

THE STAGE

(By "FOOTLIGHT.")

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE. THE MACMAHON DRAMATIC COMPANY.

"ON ACTIVE SERVICE."

The stirring nautical and military drama, "On Active Service," was produced at His Majesty's on Saturday before a big house, the members of which frequently testified as to their approval by hearty applause. The plot is a somewhat intricate one, in which a pair of unusual villains for no very conclusive reasons dog down the heroine, Rose Foster. She is accused of the theft of some marked notes, but is saved by the hero, Dick Foster, who somewhat foolishly takes the blame for the theft on his own shoulders, despite there being a willing eye-witness to testify as to the entire innocence of Rose. Foster is sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, but escapes, and immediately commences to look for more trouble by voluntarily accusing himself of the virtual murder of Stella Collville, the daughter of his commanding officer, whereas in reality he had done his utmost to take away from her the brandy which ultimately killed her and which had been supplied by one of the villains, a French spy named Count Brisson. Eventually all the characters found themselves in the Sudan, where an engagement takes place, and all the objectionable characters in the play are blotted out, and we are led to infer the way is paved for a good time for all in the future.

The cast was a very heavy one, and it speaks well for the general excellence of the company that no weak spots were to be seen anywhere. Miss Maie Nelson did some good work as Rose Foster, the much persecuted, most of whose troubles arise from her instant readiness to believe anything bad about Dick. Miss May Granville is an adept in such parts as Stella Collville, the dipsomaniac, and all through she was never out of drawing. Miss May Renne, in conjunction with Mr. P. Savieri, was responsible for a bit of fun, and helped greatly to brighten the piece, as did Mrs. Barry Lane as a Salvationist. As usual, Mr. Charles Blake essayed the role of the hero, Dick Foster, and made every point possible with the character. It was not his fault, but the author's, that Dick showed such exceptional aptitude for getting into a hopeless mess for so little reason. Mr. Blake's work was very consistent throughout, and he was loudly applauded. Mr. Wilton Power must be getting used to the execrations of the audience, not a few of whom would like to see him occasionally in some other role than that of the worst sort of scoundrel. His Jim Thornbury was quite up to his usual standard. But that there is an old saying that "comparisons are odious," many would agree that the best piece of character acting in the piece is the Count Brisson of Mr. Charles Berkley, whose portrayal of the part of the French spy was really excellent throughout. Mr. Harry Douglas as Daniel, Mr. L. Walshe as Commander Collville, R.N., and all the others lent loyal assistance in helping to make a satisfactory whole, while little Dot Hendry as Wilfred deserves a word of praise all to herself. The piece was very adequately staged, some of the scenes being most realistic, while a very large number of supernumeraries were also introduced to make up an effective nautical tableau. "On Active Service" has run to good business during the week, despite the strong counter attractions of the elections.

STRAND COMEDY CO.—"THE J.P."

The plans for "The J.P." season were opened at Messrs. Wildman and Arey's yesterday morning last, and the booking has been excellent. The success of this piece in London has been phenomenal. In London alone it ran for over 400 nights at the Strand Theatre, whilst it has been continually touring the provinces for the past four years. The piece will be presented under arrangement with Mr. J. C. Williamson, and in consequence of the brevity of the Australian season, which is limited to twenty weeks, the Auckland season of the company is curtailed to a few nights only. Already "The J.P." is a topic of conversation throughout the city, and it is almost a safe proposition to assert that crowded houses will be recorded on each evening of the company's stay. Referring to the performance of Mr. Dallas and Miss Florence Lloyd, the star of the combination, a leading Melbourne daily remarks: "Mr. Dallas has

a type of character in the exposition of which he positively revels. His J.P. is a silly satyr, basking with foolish infatuation in the smiles of beauty, irrepressible in his gallantry by any amount of abuse and ill-fortune, shallow in cunning, ready in resource, and at bottom not ill-natured. Mr. Dallas' appearance in the part is alone sufficient to upset the gravity of beholders. The indefinite complexion, the sparse and straggling locks, the thin pretence of dignity, all combine to make his Caesar Montague laughter-provoking from his entrance on the stage. But the drollery of the impersonation is culminated in the last act, when Mr. Dallas slides head foremost down a flight of stairs and lies at the foot of them overwhelmed with pillows thrown upon him by a justly indignant servant maid, and the audience roars with laughter. Altogether, his Caesar Montague is a comedy embodiment of the richest and most ludicrous kind. Miss Florence Lloyd seems to have been born to wear the unmentionables, so completely, when assuming them, does she divest herself of the attributes of her sex. It is not a travesty, but a transformation. Miss Lloyd does not merely assume the costume of a young man; she gets into the skin of the sex, and reproduces a purity of condition, with all his tricks of carriage and demeanour, and all his characteristic gestures and attitudes. The illusion is consequently complete."

OPERA HOUSE.

FULLER'S ENTERTAINERS.

This week's programme at the Opera House continues to draw good houses, in spite of the powerful counter attraction of the electioneering campaign. A glance at the many excellent items included in the entertainment, however, shows that the large share of public patronage accorded is well merited. Tuesday evening found a large audience awaiting the rise of the curtain, the orchestra, under Mr. Frank Crowther's conductorship, leading off with a fine overture, "Ma Luka," which brought the curtain up on the company. The opening chorus, "The Star of Love," was well rendered, and then Miss Gertie McLeod took the boards in a dainty serio, "She's His Sunday Girl," which was well received. Mr. Will Lochrane, who was Scotch enough in spite of his dark complexion, next gave "Macra-Mac-Menac-McCann," which caused much amusement and applause. Recalled, he gave "I Never Stopped Running" and "Nine Gallant Hielanders," for which he was loudly applauded, and as the audience would not let him go he delivered a par-

liamentary address that put most of the candidates we have heard completely in the shade. Miss Cissie Whitford, who appeared next, gave a bright little serio turn, "Flo—from Pimlico," for which she was warmly applauded. She was followed by Mr. Wallace Ascot, who is the possessor of a good tenor voice that was heard to considerable advantage in "Only a Soldier Boy." Mr. Bob Lloyd made a great hit with his topical songs, and was recalled several times. His song, "Nobody Knows, Nobody Cares," was very good, whilst "I Wouldn't Grumble Any More" was productive of much hilarity. His introduction of the famous voucher incident, and other items of an appropriate nature, fairly caught on with the house. Miss Cecile Stephano, who has quite won the hearts of Opera House audiences with her singing, sang "The Flight of Ages," giving a fine rendering of this grand song. Mr. Fuller's clear tenor joined in very happily with Miss Stephano's full deep notes, and the song was loudly applauded. Miss Gertie Maisie, whose serio and dance turn closed the first half of the programme, went through "Marching in the Band" most attractively, and was the recipient of considerable applause.

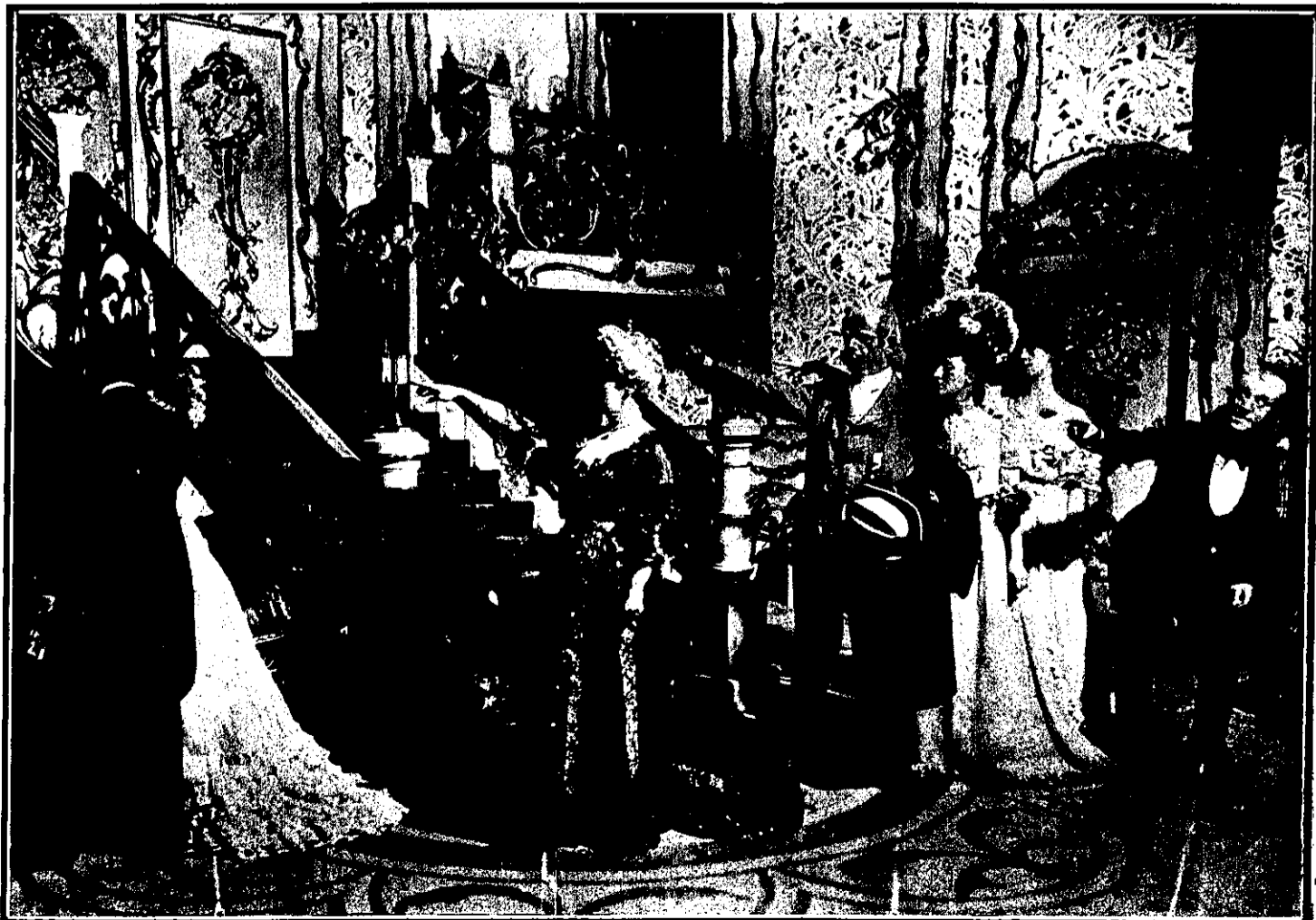
The second half commenced with a Scotch song and dance, "Hieland Rory," by Miss Gertie McLeod. The dance was gone through very daintily, and called for much applause. Mons. Oel Snekah, the shadowgraphist and bird imitator, who next appeared, gave a good exhibition of what can be done with shadow pictures. Many of them were excellent, particularly Napoleon after Waterloo and the jockey. The rabbit was also most lifelike. At the finish he gave two clever imitations of a bird singing, and the plaintive cry of a chicken. Clyde Cook, described as the king of all dancers, proved that he had good claim to that title in a series of almost bewildering evolutions on his feet. His lightness of foot is little short of wonderful, and he was loudly applauded and recalled for his turn. The next item was a duet by the two Stephano's, Cecile and Luu, who sang "Whisper and I Shall Hear" very charmingly, and were loudly applauded. Fred Rivenhall, who appeared in a large budget of comic songs, quite took the audience by storm, and was applauded and laughed at uproariously. His song, "Duty Must Be Done," in which he appeared as a doughty "mimber of the force," was very funny. The Brewers, John and Maude, American coons, etc., gave an excellent turn, their dancing and cake-walking proving a most attractive feature. Their sketch, "From America to

the Jungles of Africa," was very good, and a distinct novelty. The weird African dances and wild-looking dresses of the two were most interesting and picturesque. The evening's performance concluded with Mr. Bob Lloyd's farce, "You'll Like the Job," that caused much amusement.

On Monday next, December 11th, Ward Lear, the great end-man and mimic, is billed to make a reappearance at the Opera House.

For many years past we have had the pleasure of writing numerous favourable notices of the open musical evenings and recitals given by the pupils at the Webb School of Music, where a high standard of proficiency is invariably the rule. It must be very gratifying to the teachers, Mr. W. H. Webbe and Miss M. Spooner, to find their efforts officially noticed by such a high authority as Mr. Graham P. Moore, one of the principal examiners of the Associated Board Royal Academy of Music and Royal College of Music, London, who has written the following report of his visit to this well-known school of music:—"For this examination Mr. Webbe presented about fifty of his pupils, who performed a programme which included a large number of interesting solos, duets, and quartettes for piano-forte, both classical and modern, with spirit, precision, and fluency. Evidence was given that much care had been bestowed upon their technical training, each pupil readily playing any scale or arpeggio asked for by me with correct mechanism, fingering, and touch. One young lady in particular gave a full demonstration of the methods adopted which are fully abreast of modern requirements. Reading at sight, that usually neglected subject, had evidently received special attention, Mr. Webbe's pupils all reading fluently, not only alone, but also when playing together in duets and quartettes. In addition, good results were obtained in transposition, ear tests, and memorising. To sum up, Mr. Webbe, whose aims and methods deserve appreciation, is giving his pupils a thorough musical training, grounding them properly in each department, and paving the way, by his example, for the founding of a school of sound musicians, who should do good work in the colony in the future. (Signed) GRAHAM P. MOORE."

The naval and military drama, "On Active Service," will be repeated for the last time to-night at His Majesty's, while Friday and Saturday, the last two nights of the MacMahon Company's season, will be devoted to the production of the exciting bushranger play, "The Kelly Gang."



SCENE FROM "THE J.P."—"That is Captain Ratier."