

THE STAGE

(By "Comus.")

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

THE WILLIAMSON COMEDY COMPANY.

"The Marriage of Kitty," has been played to full and delighted audiences all the week. Miss Musgrove's impersonation of Miss Silverton has charmed everybody, and the other characters have sensibly gained in public esteem.

Last night "Kitty" made room for her namesake, "Cousin Kate," but owing to the early hour at which these pages go to press I am unable to deal with the new piece in detail. In the title role Miss Florence Hamer reveals herself as a comedy actress of rare accomplishments. She so thoroughly grips the character that she secures interest for it and the comedy at once. The sweet reasonableness of the woman of the world, her pleasant expressions, and her tenderness are all splendidly presented by Miss Hamer. "You know," she says in a pleasantly defiant way, "the men think that they can do just as they like, because there are so many of us," and all the while she delicately and artistically suggests that the gentleman in the railway carriage has played havoc with her affections. "Cousin Kate" is a charming romantic comedy, beautifully interpreted, and playgoers should not miss it.

OPERA HOUSE.

FULLER'S ENTERTAINERS.

John Fuller and Sons continue to draw satisfactory dividends out of their liberal investment at the Opera House, and no lover of clean and wholesome vaudeville would like to hear of any diminution in the profits. There is not likely to be so long as Mr Fuller keeps to the present high level of excellence. Perhaps the chief attraction during the week has been provided by Professor Parker, who has dazzled everybody by the remarkable skill and dexterity he displays in getting out of all sorts of manacles, leg-irons and padlocked chains. He has been subjected to the severest tests, but save in one or two cases, where the conditions were declared to be unfair and contrary to the liberal principles laid down, these have failed to trip him. Where proper notice is given, and the professor is allowed to examine the instrument employed to hold him, he gets through. But if Mr Parker is the strongest "draw," the qualities of the Carros are such as to ensure for their entertainment a longer run of popularity. The juggling act is excellent in all respects. The Swifts are seen to advantage in a sketch dealing with adventures of a tramp, and Mr John Fuller makes a welcome reappearance, singing with all his old charm, with Mr Henry Brown, in the duet "Excelsior." All the other items in a long and varied bill are good. This week the Stagpools, those clever comedy artists who won such applause during their former visit, made a welcome reappearance. The show is a capital one all round, and there is no place where the average person could spend a pleasanter evening than at the Opera House. Prof. Parker's engagement concluded last night. On Saturday next the popular Miss Tilly Dunbar will join the Auckland division of General John Fuller's forces, and with this reinforcement he will continue on his victorious march.

MR CLEMENT WRAGGE.

Mr Wragge's scientific lectures at the Choral Hall have been very largely attended, and their fresh and unconventional style has been greatly appreciated. I cannot, of course, attempt to give any idea of their scope and purpose in these columns, further than to say that the promise of the advertisements has been more than fulfilled. The last of the series takes place this evening, the subject being "Other Worlds than Ours."

A fine portrait of Miss Florence Hamer, who is now scoring a success in "Cousin Kate," at His Majesty's Theatre, appears as the frontispiece in this issue.

Miss Rose Musgrove is intensely funny in "Margery's Troubles," the afterpiece to "Cousin Kate," keeping the audiences in roars of laughter. A wonderfully bright and versatile young lady is Miss Musgrove, and she undoubtedly has a brilliant future.

Two of the most successful of recent London comedy productions will be presented for the first time in Australasia by Mr J. C. Williamson's Company during the present Auckland season. "The Duke of Killiecrankie" will be played for three nights, commencing Saturday next, and for the last four nights of the season "His Excellency the Governor" will be staged.

Before reaching Wellington Mr Williamson's Comedy Company will play the largest intermediate country towns as follows:—New Plymouth, Monday and Tuesday, August 15 and 16; Stratford, 17; Hawera, 18; Wanganui, 19 and 20; Palmerston North, 22 and 23; Napier, 24 and 25; Masterton, 26. In the one-night towns "The Marriage of Kitty" will be presented, and this piece and "His Excellency the Governor" will form the bill of fare where the Company are playing two nights.



MISS FLORENCE LE CLERQ, of Williamson's Comedy Company.

Mr Harold Ashton has gone South to make arrangements for "The Marriage of Kitty" tour. Mr Ashton expects to return in October, ahead of Mr Williamson's famous dramatic company, headed by those two great artists, Miss Maud Jeffries and Mr Julius Knight.

The Hellers and their new show are at present doing well in Bendigo, where their season has been extended from eight nights to twelve. A return season follows in Ballarat, where record business was recently done.

The new company at the Sydney Criterion in "His Majesty the King" includes Misses Emily Dalzell, Watts Phillips, Nellie Ferguson and Ernest Knight, Charles Lorraine and Clarence Brune.

The ever-popular Fisk Jubilee Singers purpose giving two concerts in the Melbourne Town Hall, the first concert to be given on Monday, August 29, the second on Saturday, September 3. The company are at present resting in Melbourne, awaiting the arrival of five new artists, who are now on their way, and due to

arrive there on August 18. The new people comprise first and second bassos, a tenor, a high soprano and a mezzo-soprano, and were specially selected at Washington, U.S.A., by the Jubilee Singers' agent there.

"Peter Quince," in Melbourne "Punch," writes:—"Mr George Stephenson's New Musical Comedy Company commenced their season at the Princess Theatre under the most favourable auspices. The piece, 'The Rose of Riviera,' achieved a great success, and after three hours of most enjoyable mirth and melody sent the large audience home in the best of spirits. 'The Rose of Riviera' is on the usual lines of musical farce, and is built expressly to make audiences laugh, an aim which it achieved in a marked degree on Saturday night. I think that when he was last here Mr Stephenson clearly defined his notion of a caterer for the public, viz., to supply an entertainment that is calculated to amuse. His theory is that the average man finds out all the sadness that he wants in the workaday world, and that his object in visiting a theatre is to forget for a few hours all the troubles and tears of life, and seek relaxation in mirth and laughter. Mr Stephenson's stage does not pride itself upon holding the mirror up to nature; it seeks not to move the spectator to tears, but aims at securing his smiles. In this respect 'The Rose of Riviera' fills the bill completely."

Mr Claude Whaite, who is piloting Mel. B. Spurr, writes from Dunedin to the "Referee":—"We are doing the most phenomenal tour ever known throughout New Zealand. We have never played to a bad house yet, even though we have had wet weather, snow, and everything. I expect we shall be doing a season in Sydney again before we leave for the East and England, but will advise you. We open in Melbourne on August 27, after that South Australia, and West Australia."

If brevity is indeed the soul of wit, Mr Charles Hawtrey must for the future be regarded as the very embodiment of all that is humorous. Recently a reporter of a New York paper waited upon him, and, after talking for about twenty minutes, propounded the question, "Why did you go upon the variety stage?" With pencil sharpened and note-book in hand, the inquirer awaited the reply. Mr Hawtrey closed his eyes and reflected. The interviewer grew more impatient. Mr Hawtrey opened his eyes, gazed at the ceiling of the room, then at the walls, at the carpet, at the furniture, and then at the reporter. There was a momentary pause, and then in slow and solemn accents the actor remarked, "Because I wanted the dough!" By the way, Mr Hawtrey's salary was £400 a week, so if there was not much wit, there was certainly any quantity of commonsense in his reply.

Mr R. H. Collins, of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, writes from Melbourne to the "Referee":—"I beg to advise you that we are at present resting in Melbourne, waiting the arrival of five new artists, who are coming out from Washington, U.S.A. The new people were booked to leave Vancouver on July 22, and should arrive in Melbourne on August 18. They are all first-class coloured Jubilee vocalists, comprising first and second bassos, tenor, high soprano, and mezzo soprano. I am now arranging dates for an extended tour, taking in South Australia, West Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, and Queensland."

A writer in the current number of "Femina," a Parisian ladies' paper, says:—"The London actress is more beautiful than her sister worker the French artist." It is comforting to find a French journalist giving British artists credit for anything.

Mr Tom Costello has in preparation for production at a London West End place of entertainment a romantic song-scene on the subject of "Claude Duval." In this the artist will be assisted by fifty auxiliaries, and a coach and four will be employed on the stage. The production is estimated to cost £1000.

Mr George Musgrove, recently in London, mapped out a twelve months' Australasian tour for Miss Nellie Stewart. There was nothing remarkable in this, but there was in the fact that the manager got every date he required. It smacked of wonderful luck.

Miss Stewart will open at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, on October 8. Miss Stewart is to be supported by a company of English and Australian players. The repertoire will include many new pieces that Miss Stewart has secured during her present visit to England and America. The opening piece will be "Du Barry," a five-act drama, by Mr David Belasco, in which Mrs Leslie Carter achieved marked success.

The secret of baldness has been discovered, and it appears it lies with music. According to the London "Daily Telegraph," at the Actors' Home, Staten Island, in America, Mrs Amelia Holbrook read a paper in which she asserted that certain kinds of music prevented the hair from falling out, while other kinds produced baldness. If only the lady had stated whether the "preventive" music was to be found in the tuneful strains of Gounod's "Faust," in the harmonies of Wagner's "Meistersingers," or in the technical excellence of some of our music-hall ditties, composers would know in what direction to turn in order to ensure immortal popularity. The idea is one of great possibilities. One can imagine the struggling barber-engaging a full band and advertising it as the latest tonic.

The State of Massachusetts has passed a law protecting American theatres from aldermen and ward councillors, who have claimed privileges on the free list for years past. Any municipal official accepting free tickets henceforth will be liable to a fine of £20.

Mr Alfred Dampier has forwarded a copy of the Townsville "Daily Bulletin" containing a notice of the actor-manager's production of "The Unseen Hand." The criticism is highly eulogistic.

Miss Olive Evans, of Mr George Stephenson's Company, deprecates from her experience the use of the childish voice on the stage. "From thirteen to eighteen years of age," says the lady, "a child, either a girl or a boy, ought not to sing on the stage, as it strains the voice, and a singer should never dance. The voice cannot be developed to its full power by a dancer. There is more money in a good voice than in the best dancing ever created. The greatest dancer doesn't get the salary of a prima donna."

Mrs Maesmore Morris will pay a pleasure trip to Australia, leaving London next month.