

The Stage.

The Musgrove Opera Company.

BY HILDA ROLLETT.

I WAS charmed straightway by the beautiful blue eyes of the prima donna, Miss Josephine Stanton. They are prettily fringed with dark lashes, showing clearly against a very fair complexion.

"I have any amount of time; have just been out, and am delighted to have a chat with you. Do have some tea." So we settled down to a very interesting talk, during which we discussed many things, even—which will appeal to the fair sex—to point lace. Of the latter Miss Stanton showed me great quantities which she has herself made at the theatre. Although she is very modest on the subject, my judgment told me that the work was exceedingly good.

"Yes; I am American. I have never been in England, though I intend to see London at any rate, on my way back."

"Yes; I was through New Zealand with my own company over a year ago. I enjoy New Zealand immensely, and, as much as anything, because it has good stores. Your shops are just as up-to-date as those of Sydney or Melbourne, and the arrangements are very artistic. I like them very much."

"I have been playing in opera for ever so long. Just before I left America I was very much tempted to take the part offered me of Dolores in 'Florodora.' It was going to have a great season in New York. However, I thought I should like to come out here with Mr Musgrove's Company. Yes; it is easier work with these musical comedies; but one does not, in the role of prima donna, score nearly

as much with an audience as do those who have the funny parts. Again, in the make-up costumes we are not recognized quite so soon when we appear. But I like colonial audiences. Indeed, in all my years of acting I have always had success in that way, that is to say, I feel that the audience is in touch with me."

"I know sixty operas, that means that I have been cast in sixty. But at the same time, if you asked me at this moment to sing something from 'Faust,' or 'Martha,' or anyone of them, I should be quite unable. I think that most of us are like that. But we know the whole thing once we have looked over it again, and have made a start."

"How long does my engagement last? Oh! a year. Then I shall return to America. And while I think of Australia, I must tell you what a charming sweet woman Miss Nellie Stewart is! She is one of the few women who have not forgotten, in their high positions, how to be nice, kindly—oh! everything that is charming."

"How do you like the setting of these things we are doing?"

I expressed my appreciation; Miss Stanton went on.

"The dresses are really beautiful, and the general staging, especially in 'A Chinese Honeymoon,' and that exceedingly pretty 'Porcelain March' are excellent. We can do nothing better than that in America. I have never seen any work, either in scenery or costuming, which is better than that Mr Musgrove puts on."

"How do I like being in other