

THE STAGE

(By "Footlight.")

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

"THE ROSE OF THE RIVIERA."

This popular musical comedy held the boards for the latter part of last week, and was also repeated on Monday. It went with all its old swing, the comic portions causing much merriment, while many of the songs were nightly encored. Miss May Beatty again scored in the pretty song "Egypt," with its plaintive refrain, and her other numbers were well received. Mr. Lauri proved, as usual, a host in himself, loyal assistance being rendered by Miss McNaughton, the Bovis Brothers, and others of the company, while a very special feature was the excellence of the dancing.

"A MOORISH MAID."

On account of "A Moorish Maid" having been written and composed by two local men, it created quite a sensation when first produced in Auckland by an amateur company last year. Much curiosity was therefore aroused when it was known that the Stephenson Comedy Company intended staging the piece, and among the large audience on Tuesday evening were many members of the original cast. When first the opera was seen here it suffered greatly from the fact that the notices in the daily papers were absurdly fulsome in their praise, the writers being doubtless imbued with the laudable idea that as the piece was the work of a local pressman it would be a kindly act to give it a good send-off. As a result, play-goers were led to expect that they were about to witness one of the operas of the age, and were accordingly somewhat disappointed, for although there was a great deal of merit in it the faults were there also. For the present production "the book" has been largely re-written and brightened up, but even now is susceptible of considerable improvement. The main fault is that the music is far too good for the play, and is more in the nature of grand opera. There are too many solos and duets of the serious order, and these follow each other in quick succession, whereas an all-round improvement would be effected if one or two were deleted, and others in lighter vein introduced for the sake of brightening the piece. In brief, the main fault to be found with "The Moorish Maid" as a comic opera is that it is so rarely comic. At the same time there is very much to admire, several of the solos being really beautiful, while the choruses in more than one instance compel the highest admiration. Mr. Edward Lauri essayed the role of Gastro, and while he was on the stage the laughter was continuous. His make-up was exceedingly humorous, especially so in the second act, while his fun-making efforts were of the most spontaneous description, and were keenly appreciated by the audience, whose chief regret was that Gastro was not on the stage all the time. The advent of Miss Rosina Buckmann was awaited with keen interest, which soon changed to warm appreciation. Her first success was made in the pretty ballad "Loverland," while all through her performance was excellent. The beautifully-rendered "See O'er the Mountain," perhaps, drew forth the greatest applause, and at its close Miss Buckmann was the recipient of some beautiful bouquets. The Prince Omar of Mr. Leslie Hill was about a little like what the author doubtless intended as it could possibly be, but his singing greatly compensated for the other deficiencies. Miss May Garstang was the Moorish maid, acquitting herself very pleasingly. Miss May Beatty had very little to do as May, the leader of the hockey team, but made the most of every point. Miss Mabelle Morgan was heard to good advantage in the songs allotted to the Princess. Mr. Charles McNaughton was the Divorcer-General, but even he could not make anything exceptionally humorous of the part. Mr. Harold Reeves acquitted himself splendidly as Elferino, the lieutenant of the Riffians, his fine voice being heard to excellent effect in "A Brigand of High Degree," which was deservedly encored. Fresh parts had been written for the Bovis Brothers, and they did their utmost towards promoting the hilarity of the evening, although it was not quite obvious what connection there was between them and the rest of the

characters. The dance of the hockey girls was very greatly admired, and materially helped towards the enjoyment of the audience. The piece was well staged, the costumes being excellent, while the orchestra, although too loud at times, did splendid work under the baton of Mr. Alfred Hill, the composer. The production, as a whole, must be summed up as a decided success, and it should on no account be missed.

THE MACMAHON DRAMATIC CO.

Next Monday the popular MacMahon Dramatic Company will make a re-appearance in Auckland, when, by arrangement with Mr. J. C. Williamson, the stirring military play, "Human Nature," will be staged at His Majesty's Theatre. This fine drama, written by G. R. Sims and Henry Pettit, was one of the greatest Adelphi successes, the reason of this being that there is a very interesting plot, while the strong leaven of the military element appeals greatly to the great majority of audiences. The piece has been a great success in the South, where packed audiences have been the invariable rule. Mr. Tom Pollard and a strong staff are already in Auckland making arrangements for staging the piece on a great scale. Very especial pains are being taken with the great battle scene in the Soudan, which is said to be particularly realistic. As popular pieces only will be staged there is certain to be a bumper house when the curtain rises on Monday evening.

OPERA HOUSE.

FULLER'S ENTERTAINERS.

The Opera House was well patronised on Monday evening, when a very good programme was presented. The setting for the first scene was as before, "High Life on the Quarter-deck," and the nautical accessories pleased the audience immensely. Frank Crowther's orchestra

opened with a bright little overture, "Jolly Blacksmiths," and then the company sang sea chanties, and danced hornpipes gaily until, carried away by the realism of Mr. Hutchison's painting, they at last succumbed to the rolling of the waves. Presently the good ship Opera House struck a smooth patch of water, enabling Miss Nellie Power to take the deck in a dainty serio item, "My Mimosa San," which went well and earned her an encore. She was followed by Miss Kittie Campion, who sang "A Dream of Paradise." Her voice, though not a strong one, is very clear and sweet, and she was loudly applauded and recalled. As an encore she sang a lullaby, and was again heartily applauded. Mr. Will Stevens next kept the house amused until Miss Viola Price took the boards in a bright little song and dance, "It Must Be Love," which she went through capitally, and which earned her applause and a recall. Mr. Chas. Howard next sang, "The Admiral's Broom" very finely, putting considerable power and expression into the song, and being loudly applauded and encored. Mr. Lal Logie, who followed him, gave "You Ain't No Actor," the song being somewhat spoilt by the vociferous way in which it was sung. Lal Logie has a powerful voice, which would be heard to better advantage were he to sing a little more quietly. His turn, which is always a good one, also bordered perilously on the vulgar at times. Miss Dorothy L'Estrange next sang "Carmencita" very sweetly, and received hearty applause, and in response to a recall sang "Within a Mile of Edinburgh Town," her expression and singing being very good. The first part concluded with a clever sketch by the Driscolls, whose dancing was excellent. Part two was commenced with a couple of illustrated songs by Mr. Chas. Howard, which went well, the pictures being very clear and nicely coloured. "Rollo and Clair," a couple of clever acrobats who followed, gave a very neat exhibition of tumbling.

The elder of the two did some wonderful lifting with his jaws, at one time carrying round a table, the edge of which he held between his teeth. An equally clever feat consisted in lifting his companion from the floor by seizing him by the belt with his teeth. The turn was a notable one, and introduced several new and clever acrobatic feats, for which the two were loudly applauded. Miss Florrie Ranger next came forward in a couple of new songs that pleased the audience immensely, and for which she was applauded and recalled. She was followed by the ever-popular Fred Rivenhall, who appeared in a new song, "Are You Asleep," which proved as good a sketch as this clever artist has yet given us. Two other songs, "I've Got the Sack" and "Susie Sue," followed, and in response to a vociferous demand, "Duty Must Be Done," a very old favourite with Opera House patrons, was given. Mr. Rivenhall can always rest assured of a warm welcome whenever he cares to return from abroad. Miss Stella Ranger, who has become quite a favourite, sang "The Carnival" very brightly, and in answer to a recall gave "Doris Dear." She is the possessor of a good voice of considerable richness, and sings her songs clearly and distinctly. The evening's entertainment concluded with some clever eccentric sketches by the popular Driscolls, whose work is of the best.

Next Saturday Mr. Fuller has several fresh artists billed to appear, among them being the Brewers, the clever American coons who visited Auckland a short while back.

Mr. Alec Verne writes me that the dates for Bostock and Wombwell's Circus and Menagerie are: Oamaru, March 15 and 16; Waimate, 17th; Timaru, 19th, 20th, and 21st; and Ashburton, 22nd and 23rd. A season will be opened in Christchurch on the 24th, and the show will be at Wellington on April 7th, afterwards working up to Auckland. So far business has been excellent.



SNAPSHOTS AT A REHEARSAL OF "THE MOORISH MAID."

MR. EDWARD LAURI as Gastro. The BOVIS BROS., as a Heavy Tragedian and a Low Comedian.
Photos. by Phil Muir.