

Music and Drama.

By BAYREUTH.

BOOKINGS.

(Dates Subject to Alteration.)

AUCKLAND—HIS MAJESTY'S.

October 20 to November 4—Fred Graham.
November 17 to 19—Mr. Potter.
November 21 to 26—Auckland Competitions Society.
November 28 to December 3—MacMahon Bros.
December 5 to 17—Meynell and Gunn (George Witherby).
December 19 to 24—MacMahon Bros.
December 26 (three weeks' season)—Allan Hamilton.

THE OPERA HOUSE.

In Season—Fuller's Pictures.

TIVOLI.

Vaudeville (permanent).

WELLINGTON—OPERA HOUSE.

Oct. 27 to Nov. 5—"Lover's Lane" Company.
Nov. 12 to Nov. 24—MacMahon's Pictures.
December 21, six weeks' season—J. C. Williamson.

THEATRE ROYAL.

Vaudeville (permanent).

Lewis Waller Coming to Australia.

A London cable dated 24th October says:—Mr. Lewis Waller, the well-known actor-manager, will appear with a full London company in Australia in 1912 under the management of Clarke and Meynell.

MESSRS. CLARKE AND MEYNELL are to be congratulated on having secured for his first appearance in Australia a very popular and handsome actor, in Lewis Waller. The well-known actor-manager, whose later productions have been associated with the Lyric Theatre in Shaftesbury-avenue, has had a very varied career in the drama. He made his first appearance with the late J. L. Toole in 1883, and ten years subsequently made his debut with Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree as Orestes in "Hypatia" at the Haymarket. In 1893 Waller became a joint lessee of the historic old theatre, and staged Oscar Wilde's "An Ideal Husband." After further Shakespearean and other productions under Tree, the actor-manager made a big impression by a spectacular production of "Henry V." at the Lyceum Theatre in 1899, and followed up by a still greater popular success at the Comedy Theatre two years later with "Monsieur Beaucaire," the first production of which ran over 400 nights. Waller makes a popular idol as Beaucaire, and even though he has had many revivals of the piece, he is always sure of a house when the piece is announced.

Until four years ago, he was for some time lessee of the old Imperial Theatre, in Westminster, which lately has disappeared. It was here he produced a large number of plays, including Conan Doyle's "Brigadier Gerard." In 1906 he went to the Lyric, where immensely successful revivals of the last-named play and "Beaucaire" were given. "Othello," with himself in the title role, and H. B. Irving as Iago, was also one of his successes. In the last three years none of his productions can be said to have been money-makers. The best of them were "Robin Hood" and the American play, "A White Man." The drama in London of recent years has felt severely the competition of the music-halls and theatres of variety. In common with others, Waller has undoubtedly felt the brunt of it. When he was not touring, revivals of his former successes have always ensured him a conspicuous share of the support of the London public. His latest effort this season at the Lyric is the resuscitation of Sheridan's familiar old classic, "The Rivals," which is spoken of with enthusiasm by several London dailies. During his career Waller has been commended to appear before Royalty at Windsor Castle three times.

A Popular Idol.

Waller is an actor of exceeding good looks, commanding stature and a way with him that goes right to the hearts

of his audience. His claims on the intellectual drama cannot be recognised as of much consequence, particularly as in later years he has left severely alone efforts of his younger days, and plunged instead into spectacular productions. He fills a heroic part with all the histrionic graces that are best suited to capture the "popular" audience. He uses his mellifluous resonant voice with magnificent effect, and there is probably no actor of the day who has commanded the whole-souled admiration of that large section of the fair sex which delights in a handsome, bold, dashing cavalier. For his fifty years, he is a well preserved, commanding figure, with clear cut, clean-shaven features, particularly well cast for the roles he has occupied with conspicuous success in the past. He has probably quite eighteen months to run yet before his advent to Australia will be due, and in that time, especially in London, a lot of changes can take place. One can but hope the idol of the great army of Londoners who love stage heroes

has made Vienna the birthplace of many popular productions like "The Merry Widow" and "A Waltz Dream." Apart altogether from its characteristic philosophy, "Arms and the Man" is capital fun, witty, acute, brilliant, and "The Chocolate Soldier" is most amusing when it is most Slavonian. The libretto used by Herr Straus is described as "an unauthorised parody," written by Herr Bernauer and Jacobson, and done into English by the American, Mr. Stanislaus Staage.

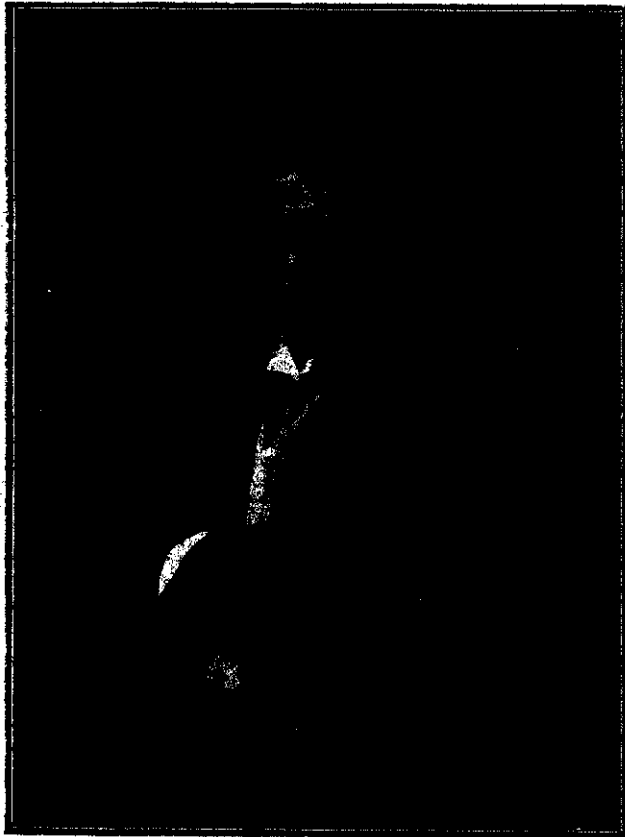
Changed Names.

The names of the characters are changed. Bluntschli becomes Bumerli, Raina becomes Nadina, Petkoff becomes Popoff (an ancient jest-name this), and so on. Some of the lines almost sound like Shaw. One or two of the characters retain the Shaw spirit, notably the Chocolate Soldier himself. Generally the whole theme has been broadened, perhaps inevitably, but enough of the original remains to make this new musical piece quite distinctive.

Nadina, the Bulgarian heroine, is still a love-sick maiden. Bumerli remains the practical Swiss soldier of fortune, preferring to fill his pockets with chocolates rather than cartridges. Popoff is an amorous elderly comedian, and Alexis (who used to be Sergius), the Bulgarian hero whose runaway horse forces him to lead the charge, and who is now (as he is

The Foreign Invasion of Britain.

Writing in the "Musical Standard," Arthur Poyser has some characteristic remarks to pass on the invasion of England by these "foreign" light operas:—"London is losing its own soul. It is acquiring, by adoption, the soul of Vienna. Our popular music-makers live and have their being on the banks of the Danube. They send us Merry Widows, Dollar Princesses, Girls in the Train, and throw in a Waltz Dream or two, and we accept them all. We are becoming the musical dumping-ground of Europe. We talk of invasion; the invasion has begun in a much more serious way than the War Office anticipated. Our conquerors come not in ships of war; their weapons are not sword and musket. They come in stage trappings, their battery is that of the orchestra, they lure us to destruction by irresistible melody, and down we fall before them. At one time, not so many years ago, we Englishmen would proudly boast of a school of light opera that no other nation could equal for delicacy, for wit, for musical charm. We possessed the first librettist and comic opera composer in the world. We slapped our chests, pressed our silk hats more firmly on our heads, struck the ground with our walking-sticks, glared in defiance at the rest of Europe through our monocles, and exclaimed: 'England before all!' At our academies we were training young bloods to carry on the proud tradition when the old hands laid down the pen. We were proud, too, of our academies, and we had real Doctors of Music at the head of them. One genuine Doctor of Music was worth twenty of those foreign music-men, and we were not afraid to say so. We did not even touch wood after making the boast. Our musical army was invincible; we slept secure in our beds. In addition to our regular army in London, we had a fine reserve of Territorials, who ran our provincial musical festivals. Our barrack-yard drill was excellent; our youngsters could turn out immaculate fugues and canons; and could imitate Brahms to perfection. Oh, canons, what a happy musical family party we were, sitting down snugly behind our battlements and calling our souls our own! The future was well, for we were under the command of Major Mackenzie, General Stanford, and Colonel Parry. But after a time we began to realise that the grass was growing on our defences; that our young academic rough-riders were not of the stuff to make a music hero; that our commanders were becoming imprisoned in a network of tape of ruddy hue; that there were three deserters from our academic camp, and that these "soldiers three" had opened the main portcullis and let in the enemy. This main gate and two others had been opened to the foe. Henry J. Wood had let the Russians in at one gate; Beecham had admitted the French and Germans at another; and George Edwardes had unlocked the third and welcomed the musicians of Vienna. Then the band began to play. But it was not our band. Our puny academic defences had fallen without a shot being fired; the fields of orchestral music, of grand opera, of light opera were won without resistance. Our generals and colonels were discovered on their marrow bones, amid the long, rank grass inside the dismantled fortifications, grouped round the clipped statue of Brahms. And so was England conquered and here, at the Lyric Theatre, we have, in "The Chocolate Soldier," one of the most charming light operas—as regards the music—it is possible to imagine. A score full of originality, of invention, of unfeigned melodic charm, of skilful characterisation, of strength, delicacy, and masterly management of detail. Is it written by any of the hundreds of young Englishmen we have been training in the academic barrack-yard all these twenty years and more? No. It is from the pen of 'one of our conquerors.' Vienna has shown us how to write light opera; if we are wise we will learn our lesson while we may and re-organise our musical standing army. From the rise of the curtain (there is no overture or prelude) to its fall again the flow of delightful music goes on almost unceasingly. There is no padding, no dull moment, no academic tomfoolery. Most of the music suggests a re-incarnation of Mozart with twentieth century orchestral methods at his command."



TO VISIT AUSTRALIA IN 1912.
Mr Lewis Waller, the well-known London actor, who has contracted with Clarke and Meynell to appear in Australia in 1912.

and romantic sensational dramas will repeat his successes on this side of the world with all that vitality and vigour he has shown in London during the past. It is to be hoped that Messrs. Clarke and Meynell have been able to include New Zealand, and not confine the tour to Australia, as was done with the recent Oscar Asche-Lily Brayton performances.

Parody on Shaw Play.

"The Chocolate Soldier," played for the first time in England recently, is said to be the nearest approach to a Gilbert and Sullivan opera that London has seen since the old came to that unexampled series. The plot, it will be recalled, is based on Mr Bernard Shaw's "Arms and the Man," and is at once coherent and fantastic. The music by Oscar Straus is described as delightfully liltful, and conceived in that lighter, easy vein which

described in the original) "an operatic tenor." The first act is almost identical with Mr. Shaw's play, and afterwards the new incidents are generally in the picture.

Herr Straus' score first and foremost possesses a waltz that was being whistled or hummed by nine out of every ten of the audience as they left the theatre on the night of the first production. This particular waltz is haunting. It is said you must whistle it. It was cheered wildly half an hour after the performance began. It was used again as the finale of Act II, and it secured a "curtain" of vehement applause, and after the play was over the orchestra rendered the waltz once more, and the gallery demanded an encore. The chocolate cream waltz is quite certain to be the tune of the time. No barrel-organ and no Cinderella will be complete without it.