

THE STAGE

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

CLARA BUTT AND KENNERLEY RUMFORD.

Aucklanders have been worked up to a pitch of expectation with regard to Madame Clara Butt and Mr Kennerley Rumford, and thus, despite the high prices, it was a foregone conclusion there would be a big house at His Majesty's on Monday evening. Big it was too, nearly every seat in the large theatre being occupied, the audience being seemingly imbued with the unanimous wish to give the distinguished artists a warm-hearted reception. On Madame Butt making her first appearance, she was greeted with a storm of applause, and it was some time before she was allowed to proceed with her opening number, which proved to be the aria "O Don Fatale" from Verdi's Don Carlos. This was sung in Italian, a language not understood by her audience. But they speedily realised that although the song might not be quite to their liking, the voice was there, a magnificent organ indeed of tremendous power and range. Yet not in any way lacking in the purity of tone and sweetness. Instantly one realised the secret of Madame Butt's great success, for truly she is a great artiste to her fingers' tips. An encore was of course inevitable, and few there were who did not hope for a dainty ballad, but this time it was Brahms' "Wiegenlied," sung in German. In the second half of the programme, Madame Butt sang Liddé's "Abide with Me." One could have wished that the

more melodious setting had been chosen, but it was a grand effort, the beautiful words telling out with magnificent effect. The organ accompaniment, however, was weak, and indeed could hardly be heard, and one could have wished that Mr Midgeley had been provided with an instrument more worth of the singer and himself. There was much applause, during which one member of the audience voiced the wish of everybody with the remark "Give us a ballad." Smiling at the interruption Madame Butt sang that charming mother's lullaby "My Treasure" and at its close she can have had no further doubt as to the class of song which finds most favour here. What a colonial audience wants is not classical music in a foreign language, but some of the gems of their own land—something they can understand and follow. Of course one is branded as a veritable heretic in saying so, but to get right down to the bedrock of actual fact, severely classical music, the beauties of which can only be divined by the very, very few, is never a welcome addition to a concert programme; for nineteen out of twenty in every audience infinitely prefer our English composers. Could proof of this be wanting after the storm of applause which broke out after Madame Butt's singing of the tender English ballad, Heron - Maxwell's charming "Smiles"? To it the applause which had gone before was as a zephyr and by that beautifully rendered ballad, Madame Butt will be remembered. One could eagerly have wished that the programme contained more of such songs.

Mr Kennerley Rumford was evidently not quite at his best on the opening night,



MISS MARION HALL, A CHARMING SERIO, NOW APPEARING WITH FULLER'S ENTERTAINERS.

neither were his songs particularly well chosen. He has a pleasing baritone, which, without possessing any great power, is nevertheless of particularly musical quality. He commenced with Rossini's aria "Largo at Facotum," from "Il Barbiere de Seviglia" singing it in the original Italian. As an encore "Da Bist wie eine Blum" was beautifully rendered, one's enjoyment of the soft passages, however, being marred by the irritating sound from the electric air fans. In the second half of the programme, Mr Rumford songs were "All thro' the Night," an old Welsh air, and King Charles. The first solemn and slow, was in great contrast to the stirring rouse "King Charles" and the applause was very hearty. A much appreciated item was the encore number Somerville's "Little Red Fox." Mr Rumford also joined with Madame Butt in Goring Thomas' fine duet "Night Hymn at Sea," which was one of the gems of the concert, and for which there was an emphatic recall. Mr Carl Barre, the violinist, appears to be a master of technique. His rendering of Schubert's Wilhelm's "Ave Maria" was fine and, and even better was the dainty "Hungarian Dance" (Brahms-Joachim). Perhaps his best effort was Mozart's "Menuet," but all the items were well received. We have heard better pianists here than Mr Frank Merrick, the items entrusted to him being treated in a rather lifeless and mechanical manner, this being particularly noticeable in Brahms' "Romanze in F." Nothing but praise can be given to Mr Arthur Godfrey, who, as accompanist, was well nigh perfect. Mr Midgeley also lent valuable assistance at the organ. Last night a second concert was given, but too late for any review in this issue. Madame Butt's items were Gluck's "Divinities du Styx," Sullivan's immortal "Lost Chord," and with Mr Rumford Goring Thomas' duet "Dear Love of Mine." Mr Rumford's numbers were "The Two Grenadiers," "Thy Beaming Eyes," and "Four Jolly Sailormen."

An extra concert will be given this evening, the box plan for which is now open.

OPERA HOUSE.

FULLER'S ENTERTAINERS.

Good houses continue to be the rule at the Opera House, and this week sees a number of new artists appearing before the footlights. Mr Will James proves to be a banjo expert of no mean order, his playing of Balfe's masterpiece "The Bohemian Girl" overture being a particu-

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MRS. ROBERT BROUGH AS MRS. DAN DE MILLE, IN "BREWSTER'S MILLIONS."