

# THE STAGE

(By "Footlight.")

OPERA HOUSE.

FULLER'S ENTERTAINERS.

Mr. Fuller continues to provide a lot of good things for his patrons at the Opera House, a fact which they are not slow to recognise. On Saturday there was a change of bill, and to greet it there was simply "a monster house." It was a case of standing room only some time before the curtain rose, consequently it was small wonder that the genial John's face wore a pleased smile as he viewed the vast audience. Miss Celestine Delwyn sang "Ain't I No Use, Mr. Jackson?" and several coon songs. Mr. James Opie put plenty of life into the well-known song, "Off to Philadelphia." Miss Florrie Leigh got plenty of applause for "Mary Kissed the Captain." Little Annie Tye was recalled for her character specialty, "If the Missis wants to Go." Mr. Sam La Mert's coon song, "Whistling Rufus," was a very clever piece of work. "Life's Lullaby," by Miss Lavinia Tyson was excellently rendered, and this artiste was heard later on to good advantage in the illustrated songs, "Two Congregations," and "In the Good Old-fashioned Way," for which she was enthusiastically applauded. The Diamond Duo made their reappearance, their coon act, "Bric-a-brac," being

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

"A MOORISH MAID."

The week's run of "A Moorish Maid" came to a close on Saturday, and proved remarkably successful, there being overflowing audiences as the season progressed, and I understand that the production resulted in a very considerable profit to Messrs. Hill and Birch. This will be good news to the friends and admirers of the two talented authors, and I should also like to add my own congratulations. The piece went much more smoothly as the season progressed, some of the principals losing much of the nervousness which characterised their performance on the opening night. I have been taken to task for attempting to indicate one or two points in which the opera is susceptible of improvement. Now there is such a thing as over-praise, and, although no one doubts the good intentions of the writers, the way this has been "laid on with a trowel" by certain of the newspapers makes such comments worthless as criticism, and is rather unfair both to the authors or to the performers. I ventured to point out that even the very greatest of London successes are altered and re-altered after their initial production, and therefore it was unreasonable to expect perfection for the new opera at the outset. That a

"THE GIRL OF MY HEART."

The initial production on Saturday, July 8, of Miss Fitzmaurice Gill's season at His Majesty's Theatre will be the spectacular, military, and nautical drama, "The Girl of My Heart." The piece was written by Herbert Leonard, and was first produced at the Surrey Theatre, London, where it proved a tremendous success, and immediately caught the fancy of Mr. W. J. Holloway, who secured its Australian rights for Miss Fitzmaurice Gill. Bright and sparkling comedy scenes follow in rapid succession on tense moments of dramatic interest; and the vivid colouring of military uniforms lend picturesque background to the brilliant gowning of the ladies. The main deck of H.M.S. Challenger, where the fine incident of the naval court-martial is displayed, is only equalled by the prettiness of the military wedding. "The Girl of My Heart" is sure to appeal to the popular taste of the British public, who all love Jack Ashore, and laugh with him in his joys and weep sympathetic tears over his misfortunes, not forgetting to applaud vociferously his sentiments of loyalty oft expressed to his country and his King. A pretty love story runs its uneven course, foiled by the machinations of a villain in the shape of a rascally major, but with the aid of numerous good friends the hero and heroine are finally re-united, and all ends happily as the curtain falls. Plot and

confident the piece will prove an immense draw. Miss Gill will have a better opportunity as the ill-fated Jewess than usually falls to her lot in ordinary ranks of melodrama, and Mr. Chas. Blake will appear in the romantic rôle of Philip Tossythe, the English artist. Miss Gill has brought some beautiful costumes for especial production, which the management are certain will prove the draw card of the season.

His Majesty's Arcade and Theatre Company has declared an interim dividend at the rate of 6 per cent.

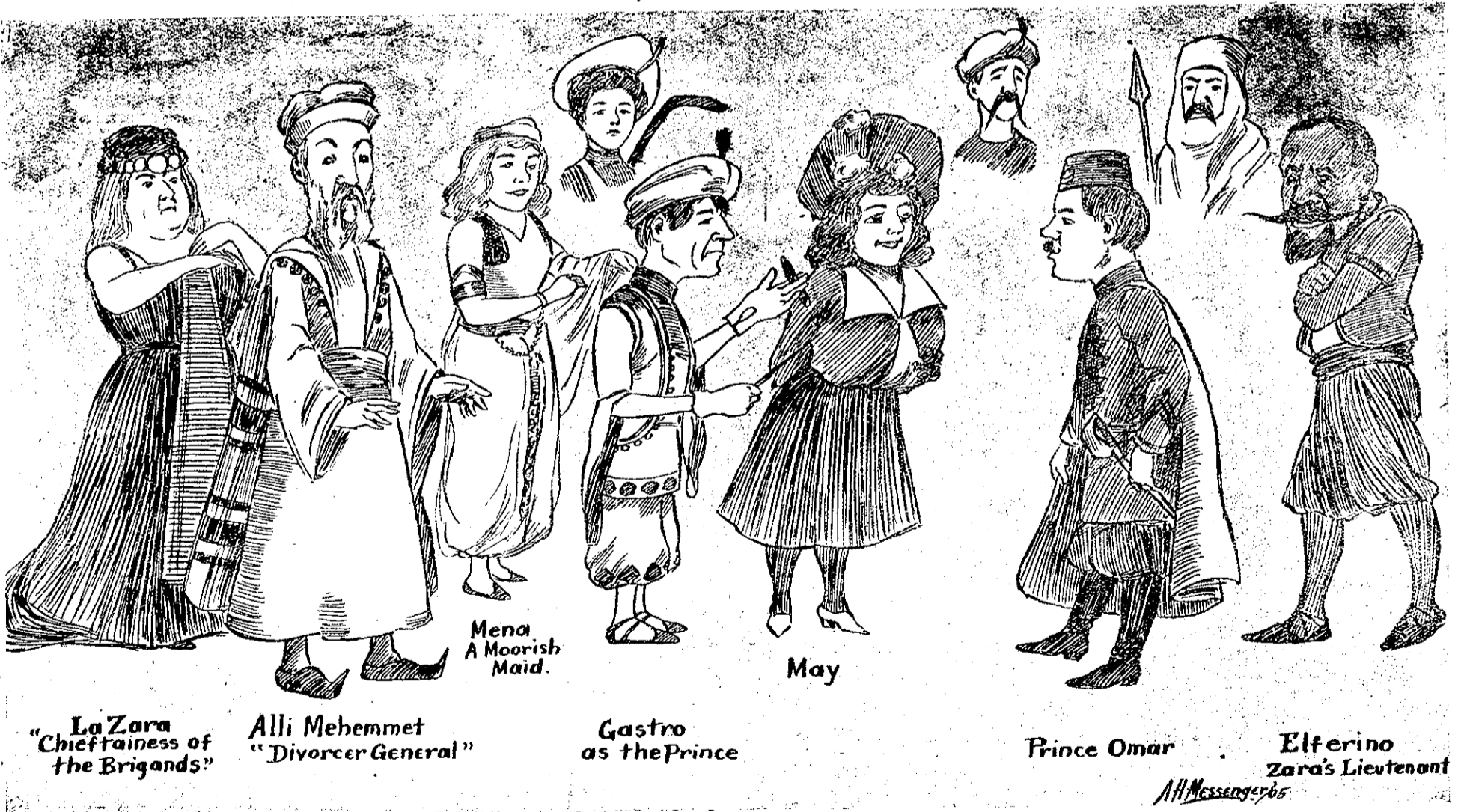
Miss Tittell Brune's Christchurch season commences on July 7.

It is rumoured that a New Zealand tour of "A Moorish Maid" is among the possibilities of the near future.

Mr. Fred. Graham and Miss Nellie Dent are billed to appear at the Opera House next Saturday.

Among new pieces secured by Mr. John F. Sheridan are "Naughty Nancy," "The Earl and the Girl," and "The New Housemaid."

I learn that Mr. J. Youlfin Birch, joint author of "A Moorish Maid," is leaving



CHARACTERS FROM "A MOORISH MAID."

much appreciated. Miss Freda Brandon gave as cornet selections "L'Éléphant" and "Alice, Where Art Thou?" both being most favourably received. The St. Leons (Gertie, May, and Philippe) gave a remarkable performance on the trapeze, and their iron-jaw art made one almost regret they were not politicians as well as entertainers. Mr. Fred. Rivenhall commenced with "That's Him," "Don't Stand There," and "Three Blind Mice," but he was encored so often that the writer lost count of the number of songs given. An excellent evening's amusement was concluded with a number of moving pictures of Edison's kinoscope.

talented writer like Mr. Birch can improve upon certain parts of the libretto I am certain, while, although Mr. Hill's music is exceedingly fine, being at times simply magnificent, it is not always in accord with the spirit of the words. It is pointed out that the box office receipts are the only indications of success, and this is perfectly true with a professional company, but with amateurs the personal popularity of the performers count for much. At the same time I think that when "A Moorish Maid" is touched up a little it will take high rank as an opera, and if it achieves a very big success in the future no one will be more pleased than the writer.

counter-plot are finely worked out, and Mr. Leonard has never lost the interest of his audience from the rise of the curtain to its close. Amongst a budget of good things Miss Gill has secured the rights for New Zealand and Australia of a dramatisation of Joseph Hatton's great novel, "By Order of the Czar." To those who have read the book, and their name is legion, the pathetic story of the beautiful Alma Klosstock will appeal tremendously, and with an elaborate stage setting, including scenes of Venice *en fete*, showing the grand canal brilliantly illuminated on the occasion of the visit of the King and Queen of Italy, and the Carnival of Flowers, Mr. Macmahon is

Auckland to take up an appointment on the staff of the New Zealand Times at Wellington. Mr. Birch has gained hosts of friends here who will unite in wishing him the best of good luck in his new home.

Mr. William Anderson's latest dramatic purchase, Arthur Shirley's sensational play, "The Midnight Mail, or the Railroad to Ruin," has been in preparation for months past, and will be produced at the Theatre Royal on July 15 by an augmented company. It will, it is said, introduce the most striking realistic incidents ever seen in modern drama.