



# THE STAGE

## HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

## WEST'S PICTURES.

After a season of a month at His Majesty's, West's Pictures were finally withdrawn on Saturday evening. During the season many fine pictures have been shown, and the season has been a success. That it fell short of the phenomenal run when Mr. West first showed here was due partly, of course, to the fact that the novelty of the entertainment has worn off, but probably more from the over-supply of the "faked" pictures of an alleged humorous nature. We have all got rather tired of the impossible conjuring feats, the chasing pictures, and the French dramatic studies which are so palpably being acted for our benefit. All through the real pictures have proved by far the most popular, and that these have been entirely subordinated to the other kind has in no small measure accounted for the decreased attendances. Mr. West has, however, brightened many an evening for us with his clever entertainment, and the pictures will at all times be welcome back here again.

## "BLUEBELL IN FAIRYLAND."

## OPENING ON BOXING NIGHT.

On Thursday evening (Boxing Night) the Pollard Juvenile Opera Company will open a season at His Majesty's Theatre in the charming musical drama play, "Bluebell in Fairyland." Much curiosity has been aroused as to how the "new Pollards" will compare with the old organisation which was always immensely popular up here. Reports from the South have been quite unanimous in praising both the company and the piece, which is said to be beautifully mounted and to contain some very bright and sparkling music and many graceful dances. That it is full of merit is shown by the fact that when Seymour Hicks produced it at the new Aldwych Theatre, London, it scored an immense success. It is quite safe to venture the prediction that there will not be a vacant seat at the theatre when the curtain goes up on Thursday evening.

"Blue Bell in Fairyland" is described as a "musical dream play," and was written by Seymour Hicks, who, in the original production, played the part of Dicky the Bootblack. The story is simple and pretty and revolves around the poverty and subsequent good fortune of Bluebell and her two baby sisters.

Blue Bell is discovered sleeping on the steps of Mr. Joplin's house, and is moved on by an unsympathetic policeman just before Mr. Joplin, emerging from the house, inquires vainly for the little flower-girl he had so often seen in the neighbourhood. The scene changes to Piccadilly Circus, where we find Blue Bell with her pal and sweetheart, Dicky, a crossin-sweeper, and bootblack. Here the kind-hearted Mr. Joplin who appears to have taken quite a fatherly fancy to the child, finds her and gives her a sovereign to buy Christmas toys. The next scene is in Blue Bell's garret in Drury Lane, where her two baby sisters are awaiting her return. Having hung up their stockings, they kneel and pray: "Please, Father Christmas, send us some toys because we haven't got any, please." A cat, who is really a fairy in disguise, enters with a companion, and with the babies sings an irresistibly funny quartette called "Two Little Cats." Then Blue Bell comes home laden with good things, and there is much joy in the garret. The children are put to bed, and fall asleep while she reads to them a fairy story of "The Sleeping King and the Little Girl Who Found Him." Blue Bell too, slumbers, and in her sleep the story is enacted. Waking from her dream, Mr. Joplin comes to tell her that he has decided to adopt her, and make her rich. But Blue Bell will not go without Dicky and a pretty love scene concludes the play.

## OPERA HOUSE.

## FULLER'S ENTERTAINERS.

The Christmas season is now in full swing and, with the strong and varied programme being presented at the Opera House, it is not surprising that Messrs. Fuller are able to report extraordinary business. Each night during holiday time finds the popular place of amusement packed to the doors, which is ample evidence of the great favour in which the entertainment provided is held. Salmon (Harry) and Chester (Ida) appear in an American rural comedy sketch entitled "The Blacksmith's Boy," with which they create unrestrained laughter. Mr. Salmon undertakes the role of the village blacksmith in a most capable manner, his clever acting evoking great applause. Pastor and Merle prove themselves to be acrobats of no mean ability, and their humorous turn is one that catches on immensely with the audience. They are both possessed with plenty of elasticity, and give a creditable display of gymnastic tricks. The two Sandow girls, Hammon and Wyatt, are making their reappearance with a number of taking songs, and their popularity is already established. "Come and Make Love to Me," as sung by them, makes quite a hit with the audience. Mr. R. Collins, the American tenor, is heard to much advantage in "Why Don't You Love Me, Honey?" and other numbers, all of which are duly appreciated. Decidedly the quaintest juvenile double ever seen in Auckland are the Seyffer Twins, who are now appearing at the Opera House with remarkable success. This unique pair keep the fun at fever heat, and are heartily applauded as a result of their efforts. "And He Never Touched Me," in which Davy's Marionettes are seen, is rather an amusing performance, and is responsible for a good deal of merriment. Klaer's troupe of dogs and monkeys show wonderful intelligence as a result of their careful training, and the knowing way in which they go through various acts in response to their master's commands clearly shows that they thoroughly understand what is wanted of them. Master Norman Mudford has a couple of capital songs in "Seagull" and "Just Because You were an Old Sweetheart of Mine," with which he finds scope for displaying his boyish voice to considerable advantage. Mr. Bob Lloyd, Auckland's favourite comedian, keeps things going merrily with several comic songs, and is accorded a hearty reception. Miss Nelly Maher is heard in "Smile on Me" and "On and Off the Stage" two fairly attractive items, after which she dances a waltz clog in an accomplished manner. Freddy Garnet, the original dummy clown, gives an exhibition of tumbling and other feats, some of which are extremely difficult. The Cromes again present their musical entertainment, while the showing of a variety of interesting biograph films adds further to the making up of a first-rate programme.

## CHRISTMAS NIGHT AT THE OPERA HOUSE.

A special Christmas night performance will be given at the Opera House, when views of "Living Ireland" will be shown; three thousand feet of film giving pictures of Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Londonderry, the Giant's Causeway, etc. Mr. John Fuller will sing "The Holy City," while the Musical Cromes and other artists will assist.

The Besses o' the Barn Band are now on their way back to Lancashire.

Mr. John Black, of the Black Family of Musicians, writes as follows:—"We are showing at Castlemaine, Victoria, at present (December 15). Finish on Saturday and go into Melbourne for a month's holiday. All the family are well and send regards to New Zealand readers and wish them a Happy Christmas."

New Zealand dates for Madame Clara Butt's concerts are:—Auckland, 14th and 16th January; Wellington, 20th and 24th; Christchurch, January 30th to February 3rd; and Dunedin, February 5th and 7th.

From Mr. M. Marcus, the well-known theatrical manager, comes a card conveying good wishes for Christmas. They are reciprocated.

Madame Melba sings for the last time in Australia at the Melbourne concert on Boxing night.

"Bluebell in Fairyland" on Boxing night.

The free performance of "The Messiah" will not be given this Christmas.

Mr. John Fuller, sen., leaves at the end of February on a round-the-world tour, going home by way of the Red Sea and returning through America and Japan.

La Milo, who returned to London early in November from a visit to the Continent, opened at the Leeds Empire on November 16th.

The Abbey Theatre, Dublin, aspires to produce Irish plays, giving true pictures of Irish life. A very young actor, named Fitzmaurice, the son of a country rector, has just had a drama produced by the Abbey players, which is said to be highly promising. The title of it is "A Country Dressmaker." Mr. Beerbohm Tree and Mrs. Patrick Campbell have expressed their great delight with the little theatre and its plays. Mr. Tree declares that in it Irishmen have founded their national theatre.

Mr. T. J. West is likely to make a small fortune during his six months' lease of the Glaciarium (says Melbourne "Dramatic News.") The centre floor alone seats over 3000 people, and quite another 500 can sit with ease on the back and side galleries. Well, on opening night, the house was so filled that in future the means of exit will have to be greatly increased. One would say that there were quite 4000 people in the building. As for the show the pictures are the largest ever seen here, and perhaps also the most diversified. The most novel and interesting are the launching of the Bellerophon, and a series of views of the late war at Casablanca.

"The Girl Behind the Counter" is the biggest musical success in New York at the present time, and is considered one of the best musical comedies seen there for some seasons. Messrs. Meynell and Gunn hold the Australian rights.

The stage manager stood at the prompt corner and placed his finger on an electric bell-push to ring in the orchestra, at the same time peeping through the curtain to see if the band appeared. The first summons had no success. He rang again; still no success. On ringing a third time a man came towards him on the stage with the remark, "What can I get you, sir?"

"Get me? Nothing that I know of at present," replied the stage manager, as he again pushed the bell.

"But I've come for an order, sir," urged the man.

"Hang you and your orders too!" said the now irate manager, looking down into the orchestra viciously, and noting its deserted appearance he savagely placed his finger on the bell and kept it there.

"I'm waiting, sir" again essayed the man.

"Get out of it," blurted the stage manager, "cannot you see I am busy? I don't want you, I tell you."

"But what are you ringing for?" asked the man.

"Ringing for!" answered the manager. "I'm ringing for the orchestra, if you want to know."

"Oh!" ejaculated the man; "don't you know you are ringing the bar bell?"

Two of the new songs of the coming pantomime season in London are "The Violet" and an American ditty, "Way Down in Colon Town." This last is expected to rival "The Honey-suckle and the Bee" in popularity.

"The Silver King" was first produced in London at the Princess's Theatre on November 16, 1882, by Mr. Wilson Barrett, and was revived by him at the new Olympic on January 3, 1891, and again at the Lyceum on September 2 1899.

Even "between the acts," the playgoer rarely casts a thought to that insignificant, yet indispensable, personage, the super (writes "Peter Quince"); and yet his stage life is more varied than a land boom. He may, by fortunate investments in the Chinese lottery, or by erratic and occasional early morning peregrinations with fish or rabbits acquire a little money, but his fixed income from the realms of art is from 15s to 20s a week. What a gamut of life he must run for half-a-crown a night. Millionaires may see all kinds of life, but the poverty-stricken super actually "lives" a great deal more when he struts and frets his hour upon the stage. One night he may, from within the interior of a turkey-twill robe and beneath a pasteboard hat, lend his aid to a medieval Doge of Venice in hearing the case of abduction brought by Signor Brabantio against General Othello, and the next night he will be a night wail, sleeping in a modern London park. At one time he is one of a crowd of English yokels, cheering the returned son of the sea, and at another he is back hundreds of years, a nobleman of Verona, twittering to a gaudy noblewoman (on the same salary) in the festive ballroom of the Capulets. Do "supers" I wonder, ever think "between the acts" and if they do, must they not moralise and sigh, "Such is life!"

## HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

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Sole Direction Mr. Tom Pollard.

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