



[BY ORPHEUS.]

OPERA HOUSE: "THE DERBY WINNER"—After a prosperous seven nights' run "In Sight of St. Paul's" was on Saturday evening replaced by one of Sir Augustus Harris's biggest hits, written in collaboration with Messrs Cecil Raleigh and Henry Hamilton. Although, of course, in many respects melodramatic, the piece contains much pure comedy, and is therefore stronger from a literary point of view than the ordinary transpontine production. The chief *motif* of a consistent plot turns upon the efforts of two unscrupulous persons—Major Mostyn and Vivien Darville—to wreck the domestic happiness and ruin the fortunes of the Earl and Countess of Desborough, in which the male and female villains are of course ultimately foiled after doing not a little mischief. They arouse jealousy and estrange husband and wife, they force the Derby favorite into Tattersall's and hocus the jockey on the eve of the race, but a *deus ex machina* always descends in time to administer poetic justice. Surgeon-Major Cyprian Streatfield, of the army medical staff; Maria, Duchess of Milford; and Rupert Leigh invariably smash the well-laid plans of the conspirators. Scenery and mounting are again immense, Messrs Brunton and Spong displaying their powers in a series of magnificent sets. Among these the drawing-room in Brackenhurst Hall (with a real billiard table in the background), the Malton Downs and the Derby trial (realistically reproduced with live steeds and jockeys), the Ball given by the 43rd Hussars, the Sale at Tattersall's, the Exterior of Mostyn's Cottage (exceptionally lovely), The Paddock, and the Derby Finish, are splendid examples of Mr Bland Holt's wonderful staging. The cast is an exacting one, and only a company with vast resources could attempt to fill it as Mr Holt does. The adventuress, Vivien Darville *alias* Delmaine, affords Miss Watson a better chance to display her finesse than any character she has hitherto assumed. The *role* is a less repulsive one than that of "The Panther," and the clever lady is winsome as well as detestable. Her comedy powers come out more strongly than ever, and she impresses upon her audience throughout the fact that Vivien, however wicked, is still a lady. Miss Frances Roes looks every inch a Countess, winning all sympathies by her emotional and *spiritual* impersonation of a loving and innocent wife caught in the toils of a polished scoundrel, but battling through her trials with dignity, virtue, and courage, and emerging with unsullied purity. As Maria, the sporting and sportive Duchess, Mrs Bland Holt makes a tremendous hit. Not a point is missed and in the scene with her betrothed surgeon-major, when the relics of his previous thirteen engagements are reluctantly produced and relentlessly condemned, the fun both make is delicious. Miss Fitzmaurice Gill as Annette Donnelly plays a light comedy part with captivating humor and signal success, and Miss Flora Anstead, as her mother (Mrs Donnelly) makes much of few opportunities. As Mary Aylmer, the trainer's gentle and pretty daughter, whom Mostyn deceives and Desborough, at the

cost of a foul aspersion, generously assists and protects, Miss Adela Kerr acted with tenderness and grace. Nurse Moyling and Jane Ann Stokes found capable exponents in the Misses E. Maher and Lucy Coppin. Miss Brightie Smith looked charming and played admirably the boy *role* of Harold Viscount Fernside. Mr W. E. Baker acted with natural dignity, force, and pathos in the hero's part, the Earl of Desborough in his hands being a true British nobleman of the right stamp. Mr Albert Norman again displayed polish, sangfroid, and finesse as the acolastic villain, Major Mostyn, winning the usual flattering groans from the pit. Mr John Co-grove (as Rupert Leigh) made much of a rather small part, as also did Messrs Corlesse, Harford, Harold Carr, etc., etc., who competently filled minor parts. Mr Charles Brown gave a living picture of the honest and bluff Yorkshire trainer, Joe Aylmer, whom the villain in vain attempts to bribe or turn from his duty by tempting him to avenge the supposed betrayal of his daughter. Mr Brown's Yorkshire dialect is well assumed. Mr Bland Holt's impersonation of Surgeon-Major Streatfield is perhaps the finest bit of comedy work that clever actor has ever achieved. As a departure from his usual line it deserves the highest praise, being much in the Boucicault style of character acting and a brilliant success. Two or three of the smart sayings in a well-written book is all I can find space for—"I have a theory!" says the doctor; "Wouldn't it be better for a doctor to have a practice," retorts the sprightly Annette; "I trains for gentlemen, not nobblers"; "He's an idiot"; "Ah! but such a dear idiot"; "Marrying a widow is like wearing secondhand clothes, or smoking another man's pipe"; "I buy sleeve-links for a friend, but a *stud* for a husband!" Mr Percy Kehoe's orchestra play new and delightful music, a trombone solo being a marked feature. "The Derby Winner" could be given for four nights only. The change (to-night) is "One of the Best," which really is one of Mr Holt's best.

REVIEW.—I have received from the composer, Mr Walter Impett, a march for the pianoforte bearing the happily chosen title, "Marches des Paladins." The music is beautifully printed and the cover adorned with a capital frontispiece. Mr Impett has written a bold and striking march which compels attention throughout. In some passages—notably the bars on top of page 5—progressions occur which display more valour than discretion from the theorist's point of view. Trumpet echoes are effectively introduced, and the piece contains sufficient difficulties to make it interesting for the advanced student. The leading theme is a catching and effective melody. The "Marche des Paladins," which bids fair to become very popular, is published by Messrs A. Eady and Co. of Auckland.

MR GEORGE S. CALLENDER writes from Napier, January 3:—"The Hellers and Bonanza Company opened at Gisborne on New Year's night, and on the conclusion of the season there will work southwards. At Napier the combination played a good three nights' season. We shall be in Auckland in a few months' time." The *Hawke's Bay Herald* praises the Hellers very highly. Mr G. W. Heller is a thaumaturgist of the Carl Hertz genus, and also a talented singer of comic songs. Mr Percy Abbott is an excellent pianist and banjoist. Miss Vera Havelock artistically performs chameleon, sun, and butterfly dances. Miss Mandeeva Heller, the "Materialised Mahatma," is a marvellous thought reader. An excellent cinematograph adds to the attraction of a popular variety entertainment.



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[BY STONEWALLER.]

THE ENGLISH TEAM IN AUSTRALIA.

The news that the Britishers had failed to save the innings defeat in the second test match did not create great surprise, for the cabled accounts of the state of the wicket prepared most people for an easy Austral victory. Perhaps such a crushing defeat was not anticipated, for a licking by an innings and 55 runs is not at all a mild one, even allowing for the bad wicket. The Englishmen were handicapped no doubt, but 520 was a big score to fight against, especially when backed up by the excellent bowling of the Victorian pair, Trumble and Noble. Trumble bowled unchanged during the last day, and though he did not get quite such a good average as Noble in the second innings his trundling was very fine, and bothered the batsmen completely. McLaren, Ranjitsinghi, and Hayward were the only batsmen to do good work, though it must not be forgotten that Johnny Briggs carried his bat in catch innings. McLaren and the Indian Prince made their runs by very careful cricket, but Hayward after playing carefully for a bit, went in for hitting, quite conscious that that was the only way to score on such a wicket. The fielding of the Australians was an improvement on their display of the first innings, Jones' work was quite one of the features of the match, and others mentioned particularly are Gregory and Iredale. So far honors are even, and already the team for the next match is being discussed in Australia. One thing is very certain, Noble will have to be included.

Some rapid scoring took place in a match between teams representing the Auckland C.C. and H.M.S. Torch, when the warship was in port. The skipper of the sailors won the toss, and sent the local men to the wickets. In the course of two hours the Auckland total was carried to 326 for the loss of five wickets. The scores were—A. M. Beale 86, R. Neill 73, N. B. Lusk 70, J. E. London 42 (not out), W. H. Quinn 31, E. C. Beale 11. The innings was then declared closed. When the Torch men went in they were quickly sent to the right about. In the first innings they were dismissed for 63, and in the second their total was only 45. Victory, and a very easy one, thus remained with the Auckland men. The small score of the Torch men were mainly due to the excellent bowling of Allen, Grindrod, Harrison, and Hackett. The sailors are very anxious to "take it out" of the Aucklanders, and a return match will be played upon the return of the warship to Auckland.

The local championship matches under the Auckland Cricket Association, which have been adjourned owing to the vacation will be resumed on the Domain and at North Shore on Saturday next, when the senior matches are—Gordon v. Auckland Eleven, United v. Auckland Fifteen,

and Parnell v. North Shore, and on the first day's play, which was brought off on December 18th, it would appear that the first-mentioned teams in each instance have the respective matches at their mercy.

The victorious career of the Canterbury cricketers received a check at Wellington on Saturday, when the home team beat them by an innings and 20 runs. Canterbury won the toss, and made 187. When the Wellington men went in Richardson and Holdship played so well that the score was taken to 188 for four wickets at the close of the first day's play. On Saturday, when the game was continued, Burton, Naughton, Ashbolt, and Holdsworth all made good scores, and eventually the total reached 404, which is a record for inter-provincial matches. The Canterbury batsmen could not do much with the bowling of Ashbolt in the second innings, and he took seven wickets for 52 runs. Garrard, Wilding, Cobcroft and the two Riddleys got into double figures, but the others did not do much, the total only amounting to 197. The Wellington men batted very regularly, only one man failing to reach double figures. The fielding of both teams was highly creditable each day.

Our Christchurch correspondent wires:—"The Canterbury cricket team returned home on Monday after having had a successful and enjoyable tour. The members of the team speak highly of the treatment they received right through their travels in the North Island, but they are disappointed over their display against Wellington."

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