

CHRISTCHURCH NOTES.

My Christchurch dramatic correspondent writes:—John F. Sheridan is with us once again, the same old John F. as of yore, only more so. Directly he made his appearance on the first night of the season, the house fairly rose at him, and he had to bow his acknowledgements again and again. Christchurch has a soft corner of its heart for the "Widdy." This time Mr Sheridan brings us an exceptional attraction in "Cinderella," which is magnificently put on and recalls the days of our youth when pantomime was pantomime. "Cinderella" is one of the old fashioned pantos. with a gorgeous transformation scene, and a harlequinade. Miss Heba Barlow, well and favourably known here, plays the part of Cinderella the girl who put her foot in it, and right worthily does she fill the bill. Her "Mirror Song" won't be soon forgotten. But all her songs are good, and her dancing is beyond reproach. In fact she is largely responsible for the success of the show. John F. as the "Baroness" is screamingly funny and scores heavily in the topical ditty, "After You with the Soap." Miss Stella Selborne is charming as the Prince, and Jack Hagan deserves honourable mention for his "Buttons." The part of "Mephistryon" is capably taken by Mr Jas. Hughes, who possesses a capital bass voice and sings "The Storm Fiend" like an artist. Miss Vera Payne's toe-dance is a novelty, and "the educated cow" act by those smart acrobats, Morris and Wilson is a feature of the entertainment. They are also most successful in "the Acrobatic Burglars." Oh, and Fred. Morris does some roller-skating quite in his old way. The ballets, marches, etc., are magnificent.

The rush on the last night of the Julius Knight season was terrific. Imagine hundreds of people indulging in a sort of free fight at the doors, and you have some idea of the scene.

Frank Thornton opens here on Saturday in "When Knights were Bold," one of the latest London successes. We are hoping he will put on "The Private Secretary" before he leaves us. This famous play is perennially popular.

The "Royal Pictures" continue to draw enormous audiences to the Colosseum, thanks not only to the excellence of the pictures, but to the personal popularity of Mr Liston, who is one of the right sort.

"THE BELL OF MAYFAIR."

We hear a good deal about art on the stage, but, after all, it is the box office that talks, and with the musical clink of money. "The Belle of Mayfair" is apparently going to repeat the success of "Miss Hook of Holland," for the Theatre Royal, has been packed since the opening night. The run, however, is limited to only three more weeks, when the season closes. A second visit to "The Belle of Mayfair" (writes a correspondent), strengthens the first impressions of the piece, and one finds even more attractiveness in this charming musical production than on the initial visit. The music, too, grows on one, so to speak. It is in a refreshingly original view, dainty, and yet catchy. One is struck, too, by the beauty of orchestration, which is certainly the finest that Leslie Stuart has ever wedded to a musical play. There are no less than twenty-four songs in the production, every one of which clings to the memory. So far as the dressing, staging, and the mounting are concerned, Meynell and Gunn have spared no expense to make the production a success, and the result is a magnificent performance. The dresses which were imported from London and Paris, are indescribably beautiful, the second act, which takes place in Sir John Chaldicott's drawing-room, being a glorious aggregation of colour harmonies.

THE MALLINSONS.

"Rich in variety and graced by excellent taste," is the description applied to the Mallinson song recitals, which have proved eminently successful in Melbourne, and New Zealanders may look forward to an artistic treat. Mr Mallinson takes a high place among contemporary song-writers. In Mrs Mallinson the composer has found a sympathetic interpreter of his songs. "The distinguished singer showed her heart and soul in her work," says a Melbourne paper, referring to the last recital, and succeeded completely in exhibiting the musical and emotional merits of her husband's compositions. Her voice, particularly sweet when softly used, is clear and ringing in the upper register, while her intonation and phrasing are faultless. The New Zealand season commences at Auckland on July 16. The following towns will also be visited:—Gisborne, Napier, Hastings, Dannevirke, Wanganui, Marton, Hawera, New Plymouth,

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Stratford, Feilding Palmerston North, Masterton, Wellington, Christchurch, Ashburton, Timaru, Oamaru, Dunedin and Invercargil. The Tasmania tour commences at Hobart on October 10, Launceston following on the 17th.

The hold that "Miss Hook of Holland" has upon Melbourne audiences is indicated by the fact that, after a ten weeks' run, the piece was revived at a matinee on Friday, 26th, given by Rupert Clarke, John Wren, Meynell and Gunn, in aid of St. Vincent's Hospital, and drew a large audience. The theatre and everybody's services were given free, so that the whole of the takings, amounting to £130, will be handed to the institution named. To this sum Mr John Wren added £20, to bring it up to the century and a half. Sydney audiences are looking forward with keen interest to seeing "Miss Hook of Holland." The Dutch comic opera opens at the Criterion on July 25, and a fifteen weeks' season will be done in the Harbour City.

The Melbourne girls are cultivating the Gibson walk. It either makes them look very graceful, or as awkward as an ostrich. They ought to take lessons from Helene Rose, who is said to look an ideal Gibson Girl in "The Belle of Mayfair."

Maud Chetwynd, who not long ago was a popular member of the Royal Comic Opera Co., is returning to the stage, and has been engaged by Rupert Clarke, John Wren, Meynell and Gunn to appear in the production of "Two Little Sailor Boys," which will be done during the season of the firm's dramatic company which opens at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, on July 18. Miss Chetwynd ought to be a good draw. Ernest Leicester, Lillian Meyers, and James Lindsay will also be in the cast.

When "The Fatal Wedding" is revived at the Melbourne Royal by Meynell and Gunn on July 18, that popular young actress, Beatrice Holloway, will be in the cast. Also, Maisie Pesner will take her old part of

the "Little Mother," in which she made such a hit on previous occasions.

The New Zealand tenor, Mr Charles Carter, has been making quite a hit in the Moody-Manners' season of opera at the Crystal Palace. Mr Carter scored his principal successes in Wagnerian roles.

Miss May Beatty and Mr Edward Lauri have made a fresh success in "The Lady Bandits," which got its initial hearing at the Holborn Empire (London) last month. The lady bandits are picturesque Suffragettes, and Miss Beatty figures as their leader.

C. F. Morgan, at one time with J. F. Sheridan, is now heading a syndicate to build provincial music halls in England.

Miss Marie Lohr, the young Australian actress will be the Marguerite of Mr Tree's production of "Faust" in the Autumn.

In view of the cable message stating that Mme. Melba's matinee performance in London had yielded £2000 to the London hospitals, it is interesting to recall (says the "Referee") that the great Australian diva holds the record for takings at any one concert in Australia. In the season 1902 Madame Melba attracted an audience representing £2630 to the Sydney Town Hall. The next highest house secured in Australia by any other artist is that of M. Paderewski, the famous pianist, who secured £1300 odd at a concert in Sydney, and about the same figure in Melbourne. Madame Melba, in the same season, was the means of inducing £1750 to the taken at a concert given in the Exhibition Building, Melbourne.

Mr Herbert Flemming has received a cable from his London agent stating that he had secured for the Australasian actor-manager, the Commonwealth rights of "Mrs Dot," "Lady Frederick," "Jack Straw," and "The Breed of the Treshams."

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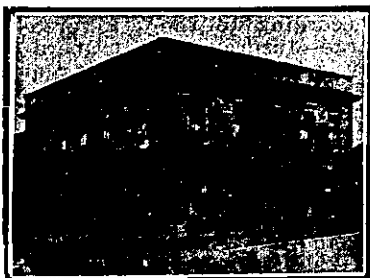
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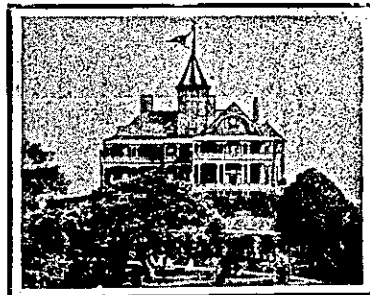
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