arduous and exceedingly good work which Mr Montague, of Auckland, had done in forming the Shakespeare Society, which has been such a success during the winter season, the members of that society made Mr. Montague the recipient of a small souvenir of their gratitude and goodwill last week in the shape of a handsome gold sovereign case. Mr. Campbell (president of the society) made the presentation on behalf of the members, and Mr. Montague, who was obviously taken very completely by surprise, responded in felicitous terms.

"Mistakes Will Happen." Messrs Geach and Willoughby's latest "boom" in the laughter-making line, commenced work in earnest in Dunedin last week, and is reported from trustworthy sources to be excruciatingly funny. The company work leisurely North, and have magnificent dates, including Carnival Week in Christchurch, and Christmas holidays in Auckland. The luck of the firm (or is it good management?) evidently keeps in, and a host of friends of the genial pair will hope it may long continue to do so.

The engagement is announced of Mrs Bode, of East Melbourne, and Mr Carlyle Smythe, musical and dramatic critic of the "Argus," and son of Mr R. S. Smythe.

Madame Emily Soldene met Mrs Herrick Knowles (Lily Titterton) in London recently. Mr and Mrs Knowles—and baby—will return to Sydney shortly.

The "San Francisco Dramatic News" says that when the Frawley Company returns to America, in about a year's time, Mr Frawley expects to engage extensively in other theatrical interests in Australia.

A well-known teacher of music in the city has methods which are peculiarly abrupt. A new pupil had come to him for an opinion, and after listening to her for some time, he said suddenly, "Why do you not wear earrings?" The question was so sudden, and to the poor girl so extraordinary, that she could only stammer, "Earrings! Why?" "Well, you might just as well use your ears for something," said the teacher. "They are no good for music."

Miss Ada Crossley is decidedly amused at the care Mr Williamson takes of her, in case she should be fatigued for her concerts. He would not allow her to shake hands at the Mayoral reception, and watches over her carefully. Miss Crossley relates how in England she has travelled miles to sing at a concert in the afternoon, then returned to town, dressing in the train, just in time to sing at an evening concert, or has travelled practically all day and night between two concerts.

Mr Harry Rickards, as the result of his present trip to England, has arranged for his first contingent of new performers, and they are already on their way to Australia. The following performers are coming by the Oroya—Madame Vulcania, a female Sandow; Atlas, an athlete; Johnson, a musical comedian; and Mrs Sims Reeves, soprano. With the exception of the widow of the famous English tenor, the new artists will open in Melbourne at the Opera House, on October 24. Mrs Reeves will make her Australian debut at the Tivoli Theatre, Sydney, on October 31. Mr Rickards has also engaged the Dunmonds, a company of Parisian minstrels, who are coming to Australia by way of America, and are due here this month.

There have been ructions in the Pollard Opera Company, says the "Critic," and Miss Nina Osborne, who has made a decided hit over there, and become a great favourite with the public, has left their ranks. The trouble culminated at

Johannesburg, where the comedian, Mr. Percy, had painted up the scenery, and asked as a favour that his wife should play "Mimosa San." His request was granted, and Miss Osborne was asked to play "Tommy." After making such a hit there, this was rather too much, especially as she had played a better part for Mr. Williamson, with a superior all-round company, more especially as Miss Ransay, who was playing "Mimosa," was promoted from the chorus, and had only played it once in New Zealand, as understudy. A New Zealand night was given during the run of "Geisha," and so great a favourite was Miss Osborne, that spite of the fact that she was no longer a member of the company, she was invited to be present with a theatre party, and was presented, like the principals, with a souvenir of the occasion, a small gold medalion, with on one side—"N.Z. night, Jo'burg," and the other the initials of the recipient and Kia-ora. After the performance they gave a supper on the stage. The company left for Petermaritzburg at the end of September.

Apropos of Miss Osborne, who, when in New Zealand, was the bosom friend of Miss May Beatty, the young lady's many admirers in this colony will hear with mingled feelings the news that she will not return to the colonies, as she is going to marry and settle in South Africa. By all accounts her fiancée is a fine fellow, Major W. J. Robertson, of the Capetown Highlanders, who was all through the South African campaign. Her Melbourne friends, while delighted to hear of her happiness, regret that it will mean a great loss to them, for she is such a sterling little woman, a universal favourite where personally known, and a staunch friend. Miss Osborne has proved a great favourite with Pollards' company in South Africa, but she has lately succeeded from its ranks, and is staying with friends.

"Mark Hambourg, who regretfully describes himself as 'a bundle of nerves,' ascribes his poor health to overwork in childhood (says the "Bulletin"). They even dragged me out of bed at night to practise," says the victim bitterly. Nowadays the word of the successful Mark is regarded as law by his relatives, and it is owing to him that brother Boris is allowed to take up athletics and spend some of his time in amusing himself. "He may thank me that there remains curl in his hair and colour in his cheek," says Mark, scanning with complacency the comely bellist, who, for his part, says he would gladly barter his superior digestion and nerves for a chance of ever landing in the same musical street as his gifted elder brother."

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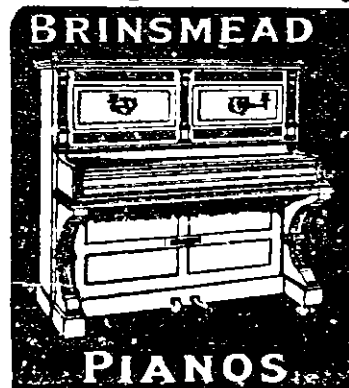
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