

Blood and Banter.

The Hamilton-Maxwell combination have staged an unusually bloodthirsty melodrama in Sydney in Walter Howard's play, "Whip Men Love Women." What the title has to do with the story is somewhat obscure. From it one would expect to hear a metaphysical dissertation or an acute analysis of the sex question, but alas! it is only a melodrama—otherwise a commonplace, blatant production of the sensational type, in which one Captain Staniloff, of the Russian secret service plots the ruin of his rival in love, Gerald Fielding, a young English artist, and incidentally seeks to compass the death of anybody else who happens to stand in his path. The packed audience which witnessed the opening night's performance in Sydney proved thoroughly receptive, and took the hero and heroine to its collective heart at once, so that whenever Fielding rushed in and felled the villain with a blow, exclaiming "Take that, you hound!" there was a perfect volley of cheering.

Fielding, of course, is wrongfully accused of murder. A Russian girl, Muriel Zoluski, who tries to stab him, believing him to have been responsible for the death of her brother—another of Staniloff's crimes, naturally—is herself slightly wounded by the stiletto, but as it has been dipped into some mysterious potion, she falls into a lethargy which is mistaken for death. Staniloff, fostering the idea that she has been murdered, kills the only other man who knows the secret, an Indian doctor; but with his last breath Chundia Singh communicates to dear Violet the truth about the potion, and gives her a cordial which will restore the girl. Hence, when dear Violet appears, almost breathless, when the funeral procession is on its way, and shouts "Stop!" the villain trembles because he knows what is coming, and the audience, also in the secret, applauds delightedly. The procession goes back into the wings and presently the Russian girl in her burial clothes, with the vivid lighting on her white face, a startling apparition, stands in the doorway—back from the cardboard coffin! From this point the descent of the villain is easy. However, he makes a last grand effort when he resorts to treachery in a duel with Fielding. The artist, with true melodramatic nobility, spares his life, but when Staniloff is about to beat a hasty retreat, Muriel Zoluski suddenly appears, also calling out "Stop!" and shoots him in revenge for the death of her brother.

Sydney "bellow-drammers" are evidently having an orgy of blood and snuff.

The Yellow Peril on the German Stage.

Etrope has produced a companion piece to "An Englishman's Home." In the latter play an English colonel embodied England's panicky fear of the Germans. "Typhoon," a sensational new play by a Hungarian playwright, portrays with more artistic restraint Europe's apprehension of the "yellow peril." The little men who amuse us in "The Mikado" assume a threatening aspect in Melciador Lengyel's "Typhoon." This "Typhoon" swept the German stage shortly after "Chantecler's" crowing in Paris; the effect upon the box office receipts of the German metropolises was as exhilarating as that of Rostand's play in the city of Sarah Bernhardt.

Lengyel's play deals with a group of Japanese residents in Paris—in the Vienna production they were living in Berlin—students, men of business and professional men. Each one of these is entrusted by his country with a secret mission, and ceaselessly, resistlessly, devotes himself to its fulfilment. These Japanese, according to the "Deutsche Rundschau," are shown with a biting distinctness, without sympathy, but with a certain air of mystery which is mingled—a sentiment shared by so many of the audience that it explains in part the strong appeal of the piece. The most important member of the colony is apparently Dr. Nitobe Tokeramio, to whom has been entrusted a statistical report upon French conditions with important political bearing; the others admire and respect him, but think it just as well to keep him under secret surveillance, exercised by old Kobayashi, partly because his mission is of such importance, partly because his conduct will certainly bear watching. For Tokeramio has fallen under the charm of a Parisian coquette, Helene Laroche, brilliant, beautiful and depraved. Love, always dangerous to the conspirator, would in this case be fatal. Helene's charm for Tokeramio is, briefly, the at-

traction of evil; he knows all she is, cynical and corrupt, and yet cannot break away from her. Her interest in him, however, has ceased as perversely as it began, and her instinctive repulsion becomes more and more unconcealed. They come at last to a bitter quarrel; Helene works herself into a fury, and throws into his face a stinging insult to his yellow skin. It puts him beside himself, and the woman, delighted at having broken down the self-control of one always before so calm and contained, flings at him one last unendurable epithet. And he strangles her.

The deed is no sooner done than his reason reasserts itself; going to the telephone, he summons the fellowship. They decide that Tokeramio's mission is too important to be endangered; someone else must take the deed upon himself. They draw lots; the choice falls upon Hironari, the youngest of all; they further convince him that his life is the least serviceable to the fatherland. The scene plays with surprising naturalness; it is pure Orient in the heart of Western civilisation—or what Western civilisation believes to be pure Orient.

The third act is full of thrills. It shows the trial—which goes on at first according to the plan arranged at the secret council. Hironari makes his confession; one after the other the Japanese confirm it with seemingly artless testimony. At last a friend of Helene's, an actress, named Therese Mounier, takes the stand. More by her looks than by her words, she shows that she

at Wyndham's Theatre is "Nobody's Daughter," by the lady dramatist who writes under the name of George Paston. "Without being a great play," writes a critic, "either in its comedy or its more serious drama, it is distinctly happy in its blend of domestic humour with what very nearly becomes domestic tragedy." A story of English family life, distasteful in itself, is told, with a wealth of drama and humour, in "Nobody's Daughter."

A winsome nineteen-year-old girl, prettily played by Miss Rosalie Toller, is the child of Mrs. Frampton (Miss Lilian Faithwaite) and Colonel Torrens, V.C. (Mr. Sydney Valentine). After the birth of Honora May, the Colonel married a practical little woman of the suffragist type (Miss Henrietta Watson), and his partner in guilt became the wife of Mr. Frampton, a manager of pottery works (Mr. Gerald du Maurier).

Both marriages were exceedingly happy, the couples being devoted to each other. The Colonel and the manager's wife continued to keep their skeleton locked securely in the cupboard for nearly twenty years, when the play opens and the trouble begins.

Honora.

Honora May has been secretly reared for them in a country cottage by an old nurse, Christine Grant (Miss Mary Rorke), whom Mrs. Frampton not unjustly derides as "a Calvinistic cat." She is ignorant of her parentage, and when Mrs. Frampton pays one of her infrequent visits to the cottage, she is distressed to find that the filial affection

playful investigations lead him to doubt the rather lame story hatched up by his wife and his friend, while his dreadful intuition is promptly confirmed by the confusion of the one and the agony of the other. Frampton's quick change from comedy to tragedy—for he is no deliberate detective—is accomplished with most effective skill by Mr. du Maurier in his transition from nonchalance to earnest intensity. The man cannot forgive his wife for her concealment of the fact that she is the mother of "nobody's child," and his punishment of the unhappy woman by leaving her seems inevitable until wiser counsels prevail from an unexpected quarter. The revelation which has stunned Mrs. Frampton's husband has not greatly surprised the Colonel's shrewder, but not less affectionate wife, who is, moreover, level-headed enough to recognise the futile injustice of blaming people for faithlessness to other people before they have ever met. Mrs. Frampton's appeal culminates in the big scene of the play, and in its success fairly brought down the house on the first night of production. The play was said to be very finely acted, but doubts are evident as to its ultimate success on the boards.

First Performance in Britain.

When the mail left London, rehearsals were in progress for the first production in England under the leadership of Mr. Thomas Beecham, of Eugene d'Alber's opera "Tiefand." Up to the end of February last his opera had been sung upon the Continent no fewer than 1854 times. It was first produced in Prague in 1903. It one year alone it was performed 647 times, a number almost equal to the number of times "Carmen" has been sung in a single year. The work has been translated into Italian, Czech, Dutch, Danish, Swedish and other languages. In Berlin alone it had been sung 273 times up to the end of February. The English translation of Rudolph Lothar's libretto is by R. H. Elkin, a libretto described as one of "strong human interest and dramatic power."

The story is intensely dramatic. In "Tiefand," as in "Fandahimo," there are a prelude and two acts. The scene of the prelude is laid amid the picturesque, grassy slopes of the Pyrenees, where, in the small hours of the morning, two shepherds, Pedro and Nando, are discovered engaged in discussing their dreams—dreams mostly of love. Pedro, a good-hearted, simply-minded lad of extremely powerful physique, deems marriage to be the culmination point of earthly happiness. Nando, sceptical and something of a cynic, endeavours to disillusion him, but in vain. Both shepherds are sons of Sebastiano, an unprincipled, sensual man, owner of vast estates but none the less hard pressed for a considerable sum of his many creditors. The prelude closes with Pedro proposing marriage to Martha, Sebastiano's mistress, though Pedro is not aware of the fact that she is his mistress. This is, however, common talk amongst the villagers. Sebastiano himself is desirous that Martha should wed Pedro; indeed, he has arranged that she shall marry him, for not only is she about to become a mother, but Sebastiano is anxious to marry a certain woman of wealth and of his own rank in life, which will enable him to pay his debts. At the same time he intends to continue his relations with Martha after his marriage and hers. In the first act, the scene of which is laid in the village down in the valley, Pedro's marriage with Martha has just taken place and the villagers have all assembled to celebrate the event and make merry. Though Pedro still believes his bride to be immaculate, Martha has all along been under the impression that Pedro has married her well knowing the relations that have existed between Sebastiano and herself. The villagers depart. It is night. Pedro and Martha are alone in their mill, the mill that has been placed at Martha's disposal by Sebastiano. Martha, discovering that Pedro is ignorant of what has happened to her, is filled with dismay. In a very pathetic scene Martha hints unmistakably the truth to Pedro, apprising him also of her condition. Almost as she finishes doing so and Pedro is becoming distraught through disappointment and rage, a number of villagers are heard without, singing in mockery and taunting Pedro with his stupidity, his blindness, being to the verge of madness, Pedro vows vengeance upon the betrayer of his bride.



THE LEADING LADY AT THE CLOSE OF THE SEASON.

suspects Tokeramio of the murder. All at once he breaks under the strain of passion and remorse, and accuses himself of the crime. But the Japanese instantly readjust to meet the crisis; old Kobayashi declares that Hironari is the son of an illustrious house, and lets it appear that Tokeramio, out of devotion, has taken upon himself the crime of the young nobleman, committed as it was in hot blood. The story—evolved on the instant—seems to fit the judge's ideas of Japanese feudal devotion, and one by one the Japanese build up anew the fabric of testimony until Hironari is condemned to a long imprisonment. The act-drop falls on Tokeramio free to fulfil his mission, free from both his perils.

But he is no longer the same. He cannot forget his love or his crime. Passion and remorse are destroying him; he feverishly uses his last strength to complete the report. But he associates no more with the fellowship; his only friends are now Therese, Helene's companion, and Charles Renard-Bensky, an author, her lover. With these he can talk of the dead woman. He has become a man without a country—a pariah of the soul.

A New Actor-Manager in London.

A new actor-manager, in the person of Gerald du Maurier, one of the cleverest and quite the most versatile of younger comedians in England, has made his first venture in London. The opening piece

for which she craves is being lavished by Honora May on the motherly Christine. A crisis in Honora's life leads to desperate measures. The girl has fallen in love with Will Leonard (Mr. Marsh Allen), a mechanic, a good hearty fellow, but socially not her equal. Only one inducement will tempt Honora May to postpone her marriage—an invitation to live for a time with her so-called aunt, Mrs. Frampton. The risk is tremendous, but the father and mother agree to take it in the hope that contact with her own people will alter the girl's outlook on life.

A delightful scene, rich in feminine drollery, illustrates the introduction of Honora May into a home of wealth and luxury. "Oh!" she exclaims, "the scrumptious food that seems to come by magic! And the clothes—oh, the ripping clothes!" Beautiful Honora May, half buried in bonnet-boxes, with voluble Mr. Du Maurier playing the part of miliner, and trying on hat after hat ("Oh, to be nineteen with a new hat!") is a sight that should draw the town.

The Crash.

At the end of the third act, and with the return upon the scene of Honora's strict, old Calvinist nurse, and of her artizan sweetheart, comes the crash. Half in joke Frampton has been seeking to provide his pretty guest with relations, and has been trying to find out something more about her apparently non-existent family than her guardian seems to know. Then, suddenly, his