

THE STAGE

(By "Footlight.")

HIS MAJESTY'S.

THE MACMAHON DRAMATIC CO.

"THE EXECUTIONER'S DAUGHTER."

The second production by the MacMahon Dramatic Company was the four-act play "The Executioner's Daughter," a dramatisation from the French by Mr E. Hill-Mitchelson. The story is well worked out and is a particularly interesting one the piece on the whole being much ahead of the opening production. It tells of a Monsieur Roche, who is the executioner of Paris, a fact which he has entirely concealed from his family and friends. He has two daughters, Annette, a woman in a hundred, and Felice, who is rightly described as a disgrace to the name of woman. Annette is secretly married to one Felix Marius, a thief and gambler, who, besides countless other villainies, has in a fit of rage, crippled a child of his by a former wife. Marius is anxious to get rid of Annette, of whom he has tired, and of the child, in which he is aided by Felice and one Vivan Ormonde, a tool of his. To the aid of Annette comes Paul Rouvell, who loves her, and Tom Holmes, a telegraphist. Also they are assisted by an old man named Kretch. Marius robs Monsieur Roche's safe and discovers the secret of his calling. The old man finds this out and Marius is denounced, and in defending himself betrays Roche, and at the same time announces his marriage with Annette. The thought of their own father being the much-hated executioner is too much for the family, who all turn from him with the exception of the crippled child Christina. Next Marius is detected cheating at cards and on being accused murders his victim. To save himself he puts the police on the track of Paul and Annette, who have eloped, and the latter is charged with the crime and condemned to be guillotined. The father is then called upon to execute his own child, but refuses to do so, whereupon Marius, who is the sheriff of the district, is about to carry out the sentence, when Paul and Tom Holmes save her by means of a forged reprieve. All return to Roche's house, when Marius and Ormonde again attempt to rob Roche, but are frustrated by Christina, who locks them in the strongroom they are robbing, where they are caught by the Gendarmes. Christina, who has been a witness of the murder, denounces Marius, her own father, whose prospect of meeting his fate at the hands of Roche, the executioner whom he has so wronged, seem very certain as the curtain descends. The story told in brief seems over gloomy, but there are many bright spots in the play itself, the comedy element being fairly strong. Miss May Granville was cast for Annette, in which she proved successful, although somewhat lacking in the vivaciousness which is such an essential attribute of the French woman. Miss Helen Fergus made every possible point tell as Felice, a woman who sticks at nothing to gain her own ends. Miss May Renno was amusing as ever as Sally King, a domestic from the East End of London. Little Miss Sinclair did exceedingly well as Christina, the cripple, a special point being her clearness of utterance. Miss Oriel Hotson and Miss Stephenson, as a Parisienne and a Sister of Mercy respectively, were not given much chance to distinguish themselves. Mr Charles Blake as the hero Paul Rouvell, gave an exceedingly natural representation of the part, his work all through being most consistent. Mr Alfred Boothman proved as thorough going a scoundrel as could be wished, but why he should speak in broken English was not obvious. All the characters would be speaking French in reality, and as the present is an English version, presumably all should speak correct English. Otherwise Mr Boothman's interpretation left nothing to be desired. Mr E. B. Russell made the most of the part of Monsieur Roche, the pathetic scene where he refuses to execute his own child, being a very effective bit of acting. A clever character study was that of old Kretch, by Mr S. A. Fitzgerald and this was one of the

best things in the piece. Most of the fun of the evening was caused by the efforts of Mr E. Nable, a servant, telegraphist, etc., who in an impossible character and in an absurd make-up, succeeded in getting roars of laughter from the large audience. Mr M. Lynch was somewhat colourless as Vivan Ormonde, while Messrs Coape, G. A. Preston, W. Ellison, H. Walker, N. E. Clifford and others helped to complete a long cast.

The piece was most effectively staged, all the details being properly attended to. So good was the all round quality of the acting, and so strong the dramatic interest running through the piece that perhaps the Company might do well to make it their opening production during their Southern tour.

Douglas made a hit with his coon song "There's a Chicken Dinner Waiting For Me," and was promptly recalled for another item. Miss Stella Vernea was heard to good advantage in the pathetic ballad "When My Sweetheart Answered Yes." Her voice shows marked improvement and the song was given with considerable feeling. Mr Carl Collier drifted onto the stage as lightly as gossamer, to the accompaniment of growing hilarity, and very quickly made the fun fast and furious. His 'pat' delivery of comic songs, and wild eccentric dancing always makes a great hit, and on Monday evening as usual he was recalled to further orders. Miss Dorothy L'Estrange was warmly applauded and recalled for her rendering of the soprano song "Oh How

were as delightful as ever in their musical turn, a pleasant feature being the singing of the lady performer, whose voice is a very sweet one. The cornet selection was specially good, and the piccolo playing was a treat. Miss Dorothy L'Estrange sang "For Old Time's Sake," the song being illustrated with a series of fine pictures. Miss Clara Keating gave a couple of dainty serio items, for which she was warmly applauded and recalled. Loydall and Berry made a great hit with their clever sketch "Acting on the Brain," which caused great hilarity and loud applause. Loydall's work is neat and finished, and has a breeziness about it that is irresistible. The lady's work is delightfully fresh, and between the two of them they quite captivate the audience, whose spontaneous applause proves the success scored by these versatile performers. Our old friends the Driscolls created roars of laughter and applause with their clever sketches, and their turn went as pat on Monday evening after their prolonged stay at the Opera House, as it did on their first appearance. They never give stale items, but believe in something fresh every week and herein lies a large measure of their success. The evening's performance closed with another series of pictures by the Warwick Bioscope that caused great amusement and applause.

MR CHARLES VERNER.

In the course of the MacMahon Dramatic Season in Auckland, which will extend to four weeks, that which should prove to be a refreshing novelty or rather a welcome recurrence of a beloved phase of the drama, will be the appearance in Irish plays of the famous Irish actor, Mr Charles Verner, who has recently arrived from England specially engaged by this management. The opening production will be the original version of the patriotic play "Shamus O'Brien," as played by Mr Verner first in New York and widely throughout the world.

THE OLYMPIA RINK.

Excellent reports continue to come to hand from patrons as to the general management at the Olympia Rink, and this popular resort is never without plenty of visitors. Rinking possesses a subtle fascination on its own and an hour or two spent on the roller skates passes all too quickly. Three sessions are held during the day, and everything possible is done to make patrons enjoy themselves. The result is that everybody who goes once goes again, and all have a good word for Mr Woodley and his staff.

ROYAL ALBERT HALL.

PROFESSOR POTTER'S ATHLETIC DISPLAY.

That Auckland possesses a man of no mean strength in Franich was evidenced by a series of weight-lifting feats performed by this youthful Hercules at an athletic display given by the pupils of Professor Potter in the Royal Albert Hall last Thursday evening. Franich in a number of poses showed the audience the high standard to which the various muscles of his body were developed. With one hand he lifted a 75lb. bar-bell, then a 150lb. bell, and after that a bell weighing 180lbs. The last-named weight he supported on his neck and shoulders with a boy hanging on each end and one behind. The feature of the evening was the great motor car act in which Franich allowed a car (weighing 22cwt) to be driven over his chest while he supported it with his hands and legs. During the evening exhibitions of tumbling, wrestling, fencing, lance exercises, pyramids, and parallel bar exercises were given by some of the pupils, and the capable manner in which they were executed reflects great credit on the instructor, Professor Potter. A fire club solo performed by Professor Potter, accompanied by Mr W. Purcell on the piano, came in for a good round of applause. Vado, the magical monarch, created much amusement with his card, flag, and other tricks, and Mr J. Smithson's whistling solo was well received. Songs were rendered by Messrs R. Aulsebrook and J. Smithson, which contributed largely to the success of the evening.



MISS ROSA BERRY, a clever Sketch Artist, now appearing at the Opera House, in her original Chinese act.

"THE PRICE OF SIN."

To-night the management produce on a scale of exceptional lavishness, the third dramatic novelty of the season, when Mr Hill Mitchelson's (the author of "The Executioner's Daughter" and other equally successful London productions) cleverly constructed play "The Price of Sin," will be presented for the first time in New Zealand. Another drama new to Auckland entitled "The Galley Slave," being underlined for early production.

THE OPERA HOUSE.

FULLERS' ENTERTAINERS.

There was a large audience at the Opera House on Monday evening to witness the change of programme, and the items given were capital throughout. Mr Frank Crowther's Orchestra played the curtain up with a lively overture, and the Company gave a good opening chorus. The Two Stars, who first took the boards, gave a bright little singing and dancing sketch "That Candy Girl of Mine," which showed that they are making steady headway with their work, and we shall expect to hear more of them before very long. Mr Aubrey

Delightful," and her clear full notes made one think of grand opera. Miss Clara Keating gave a serio and dance very bewitchingly, and finished it off with a dainty dance under the limelight that earned her hearty applause and a recall. The first half concluded with a couple of films by the bioscope that were much appreciated by the audience. Part two ushered in by Mr Frank Crowther's Orchestra, commenced with a bright little triple song and dance by the "Three Stars," that went well and earned them applause and a recall. The Power Brothers gave a very graceful and finished exhibition of tight wire balancing that earned hearty applause at the hands of the audience. They performed some exceedingly skillful evolutions on the wire, notably the changing of places, and the act in which one of the two stood on the shoulders of his partner. Their turn is an excellent one, the only thing that struck us being that a finer climax might be substituted, as their leading work appears to demand that the finish should eclipse it. Mr Val Newton was very fine in "The Skippers of St. Ives," his rich mellow voice and clear enunciation giving a capital rendering of the song. He was warmly applauded and recalled for his efforts. Monaghan and Sheehan