



THE STAGE

(By "Footlight.")

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.**"THE SQUAW MAN."**

So many good reports had reached Auckland as to the merits of "The Squaw Man," that playgoers were on the tip toe of expectation concerning it, and therefore when the curtain rose on the initial production in Auckland on Monday evening there was a great house to welcome the new company. "The Squaw Man" is described as a sensational melo-comedy drama by E. Milton Royle and is in four acts. The story has been told before in these columns. It shows how the Earl of Kerhill has misappropriated the regimental funds for the widows and orphans, and when utter disgrace and ruin threaten, how his cousin, Captain James Wynnegate, takes the blame upon his shoulders and flies the country. This he does for the sake, not of his profligate cousin, but for the sake of Diana, the Countess of Kerhill, whom he loves. James goes to Utah, where under the name of Jim Carston he goes in for ranching. Here one Cash Hawkins, who is a typical example of a western desperado, attempts to do for him, but is shot by Nat-V-Rich, an Indian maiden. Jim's life is saved on more than one occasion by the same grit and partly out of gratitude, and partly so that their child shall not be illegitimate Jim marries the Indian, thus earning for himself the contemptuous title of squaw man. After some years the Earl of Kerhill dies, and the family solicitor, accompanied by Diana and her cousin, Sir John Apple-gate, come to look for Jim. They ultimately find him when things are in a bad way with him. The solicitor attempts to persuade Jim to return home, but he refuses, although after much pressure he consents to the boy Hal going. Diana learns of Jim's marriage with Nat-V-Rich, and agrees to take charge of the boy in England. Just as they have departed the sheriff arrives to arrest Nat-V-Rich, who solves the whole problem by shooting herself, and one is left to infer shooting herself, and one is left to infer Diana.

When one has had the praises of any play sung in one's ears in all keys, it sometimes happens that the actual performance comes as something of a disappointment and this may be said of "The Squaw Man." The first act is dull, and on the opening night dragged a good deal, and although matters improve when the scene is transferred to America, yet there is too sombre a note throughout, which is not improved by the repeated farewells to the little boy or the subsequent suicide of the mother. The play would have been improved if the author had introduced a few lighter touches to relieve the mournfulness of the theme.

As Captain Wynnegate, Mr Charles Waldron was not too convincing, but as Jim Carston he improved immensely. He played the part very quietly throughout, making a very manly hero. In the strong scene in the Long Horn Saloon, Maverick, Mr Waldron was seen to much advantage, while the pathos of the closing incidents was well brought out. Miss Oia J. Humphrey as Diana, had not a great deal to do, except to look charming, in which she succeeded admirably. Although not particularly in accord with one's preconceived idea of an English Countess, Miss Humphrey scored more than once, notably in the opening scene with her husband and his cousin. Perhaps the most generally popular character in the play is that of Bill, the foreman, splendidly taken by Mr Rapley Holmes, who became an instant favourite with the audience. The Cash Hawkins of Mr George Bryant was satisfactory, in that the rustler was shown as a bully of the worst type, all the objectionable features of the character being well brought out. Mr Leonard Wiley was somewhat overweighted with the part of the Earl of Kerhill, and was not very convincing. Mrs G. B. Lewis made an effective Lady Elizabeth Wynnegate the Earl's mother, while all the other characters in a very big cast were capably filled. Particular mention must be made of Mr Hardie Kirkland's Tabywana, a very impressive performance, while Miss Florence Glee-

son's Nat-U-Rich was another good piece of work.

Anything presented under the William-son management is bound to be staged in the very best style. The appointments in connection with the production of "The Squaw Man" were no exception to the rule and the elegance of the costumes was a special feature. "The Squaw Man" will reign at His Majesty's during the week, and will be followed by "The Virginian," a strong play founded on the absorbingly interesting book of that name.

THE ROYAL COMIC OPERA COY.

The ever popular "Belle of New York" was staged on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and this proved perhaps the most attractive of the five pieces seen during the Comic Opera Company's sojourn at His Majesty's, for there was an excellent house each night. Miss Olive Godwin in the title role sang most charmingly, being especially heard to good effect in the many fine choruses with which the piece abounds. Miss Alma Barber made a particularly dainty Fifi Fricot, perhaps the best thing she has shown us. Miss Nelly Wilson was fairly successful as Cora

Angelique. Miss Connie Milne, a great favourite with the audience, was well cast as Kissy Fitzgarter. Miss Tilly Woodlock made the most of the small part of Mamie Clancy. Mr Claude Bantock, after a somewhat poor effort in the opening song, improved wonderfully, giving a very humorous conception of Ichabod Bronson. Mr Arthur Crane sang the items entrusted to him in a manner which called forth warm applause. The part of Blinky Bill fitted Mr Fred Leslie like a glove, his dancing being excellent. Mr W. A. Percy was as humorous as ever in his old role of the mad German, and all the other parts were well filled. The choruses were splendidly taken, especially the great one at the close of the first act, one of the best things in the opera. The revival was in fact a striking success. The season closed on Saturday evening, and the company have now gone to Christchurch.

OPERA HOUSE.**FULLER'S ENTERTAINERS.**

A smile of complacency wreaths the countenance of the Opera House management these times. Good business, and

steady business, has been recorded, and nightly big crowds fill the theatre from top to bottom. An almost entire change of programme is being presented this week, no less than twelve new artists taking the boards. Miss Lorraine Tansley's rather pleasing contralto voice was heard to advantage in "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep." In response to an encore she sang "The Banks of Loch Lomond," and received a good reception. Maxwell and Roberts, two handsome artists, are making their first appearance, and bid to become very popular. Their singing is good, though a little more unanimity of action in their dancing would be an improvement. Mr Larry Herz was encored for his singing of "Floradora." "Have You Seen My Soldier boy" was coyly sung by Miss May Wallace, who received an emphatic encore. The fun and humour of the first part of the programme is in the very capable hands of Messrs Sam Wilson and Harry Linden, and these artists, both corner comedians of the first water, are responsible for a good deal of laughter making. Miss Ida Berridge is a very clever little artist, and her items were encored again and again. "He Kissed I



*Madame
Blanche Arral*