

calmness, coupled with the use of a mysterious powder. Dan protests that he is a sinful man, who may not go among his people. The priest promptly absolves him, and sets him about his business of healing. So, with the priest's cloak and crucifix, and the wonderful powder, Dan goes forth to "succour and save his people—his task and his atonement."

The powder is miraculous. It cures everybody; it even cures the Deemster, who is reduced to beg life from Dan. There was one dose left, and as Dan thought he had the disease himself, his nobility in giving his one chance to the Deemster set the seal on his atonement. Apparently, however, he was mistaken about his own case, for in the last scene, which took us back to the Tynwald hill, he promised to live because Mona loved him, and there, to the acclamations of the crowd, the Bishop revoked his extraordinary excommunication, and all was well.

The play, according to all accounts, requires copious use for the handkerchiefs of the audience, and, on the whole, it seems to be a characteristic blubby and mawkish production designed to make dollars out of human foolishness.

Moral or Immoral.

Writing in "The Review of Reviews," W. T. Stead has something to say apropos of the definite Eternal Question, which is well worth repeating. "Of the sermons," he writes, "in this new morality play the worst is the last, in which the Magdalen is made to philosophise upon the wisdom and justice of the eternal law by which the woman who falls is damned for all eternity, whereas for the man who made her stumble there is always a place of repentance. But for such arrangement, she asks, what inducement would there be for good women to preserve their virtue? Was there ever a more detestable sentiment put in the mouth of a woman? If Mr Hall Caine goes on like this, we shall have to call his "Eternal" not the morality, but the immorality play of our time."

It seems to me there is no question about it. Hall Caine, in the words of George Meredith, "fiddles harmonies on the strings of sensualism." He is the one dramatist of the day above all others who exploits sex-questions for no apparent lofty purpose. But because he does it under a guise of pulling sentimentality his plays are passed by the British censor, whilst a virile and anti-septic production like "Mrs Warren's Profession" is turned down with hushed voices and unctuous respectability. It is only too true that genius has to suffer the indignities which stupidity thrusts upon it.

Auckland Orchestral Society.

The fourth concert of the Auckland Orchestral Society's present season, under Herr Wielaert, was not productive of any important novelties, but the repetition of Carl Goldmark's gorgeous overture to "Sakuntala" and the Sibelius tone poem, "Finlandia," were very much to be welcomed. The former is a complex work, rich in chromatic effects, which have become such a distinguishing feature of modern orchestral music. The score offers considerable technical difficulties and probably for that reason there was no marked improvement on the rendering given at the previous concert, although there was a little more coherence, and most of the performers seemed to respond more readily to the conductor. The tone poem from the back of the hall on the second night did not sound as well as the previous production of this sublime work, which cannot fail but to attract for the vigour and richness of the scoring. The brass completely overshadowed the rest of the band, and once or twice blared rather inconsiderately. The nocturne from the incidental music to "A Midsummer Night's Dream" proved a popular revival, and although the fundamental weaknesses of the orchestra in the crudities of the second violins and the viola, the roughness of legato from the basses were conspicuous, the number was very well received. The overture to "King Manfred," by Reincke, the successor of Mendelssohn in Leipzig, was also given as an opening number, but owing to the restlessness of the audience, sundry whisperings at the back, and the crackling of programmes, it was impossible to form any estimate of what seemed to be a fine performance of this beautiful work. Mr. O. E. Farrow was the vocalist of the evening, singing Gounod's "She Alone Charmeth My Sadness" and "The Two Grenadiers" (Schumann). Both items were encored. Mr. Leslie Moses also gave a Cor Anglais solo, "Lebe Wohl" (Moen), which was warmly applauded.

A Progressive Proposal.

A movement is on foot in Devonport, the picturesque borough that smiles at Auckland from across the water, to found a musical society. The initial proposal for bringing the possibilities of such a society under the notice of the public is to take the form of a light opera, rehearsals for which are now so advanced as to permit of the performance taking place on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd December at Post Hall. The opera is "Chilperic," a humorous work written by Herve a little over forty years ago, which has had a great vogue in its day. There are some people in Auckland today who will recall the performance of the opera given by the Choral Society in 1872. The story is laid in the long ago, when France was three kingdoms, and Chilperic was the autocrat of autocrats, whose domestic affairs were conducted much on the same lines as those of Henry VIII's. It is on various happenings, in which Fredegonda, a pretty and ambitious maid, takes a prominent part, that the fabric of the opera is reared, and very laughable it is said to be. The cast for the Devonport production is as follows:—Chilperic, Mr Colin Cardno; Siegbert, Mr Leo Whittaker; Dr. Senna, Mr A. Hobbs; Fatout, Mr Binnington; Divitiaicus, Mr H. P. Oaken; Laundry, Mr A. Cardno; Don Nervoso, Mr B. Buddle; Alfred, Mr H. Gray; Fredegonda, Miss Knight; Brunehaut, Miss G. Evans; Galswinda, Miss E. Carter. In addition, there will be a number of pages, peasants, Druids, cour-

teers, and dancers. The period permits of very picturesque costumes being employed, and it is certain that the forthcoming production will be anticipated with a good deal of interest. The proceeds of the performance are to be devoted towards the formation of the proposed musical society. There are, all told, 52 performers, who will be under the direction of Mrs Sutherland (conductor) and Mr E. J. Haynes (stage manager). Mr Carl Prime will take the lead in the orchestra.

Nothing Succeeds Like Success.

Nobody could have foretold with certainty that the Auckland Competitions in the first year of existence would leap into instant success. The chances were all against it. Auckland is notoriously a hard place to stir up in some matters that touch the individual pocket. The people have a reputation for seeking the pleasures of the seaside and the picture shows, but that reputation only concerns a section of the populace in so far that it implies indifference to artistic and civic welfare. There is no doubt that there is a considerable number of people in Auckland who are genuinely interested in the endeavours of the community to promote intellectual culture and emotional refinement. The support of its musical societies, the maintenance of painting, and the activities of dramatic clubs all point to it. In recent years the capital city, too, has been making noticeable strides in a similar direction—more particularly in music. After some passive years of indifference,

Clarke (elocution, etc.)—gave a popular decision. The full report of the proceedings must now wait till next week.

Stray Notes.

Dr. Charles Harris has suggested in England that at all concerts at which his Imperial Choir sings they should open with "God Save the King," immediately at the finish of which the choir should give three rousing cheers. This, of course, is all very fine and Imperial, but hardly likely to improve the tone of the voices for the next number. One of the Home journals suggests that the three cheers should come in as a finale to the concert—but perhaps Dr.



BETWEEN THE ACTS.

The girl he left behind him.

Wellington seems to have suddenly awakened to the fact that the cultivation of the arts is just as important a factor in the promotion of social well-being as drains and wood-paving are. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the capital, which ought to be in the van in the manifestation of progressive thought, should have had to abandon the projected competitions. That it was a mistake, the example and success of Auckland makes abundantly clear. The Northern City was more fortunate in getting "the right man in the right place." The success of all enterprises depends on the ability to organise, to face what appear to be insuperable difficulties, to stimulate the people, no matter what they imagine in the first place, into the belief that the enterprise simply cannot fail. To do it takes a human dynamo capable of generating any amount of determination, enthusiasm, and executive ability. And Auckland was fortunate in securing the man with these qualities in Mr. Scott Colville, the managing secretary, whose capacity was not overpraised when spoken of in such appreciative terms at the official opening of the competitions at His Majesty's, Auckland, on Monday, by the chairman of the executive; Mr. Chas. Hudson. It is impossible at this stage to offer any comment on the performances, which so far have characterised the proceedings. The first day was a singularly happy augury for the rest of the big and busy week, now in the height of its activities. The public turned out in astonishing numbers to witness and hear the various competitors both day and night. The Monday evening's programme proved to be most interesting, and often aroused the house to enthusiasm, particularly when the judges—Mr. W. Paget Gale (music), and Mr. J. M.

Purple Patch of Genuine Humour.

"Mr. Preedy and the Countess" is to be staged at His Majesty's, Auckland, on Monday, December 5th, for the first time in New Zealand. The leading roles are to be taken by Mr. David Jones, as Preedy; Mr. Charles Willoughby, as Bounsaill; and Miss Beatrice Day, as the Countess of Rushmere. Mr. J. Youlin Birch, advance agent for the company, advises that Miss Mab Paul was prevented from coming to New Zealand, and had resigned on account of illness. The "Sydney Morning Herald" described the play as "a purple patch of genuine humour," when it was produced recently in the harbour city. There seems to be no doubt that Carton's latest is a very fine piece of work, and it will be interesting to see what the Willoughby Company will make of it on these shores.

The Eight Pictures—Johnson v. Jeffries.

The much-heralded reproduction by biograph of the fight between Johnson and Jeffries, which the Ma Mahon Bros. introduced to Australasian audiences for the first time at the Wellington Opera House last week are due for showing at His Majesty's, Auckland, on Monday night next. It is said that the film are excellent as regards clearness, and are

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