

by the average playgoer, but by the "galeries and pitties" of provincial theatres.

The Chocolate Soldier.

It is said that no musical number ever travelled round the earth more quickly than the tenderly graceful waltz song "My Hero," sung in the first act of "The Chocolate Soldier." This thrilling ensemble in its refrain recurs at the close of the second act, and is said to be worthy of the best in grand opera. "The Chocolate Soldier" is described as being an entirely different order of entertainment to the usual light comic opera. "A continuous stream of melody," Oscar Strauss at his very best, "Strauss in his most melodious mood," are some of the opinions expressed by leading Australian contemporaries. Songs, trios, quartettes and choruses, all of a high musical order abound—langorous, exhilarating and romantic in turn—but invariably tuneful. In these Oscar Strauss has run the gauntlet of sound in no uncertain manner, and has, according to reliable opinion, succeeded in accomplishing something like a magnum opus in genuine comic opera. It may be of interest to know that the melodies of "The Chocolate Soldier" are being played and sung in 30 countries and more than 200 cities of the world to-day. It is promised that the libretto is of a distinctly high literary character, which may be reasonably expected, seeing that the opera is a dramatisation of the famous Bernard Shaw's much debated play, "Arms and the Man." "Music, I smell music," exclaims Hummel in the early scenes of the piece, and his olfactory organ is bantered to repletion during the two hours and a half of the play's performance. Strauss is invariably melodious, never tiresome, and in this his latest production, in a light opera way, is said to be little short of divine. "The Chocolate Soldier" will be presented in Auckland by Mr. J. C. Williamson's New English Comic Opera Company on December 18th.

Latest Use for Music.

A tale is going round about some doings at a London Club which enjoys a certain notoriety for particularly late hours. It seems that the wives of some of the members informed the Committee that they should like to commemorate the recent Coronation by offering for acceptance a valuable and beautiful old porcelain vase mounted on a pedestal, furnished with a suitable inscription. The gift was thankfully accepted, and placed in the smoking-room. All was admired, the fine lines and colouring of the vase, with the handsome carvings, inlaying, and moulding of the supporting base, and the polished fluted column; all were effective. But admiration was turned to surprise, about a week after the inauguration, when, on the hall clock striking twelve, the suggestive melody of "Home, Sweet Home" rang out from the ingenious contrivance. It then dawned upon the late habitués that the ladies had cleverly found the means of a striking appeal to stop off talk, and beckon homewards laggards who were not accustomed to appear until the small hours of the next day. The puzzle has been to ascertain how the contrivance worked. Nightly at twelve, or within a few minutes, "Home, Sweet Home" makes its alluring appeal, and there is a gloomy gathering to hear the well-known strain—with some muttered threats. It is surmised that the apparatus contains an electrically controlled clock, which actuates a barrel working on a powerful steel-comb, as is found in the usual Swiss music-boxes. Dry batteries supply the motive power, and the mechanism may be designed to run for a long time, so no sort of winding-up is required.

John McCormack to Sing in New Zealand.

Quite the most important announcement for this week is the information which reaches me that Mr. John McCormack, the famous Covent Garden tenor, who was associated with Melba in the late season of Grand Opera in Australia, is shortly to give two concerts in New Zealand. The first concert will be given at Wellington on 12th January, and the second at Auckland on 18th January. On the following day Mr. McCormack leaves for Home via Suva.

It is not yet four years ago since this brilliant artist made a sensational appearance at Covent Garden in "Cavalleria Rusticana," and rose almost at a bound to gain a reputation that is now world-wide. He is a young Irishman—not yet 27. The story is on record how, as a youngster, he entered the National Irish Festival, and (much to his own

surprise) won the Dezza Gold Medal for singing. It was that which set him definitely on a career of astonishing development. He completed his studies in Italy with such excellent purpose that when he was in his 21st year he was able to make his debut with great success before a critical Italian audience at Savona, when he sang in "L'Amico Fritz." It is understood that whilst in New Zealand Mr. McCormack will sing chiefly ballads, as he usually does when he takes to the concert platform in London. He will have in association with him the New Zealand soprano, Miss Rosina Buckman, who did such excellent work in this country the last time she came round with the Italian Grand Opera Company, especially in "Madam Butterfly." Mr. Alfred Kaufman, a bass solo, also of Covent Garden, also a fine artist, and Mr. Spencer Clay, an English pianist, will complete the company. It is almost certain that these two concerts will be rushed when the box office arrangements are made known.

Stray Notes.

The largest chamber organ in the world is to be found in the residence of Mr. J. M. Boustead, of Westfield, Wimbledon Common, London. It has five manuals, and 122 stops, 81 pistons and pedals. There are really six organs and pedals. Over 6500 pipes, 30 gongs, etc. Mr. Mark Hambourg is now giving a series of 60 recitals in Canada and the West of America, the tour extending from

to Irving from that time till I went back to London 12 years ago. He took them in at one of our house dinners, and I had the satisfaction of telling him then that he completely effaced my impression of Charles Keau's Louis.

"Bless you, the changes there have been! When I first went acting there were some plays being written and acted which entirely revolutionised the British stage. There were such plays as T. W. Robertson's 'Caste' and 'School,' which were put on at the Prince of Wales' Theatre in London by the Bancrofts. These pieces introduced a new school of acting—what the old folks called 'teacup and saucer acting.' Just because it was natural! Well, I made my first appearance in London in '77, under the management of John Hare, and at the first theatre he ever had, the Court Theatre. Ellen Terry was the leading lady. Just before I returned to Australia a couple of years ago I was engaged by Sir John Hare to play Captain Hawtrey in 'Caste,' when he was taking his stage farewell. It was strange that I should have opened with him and have taken part in his farewell. But I was speaking of revolutions. There had been another revolution. The new style of acting which in the early sixties had revolutionised the English stage had gone. It was as dead as the do-do. You saw Ethel Irving the other day. Well, she is one of the exponents of the very latest style of acting. Acting, like dialects, alters from year to year. You won't find any-

—a thing of the past. I graduated in the same school as Rignold in Bristol, under James Henry Chute. Ellen Terry, Lady Haughey, and Mrs. Labouchere (Henrietta Hodgson) are among those who also graduated in the same school." Mr. Titheradge, however, is best remembered in connection with the Brough and Boucvaunt Company. For ten years he delighted the people of Australia in the splendid plays which that firm put on the stage. He was the original Aubrey Tanqueray in this country, with Mrs Brough as Paula, as he was the original of the "Silver King" under the management of Williamson, Garner, and Musgrove. Most people will say his biggest success was in "The Silver King." In a popular sense it was. It was a "showy" part. Artistically, Mr. Titheradge has made bigger successes than that. "Personally," he says, "I never cared two pence for it. I think I like the 'Village Priest' as well as anything."

In the performance of "The Chocolate Soldier" at Her Majesty's, Sydney (says the "Referee") Miss Winifred O'Connor, as Nadina, had encore honours for the waltz song "My Hero." "Symphony," "Falling in Love," "The Letter Song," "Alexis the Heroic," "The Tale of a Coat," "That Would Be Lovely," "The Chocolate Soldier," and "Never Was There Such a Lover," were the other popular numbers. Mr. Leslie Gaze as Lieutenant Bumerli and Mr. Noel Fleming as Major Alexis were again successful. On Tuesday and Wednesday of last week Miss Amy Murphy appeared as Nadina. The New Zealand soprano acted with animation, and her bright voice was effectively used in the concerted numbers as well as in "My Hero" and "The Letter Song." Judging by the booking, the comic opera should be able to hold the stage at Her Majesty's until the Christmas season.

"Every Woman," the remarkable morality play shortly to be introduced to Australian playgoers by the J. C. Williamson management, has an immense cast. Each of the characters is symbolical, and has reference to the order of our daily life. The long list includes Wealth, Love, Youth, Beauty, Modesty, Conscience, Truth, Passion, Trust, and so on. A recent issue of the Elbert Hubbard magazine, "The Philistine," was completely devoted to a review of "Every Woman," which was praised by the philosopher-author in glowing terms of panegyric.



IN EDEN.

The Serpent.—What's Adam so grouchy about to-day?
The Ape.—Oh, he says that the arrival of woman means that all his plans for universal peace have been knocked in the head for good.

the Atlantic to the Pacific coast. He will not return to England until February 7 next.

Here is another instance of the amazing extent of Professor Reinhardt's great spectacle as produced at Olympia at Christmas. As is generally known, the scene represents the interior of a huge Gothic cathedral. During the intermezzo the doors are opened, and the spectator sees a band of huns, with their horses and dogs, traversing a lofty mountain. But to give due effect to the picture it has become clear that the mountain must be in the middle of the arena. To accomplish this Professor Reinhardt and Mr. Stern, the scenic designer, have arranged to build up a huge mountain capable of supporting hundreds of people, and bigger in circumference than almost any stage in London. This is to be equipped with motor power, so that it may be easily moved from one end of the building to the other. No wonder that the spectacle has been named "The Miracle."

"I remember paying in 'Hamlet' and 'Louis XI.' with Charles Keau, in the same year as he died," said Mr. Titheradge in some reminiscences related to a Sydney pressman. "I had not been long on the stage then, and my idea of Keau's performance in 'Louis XI.' was such that I never thought it would be upset by anyone else. But Henry Irving upset it—the great father of H. B. Irving, who bears a remarkable personal resemblance to him. I first met Irving in '68 or '69. It was in a piece called 'Dearer than Life,' by H. J. Byron, the man who wrote 'Our Boys.' Let me see. I believe I am the only one of that cast alive. Henry Irving, J. E. Toole, Lionel Brough, and J. S. Titheradge—all gone but one. I never spoke

body in London now who speaks with the Cockney dialect of Sam Weller.

"I have been acting for 45 years—a long time," continued Mr. G. S. Titheradge. "One man in his time plays many parts, but I suppose I have played more parts than any man breathing. I was 17 when I went on the stage, and I am 62 now—45 years of it. And I love my art to-day as much as I ever did. I started at Portsmouth, in October, '60, playing comic business in pantomime, and being knocked about by the clown; and I have played every line of business from Hamlet to Hamlet. I have played utility, I have played the walking gentleman, I have played juvenile business, and I have played leading business; I have played for nearly half a century; and in that time I have seen three entirely revolutionary styles of acting. Actors are no longer judged by former standards. I had my early training in the days of stock companies

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