

THE STAGE

(By "Footlight.")

OPERA HOUSE.

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

"MONSIEUR BEUCAIRE."

After a week's run to good business "The Darling of the Gods" gave way on Monday to that most charming of plays, "Monsieur Beaucaire." It is about a year ago that it was first played in Auckland, scoring an instantaneous success, and now the Knight-Jeffries Company have repeated their former triumph. It is a fine acting play, full of stirring scenes and bright dialogue, while the period is that picturesque one when the women wore powder and patches, the satin suits of the men were as radiant in colouring as a bird of paradise. The City of Bath in those days was what Homburg or Carlsbad is to-day—a place where fashion gathered, nominally to take the waters, but in reality to indulge in all sorts of frivolity and amusement. It was the time that ephemeral production of a curious age Beau Nash ruled Bath in his capacity of Master of Ceremonies, and when in the Pump Room were daily to be found not only many of the leaders of society, but hundreds of those whose one object in life was to obtain a foothold in the charmed circle. Booth Tarkington, in his romance has, it is true, not confined himself to historical accuracy, but has perhaps done better, for he has succeeded in making his story absorbingly interesting. It gives Mr. Julius Knight a great chance, and to say that the actor fully grasps the possibilities is but to half state the case. Mr. Knight's Monsieur Beaucaire is perhaps the finest of all his impersonations, not even excepting his Marcus Superbus in "The Sign of the Cross," which many consider to be his masterpiece. In the hands of a less versatile artist the part might easily be overdone, the effect of which would be to irretrievably ruin the play, but not so with Mr. Knight, whose impersonation is so fine, even down to the smallest and what might be considered by others unimportant details, as to make it almost above criticism. There may be better Beaucaires, although I take leave to doubt it, but we cannot hope to see them here, neither is the desire particularly strong. Miss Maud Jeffries resumed her old role of Lady Mary Carlyle, making a very sweet-faced heroine, who, however, gives but little evidence of being "the proudest woman in England." If blemish there was, it consisted in the inartistic drawl which with Miss Jeffries is becoming more pronounced than ever. Mr. G. P. Cary, as the Duke of Winterset, did sound work throughout, while Mr. Harry Plimmer made a very manly Major Molyneux, his description of the duel being a particularly fine piece of elocution. Mr. Frank Sterling appeared to enjoy the role of Mr. Rakell as much as did the audience, while all the other parts were well filled.

"Monsieur Beaucaire" has drawn good houses during the three nights of its run, but to-night will give place to "A Royal Divorce." The popularity of this Napoleonic drama has been simply wonderful. It has been played on more than one occasion here, when the business done has proved simply phenomenal. The record has been the same in the South, where people have had to be turned away nightly from the doors. Mr. Julius Knight will, of course, resume his old role of Napoleon, while Miss Maud Jeffries will enact the part of the Empress Josephine. The three fine tableaux depicting "The Return from Moscow," "The Battle of Waterloo," and "Alone on St. Helena" will again be repeated, and in every respect the production will be on the same scale as before. Those who have not seen it should on no account miss this stirring play.

THE CHARLES HOLLOWAY COMPANY.

A short season at the Opera House will be commenced by the Charles Holloway Company next Tuesday evening, when there will be staged G. R. Sims and Arthur Shirley's fine play, "Two Little Vagabonds." In the cast will be Miss Beatrice Holloway, Miss Mabel Russell, Miss Ethel Appleton, Miss Alice Deorwyn, Miss Cora Clavery, Miss Pattie Gourlay, Miss Hilda Fraser, Messrs. Robert Inman, Godfrey Cass, Jefferson Talte, J. P. O'Neill, J. Hesford, Wilton Welsh, Franklyn Kenny, George Heather, S. Leonard, Harry Brownless, Max Strathmore, and Crosbie Ward. The play is in five acts, and is one of very human interest which on its former production in Auckland drew big audiences. Some very effective scenery has been painted for the piece, which will be produced under the personal supervision of Mr. Charles Holloway. "Two Little Vagabonds" will be followed by "Rogues of the Turf" and "Shall We Forgive Her?"

Mr. James Hendy arrived in Auckland from Sydney on Sunday in advance of the Charles Holloway Dramatic Company, which opens a season next week in Auckland.

Czerny met with great success in his tour of the Waikato, packed houses being the rule. By the way, on the opening night at Hamilton the luggage, instead of arriving by the one o'clock train, came to hand in the evening. This meant getting a hustle on and no time for dinner. The curtain rose half an hour late, but "the gate" was a "boomer."

A matter that has puzzled nine out of ten people who went to see "The Darling of the Gods" was why the play was given its title, and who was the darling of the gods. Manifestly it could not be Yosan or Kara, the much-persecuted hero and heroine, neither could the cruel Zakkuri fill the bill. I have heard many discussions on the point, but in no case was the right answer hit on, namely, that it was the butterfly inadvertently killed by Yosan in the first act.

The next dramatic company to visit us will be that headed by Mr. Charles Holloway, which commences a season on the 13th inst. under the management of Mr. Edwin Geach.

Miss Florence Hamer, whose portrait forms the subject of our frontispiece this week, is well known to Auckland audiences, having been here previously with "The Marriage of Kitty" Company. In that comedy and in the others played by the company, Miss Hamer proved beyond

doubt that she is possessed of exceptional ability, her success being very great, so much so that it seems a pity she is not given greater opportunities with the present organisation, the Knight-Jeffries Company. Miss Hamer's two years' engagement really terminated when the New Zealand tour commenced, but she likes the colony and its people so much that the trip through the island was undertaken. After the season at His Majesty's, Miss Hamer will pay a flying visit to the Hot Lakes, and then leave for Sydney, where she will join the R.M.s. Orient, which sails for London on March 10. The popular actress states that her two years' experience in Australia and New Zealand has been a particularly happy one.

"British Australasian," just to hand, says: "Mr. J. C. Williamson was wont to say that Miss Carrie Moore was the cleverest child who had ever come under his banner. Her rise to first place was phenomenal and deserved. In London, under Mr. George Edwardes, she fully justified the reputation which gained her a leading place in his companies, at Daly's and elsewhere. At the Grand, Glasgow, in Mr. Robert Courteidge's production of 'Aladdin,' she opened as principal boy on the 30th ult., and achieved instantaneous success. On the first night the gallery, like Oliver Twist, called for 'Moore.'"



MISS C. HOLMES, a beautiful English actress.