

A few profits of London productions: "Beauty and the Barge" cleared over £10,000, while up to date, "The Walls of Jericho" has made over £25,000. "The Catch of the Season" is another money-maker, and during its run, which is still on, a profit of £12,000 is quoted. On the other hand, "The Talk of the Town" £10,000 losses, "Lady Ben" £3000, and "What Pamela Wanted" £6000 were some of the financial failures.

Or Miss Maggie Stirling, who is now on a concert tour of the colonies, an exchange says:—It is six years since the tall Victorian vocalist left for Europe, after having acquired great popularity as a Scotch and ballad singer in Melbourne and elsewhere. In the southern city she had studied under Cecchi, who gave Melba her Australian vocal training; and, like Melba, she went to Mdne. Marchesi, in Paris. Piles of letters to the contralto from that most widely-advertised of teachers show the interest taken by her in Miss Stirling. Later, in London, Miss Stirling made her debut, and sang at many concerts and "at homes." A tour of the English provinces with Mdne. Lillian Blauvelt is one of her most enjoyable recollections. Family presents are mainly responsible for her present visit to Australia. In Melbourne she had a hearty reception from the many friends she left behind. She has brought out Miss Ethel Sinclair, the Victorian violiniste, who won the Clarke Scholarship, and who has spent several years in London, and Herr Adolphe Borshke, a young Viennese pianist (pupil of Leschetizky and Emil Sauer). The latter cannot understand English, but converses in German or French. Miss Stirling has with her a stack of letters from all sorts of distinguished social and musical people in London, and an autograph book signed by Clara Butt, Richter, Kennerley Rumford, Villiers-Stanford, etc.

The boy chorister is one of the most unique productions of English musical life, and few persons have a better knowledge of this than Mr. Edward Branscombe, of the Westminster Glee Singers, who for a number of years was associated with the famous choir at Westminster Abbey (writes "Pasquin"). Mr. Branscombe does not think that England enjoys a monopoly of good chorister boys. For instance, in Australia and New Zealand one might pick up several good voices, but without the training and practice they would be raw amateurs. Speaking of training, Mr. Branscombe states that the best boys are to be found in the cathedrals, where, in every instance, the boys are educated in a choir school, which ensures attention being paid to the use of the speaking voice. Over 12 services a week, with attendant rehearsals, afford opportunity for a sound musical training. In London there are two famous choir schools, and it is from these that many of the city churches in the Old Country acquire the best solo boys. The dialect, in Mr. Branscombe's opinion, is a very difficult trouble, the two worst being the Yankee twang and the Cockney. Mr. Branscombe speaks

interestingly about the boys at Westminster Abbey. A boy, he explains, enters the choir for a year's probation, during which time he does not take part in the actual services. At the end of the probation, if he has shown promise in training, he is kept on permanently, and is promoted to the choir. The position of solo boy is gradually attained by the ordinary method of promotion. The boys sing at two services a week and three times on Sundays, with, perhaps, six rehearsals weekly. The boys of the present Westminster party are very much above the average of the English Cathedral soloists, because of their training being more exacting in view of appearing in public. Then, again, the music is considerably more varied. No party of boys in England has been called upon to sing such a big repertoire of part music from memory.

The welcome accorded Miss Nance O'Neil at the Opera House last Thursday evening, when she renewed acquaintanceship with Wellington theatregoers, after an absence of some four years, must have been exceedingly gratifying to the talented actress (says the New Zealand "Mail.") The ovation which Miss O'Neil received on making her first appearance was spontaneous and lasted some time. It was repeated several times during the performance. As on her first appearance in Wellington Miss O'Neil selected Sudermann's "Magda" for the opening production of an all too short season of ten nights. Her impersonation of Magda is a wonderfully improved performance from the one she gave during her first visit to New Zealand. She has improved considerably in her art, whilst her personal charm is greater. It is safe to say that before the close of the season she will make even stronger appeals than she has previously done to merit the approval of New Zealand's discriminating audiences. Mr. McKee Rankin's Colonel Schwartz is an artistic impersonation. Mr. John Glendinning gave an earnest and sincere portrayal of the character of the Pastor Hefflerdingt. Miss Ricca Allen, as Franziska and Miss Jane Marbury as Marie gave fine studies of their respective parts. Mr. Gaston Mervale's Max was a well-played part. Mr. Andrew Robson, as Dr. Von Keller, was fairly good. Mrs. Henry Bracy gave a fine impersonation of the character of Augusta. Mr. Mario Majeroni and Mr. G. Friend did all that was required in the parts of Buckman and Von Keller respectively.

Miss Nance O'Neil's Wellington season has been a great success in every way. Large and appreciative audiences have witnessed each performance of the clever young tragedienne. Last Saturday evening "Marie Antoinette" was presented, and the manner in which the historical romance was interpreted by Miss O'Neil and the company who supported her was a genuine treat to all who witnessed the play. On Tuesday evening "Ingomar" was produced. Miss O'Neil's Parthenia was a very fine piece of work, and emphasises what has already been said about the versatility of this clever young actress.

"Oliver Twist" has been scoring a big success at His Majesty's Theatre, London. Of Mr. Tree's latest production an English exchange says that everyone is more or less familiar with Charles Dickens' story of "Oliver Twist," and for those who are least conversant with the story the surest guarantee of an enjoyable evening at His Majesty's lies in their slight knowledge of the book. There are many lovers of Dickens who will regret that the necessities of drama have rendered considerable modifications of the book unavoidable, perhaps their enthusiasm for the great author may even dim their realisation of the existence of such necessities; however, if these will forget Dickens for awhile and think of "Oliver Twist" as a new drama, they will find ample reason to feel satisfied with the entertainment provided. The story preserves all that early Victorian atmosphere in the portrayal of which Charles Dickens so greatly excelled, and as scene follows scene, imagination carries the watcher back into those bad old times when a dimly-lighted, poorly-guarded, London sheltered such inhuman creatures as Fagin and Bill Sykes, and made it possible for such as they to crush all rectitude from innumerable little Oliver Twists.

"The White Chrysanthemum," produced by Mr. Frank Curzon at the London Criterion Theatre, is described on the programme as a "lyrical comedy," but for the fact that in the course of its three short acts a real story is unfolded it might have been called a "musical play" (says the "Licensed Victuallers' Gazette.") At the present time a play with a Japanese setting, a bevy of pretty girls arrayed in kimonos, a sprinkling of naval officers in very white uniforms, and

a number of tuneful songs, has a fair chance of success, and in "The White Chrysanthemum" to these attractions are added a motor car, a jinrickisha, and an entertaining little love story. The story is simple: A naval lieutenant, Reginald Armitage, is commanded by his father, a pompous admiral, to marry an American heiress. Obedience to this order, however, would undo his own matrimonial plans, he being already betrothed. In defiance of the ways of real life, but in compliance with the necessities of lyrical comedy, the lieutenant has persuaded the girl he loves to come to him in Japan, and to allow herself to be installed as O San, "The White Chrysanthemum," in a bungalow on the sea shore, with a young widow as chaperone, until an expected promotion enables him to marry her. Unfortunately for the smooth accomplishment of the lieutenant's project, Fate sends his harsh father to the Far East in command of the China squadron, and with the Admiral comes the heiress. The inevitable complications ensue, and Lieutenant Chippendale Belmont, a friend of the disobedient son, in endeavouring to invent explanations which will satisfy the Admiral, makes confusion worse confounded; however, all comes straight with the help of Sin Chong, a Chinese servant, and the final unravelling of the tangle finds the principal lovers happy, the heiress paired off with Lieutenant Belmont, and the Admiral—after a very short but decisive bombardment—in possession of the widow. The piece has been running to great business, and a big season is predicted.

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