



THE STAGE

(By "Footlight.")

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

"A COUNTRY GIRL."

The management made no mistake in including a revival of "A Country Girl" in the repertoire, and good business was done throughout the four nights' season. It is doubtful if any comic opera has been presented which surpasses this musical play of Mr. J. L. Tanner's, and it is one of the most universally popular ever presented to the public. As Geoffrey Challoner, Mr. Arthur Crane had plenty of scope, and he lost no opportunity. Miss Olive Godwin is probably at her best in the part of Marjory Joy, and her fulfilment of the role was most charming. In the delightful "Coo" duet with Mr. Crane there was such a perfect blending of voices, that it amounted to a musical triumph, and the audience was sent into ecstasies. Mr. George Lauri appeared in his original role of Barry, and with Miss Connie Milne as Madame Sophie, was responsible for no end of merriment. The applause which followed their clever duet, "Won't You Marry Me, Chic?" amounted to a furor. Mr. Claude Bantock seems eminently suited for such parts as the Rajah of Bong, and assumes the role with a kind of humorous stoicism which befits the conception. Miss Nellie Wilson was a decided success as Princess Mehelaneh, a part in which Miss Cecilia Ghiloni appeared the last time "A Country Girl" was staged in Auckland. Miss Wilson's singing and acting was in thorough accord with the character, and her conception of the Indian princess was one of the most creditable features of the piece. Mr. W. S. Percy had hardly his usual amount of scope in the part of the country-bred Douglas Verity, but, needless to remark, he made the most of it as a character study. As Nan, Miss Evelyn Scott was really excellent, and her "Try Again, Johnny," was simply splendid. Minor parts were taken in a way that combined to make the presentation of "A Country Girl" one of the most successful productions of the season.

"LA MASCOTTE."

Audran's charming opera, "La Mascotte," was staged on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and appeared, to judge by the unstinted applause, to have lost none of its old-time popularity. It abounds in beautiful melodies, the music throughout showing up in sharp contrast with some of the stuff given us in more recent years. Moreover, there is a coherent plot told in a picturesque way, and this is never allowed to be obliterated by the desire for broad farce or burlesque. The fun is there in plentitude, nevertheless, and from start to finish the opera went with all its old-time swing.

Miss Olive Godwin essayed the role of Bettina, the Mascotte, and succeeded in giving a capital impersonation of the turkey herd. What was wanting in vivacity was compensated for by her singing some of the numbers entrusted to her being a genuine treat indeed. In the famous "Glon Glon" duet with Mr. J. Ralston, the audience gave her a very hearty recall. Miss Evelyn Scott did good work in the comparatively small role of Fiametta, her representation being very bright. Owing to the illness of George Lauri the part of Laurent XVII. was undertaken by Mr. W. S. Percy. It is perhaps hardly the best of this talented comedian's characters, but he threw himself into the part with much vigour and succeeded in keeping the audience thoroughly amused while he was on the stage. He received a great reception on making his appearance on Monday, many of the audience, no doubt remembering Mr. Percy's many successes with the Pollards, being glad their old favourite should have a chance to show his ability. Mr. Bantock was entirely satisfactory as Rocco, a role

be invested with much humour. Mr. J. Ralston made a very manly Pippo, while his singing showed considerable improvement. Mr. Arthur Crane was excellent as the Crown Prince, the beautiful "Love is Blind" being splendidly rendered. This, of course, is a tenor song, and one remembers how sweetly Joseph Tapley used to render it. Very little was lost in the hands of Mr. Crane, whose light baritone was also heard to good effect in other fine items.

The dressing of the piece was lavish almost to gorgeousness, many of the costumes being particularly fine. The chorus work throughout was excellent, while a beautiful effect of lighting was introduced in the marching and counter-marching of the soldiers in the third act. If fault there was it might be that the orchestra was too loud, more than one of the vocal gems being partly ruined through this cause. Taken as a whole "La Mascotte" was probably the most enjoyable of the pieces staged during the present season.

To-night, Friday, and Saturday the ever-popular "Belle of New York" will go up, and this will bring the season to a close. The Belle is by no means new to Aucklanders but there is something about it which greatly appeals to the public taste. It is said that the present company do the opera very full justice, and under the circumstances it may be expected that crowded houses will result for the rest of the season.

"THE SQUAW MAN."

Mr. E. Milton Royle's four act comedy drama, "The Squaw Man," will be produced in Auckland at His Majesty's Theatre on Monday evening next, for the first time. This is Mr. J. C. Williamson's latest attraction, and it has been produced in crowded houses in Sydney and Melbourne and throughout the South of this colony. As an emotional revelation of life in distinct and stirring phrases, "The Squaw Man" is said to mark an era in modern play construction. A set of intense human probabilities distinguish the story, the incidents of which are welded into a dramatic episode. The opening scene is laid in England, and the succeeding ones in the Western States of America. Typical scenes of American life are promised in this realistic drama, and to help the presentation a number of real cowboys and several talented artists have been imported. The occasion will be notable in introducing to Auckland audiences Mr. J. C. Williamson's new dramatic company, headed by Mr. Charles Waldron, whose fine personality and talent have already won for him a "star" position on the stage; and Miss Ola Humphrey, a gifted leading lady, whose work has made for her a widely known and enviable reputation. Included in the company are a number of Australian favourites, in addition to the contingent of artists whom Mr. Williamson specially selected in England and America. The scenic investiture of "The Squaw Man" reaches the high water mark of excellence which has always characterised the firm's productions, while no detail has been neglected that might add to the artistic verity of the

representation. "The Squaw Man" will be followed by "The Virginian," "Under Two Flags," and "The Christian."

THE OPERA HOUSE.

FULLER'S ENTERTAINERS.

An excellent programme is being presented at the Opera House this week. The song cycle which constitutes the first part is made up by attractive items of special merit. Miss May Wallace is making her first appearance, and creates a very favourable impression, her serio singing and step-dancing being clever. Mr. A. L. Cropp, though obviously suffering from a cold, is nevertheless appreciated, and his singing of "The Mighty Deep" was, as all his contributions are, a very acceptable item. Miss Beattie Macdonald sang a charming little song, entitled "I'd Like to Call You Sweetheart," for which she was encored again and again. Mr. Sam Wilson's popularity never wanes; the audience is always heartily glad to see him, and it is doubtful if there has ever been a more genuinely established favourite before Auckland playgoers. His jokes are mainly original, and he possesses a quaint drollery which never grows monotonous. "Just a Little Bit of Sugar-cane," was prettily sung by pretty little Eileen McLeod, who has, by her winsome ways, won a place in the hearts of Opera House habitués. Miss Florrie Leigh always chooses songs which become popular with the



MISS OLA J. HUMPHREY, OF "THE SQUAW MAN" COMPANY.