

new play has cohesion and continuity of action (save in one respect, which I will presently deal with), the characters are well-balanced—the situations striking, effective, and in some places ludicrous in the extreme. The first act is almost perfect in construction, but there are one or two blemishes in the second act which will doubtless be removed when the final polish is put on. In the first place, the device of having a garden party in order to give an opportunity for some really excellent variety work is ingeniously contrived to suit the clever company now supporting Mr. Sheridan. But I think that the play as a play would be improved by elaborating the action and going straight on to a more complete *denouement*. For example, Major Tiffin, on failing to secure the dear old widow, might console himself with the Dowager, Mrs. Sparks, whose aristocratic prejudices might receive a gentle shock by discovering that the Major had omitted the prefix "Sergeant" from his title. Then in the cheque business between Mr. Sparks and Brewster the amount should be mentioned to keep up the verisimilitude of the incident; and when Tiffin suggest stopping the cheque by telephone message to the bank, some one should at once rush off to do so. Much more could be made out of a sub-plot in which Rose might coquet with the German valet, the Franco-Cockney footman, and Peter the policeman. Turning to the performers, I will first repeat that Mr. Sheridan's "Widow" is beyond all praise, indescribably funny, and now quite free from any excess of vulgarity. Miss Gracie Whiteford's Nora is like all that she does, ever better than the last thing she did. As she is in this play old enough to be engaged to be married, I think she should don the longer frock which damsels usually assume at that age. The love-making between her "chappie" suitor and herself is exquisitely naïve and charming. She here proves herself an *ingénue* of quite the highest order. Miss Tudor's Dora is a good performance on the whole, but the part is hardly calculated to display the strong points of this talented lady. Miss Austin as the soubrette Rose is quite admirable. She looks and acts the part to perfection. Miss Beatrice Lorne as the other mother-in-law fulfils a difficult task with great credit to herself. In the battle of precedence with Widow O'B., it is incongruous to hear the cultured lady pronounce the word wrongly, while the uneducated one—who is quite a Mrs. Malaprop in the way of solecisms of speech—makes precedence long in the penultimate as it should be. This should be corrected and marked in the book. For Mr. Royle's performance as Mr. Sparks I have nothing but praise. He is a gentleman even in his cups, and brings out every good feature of an excellently conceived character. Perhaps the farcical business behind the screen might be modified a little. Mr. Erickson's part of a German valet suits that gentleman down to the ground, and he does it full justice. The little Mr. Bovis has to do as the amorous constable could not well be bettered. One of the greatest hits is Mr. Tudor's Jenkinsini, a cockney footman, whom Widow O'B. persists in turning into a Frenchman. Mr. Tudor's make-up and acting are superably comic. Mr. Carr as Bleeter, a drawing swell, deserves almost as much praise as anyone else, and Mr. Imano's Brewster is the best piece of acting I have yet seen by that gentleman, who, as I have previously stated, seems to improve in histrionic art every night. Last, but not least, comes Mr. Alfred James as Major Tiffin, a clever but somewhat rough impersonation. Although I have said that the piece might be improved by cutting out the concert business, I do not wish to convey the impression that the variety work is inferior. On the contrary it is really first-rate, but in my opinion out of place in a piece which should aim at being a superior farcical comedy. Mr. Sheridan and Miss Whiteford in the lugubrious tale of woe anent "Johnnie Jones and his sister Sue" and the "Peach of Emerald Hue" were absolutely perfect. Lettie Lind and Frank Leslie never did better. Mr. and Miss Tudor in the English stick dance display some clever and graceful manœuvres.

In bidding farewell to Mr. Sheridan and his supporters, from whose work I have derived so much pleasure, I may venture to hope that nothing in my criticisms has wounded any member of the company. It has been my aim to "set down nought in malice, nor ought extenuate" where blemishes seemed to exist, I

have honestly indicated them, not from any wish to find fault—for to me it is always more pleasing to praise than to blame—but with the desire of assisting the performers to make their work *totus teres atque rotundus*. That I take to be the true function of a critic.

On Tuesday next the American Midgets, General and Mrs. Mite, are announced to make their first appearance at the Opera House. They are said to be the smallest couple in the world—but midgets always are smaller than any other midgets! In conjunction with the attractions of the diminutive pair, Dr. Canaris' Combination Company will offer entertainment of the variety order. I shall deal with the performance in due course next week.

Mr. Harry Cowan, who was one of the most brilliant members of the Harvey Minstrel Company which occupied the boards of the Opera House a couple of months ago, is remaining in Auckland for a few weeks. He generously offers his services, free of charge, for any benefits or charity performances which may occur during his stay. Any communication addressed to the care of ORPHEUS, SPORTING REVIEW OFFICE, will be forwarded to Mr. Cowan. ORPHEUS.

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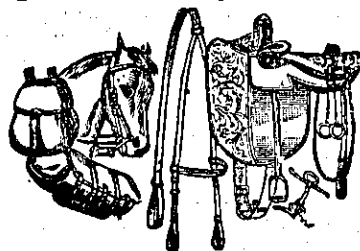
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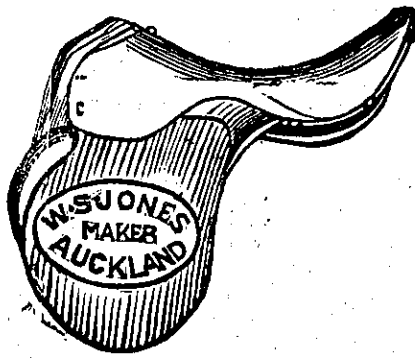
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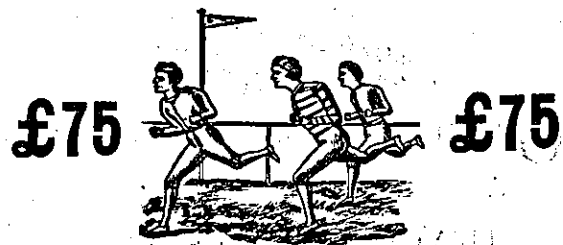
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NOMINATIONS, ACCEPTANCES, AND HANDICAP.  
NOMINATIONS close with the Secretary TO-DAY, Saturday, March 14, at Waverley Hotel, Auckland.  
HANDICAP to appear on or about March 19.  
ACCEPTANCES close with the Secretary, WEDNESDAY, March 24.

ENTRY FORMS TO BE OBTAINED FROM THE SECRETARY.

PROMOTER ..... MR. WALTER MOUNTAIN  
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THIS DAY, SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 1891.

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(ST. PATRICK'S DAY.)

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SPECIAL TRAINS will leave Auckland Station at 12.10 and 12.35 p.m., returning from the Course at 6.10 p.m.

B. WYNYARD, Secretary.