



THE STAGE

(By "Comus.")

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

THE JOHN F. SHERIDAN COMPANY.

The "immortal" Widow O'Brien, who now travels under her own name, and not as a mere passenger on the fast and furious steamer Bristol, made her appearance for the many thousandth time at His Majesty's last week. She still retains her stern demeanour towards her rebellious daughters, and entertains the same old objection to be called "Mrs Obreeon." She is, also, just as lively and as fond of a joke, and displays even more than the old-time dexterity in knocking (old Cranberry's) head on the table and making him turn a somersault in his rocking-chair. Miss Celia Mavis is one of the sweetest of the many Norahs that the Widow has adopted, and she has certainly never had a more fascinating elder daughter than Miss Heba Barlow. Mr Sydney Carden develops quite a mine of comedy in his impersonation of bashful Tommy Cranberry. Mr Needham is a fine old Captain Cranberry, and all the other parties to the revels deserve a medal with several clasps. The singing and dancing are lively and bright, and everything else is fully up to the mark, except perhaps the nigger steward.

On Monday there appeared a variant of the O'Brien legend in the shape of Mrs Murphy on a Trip to Chicago. There was the same mother, and the same daughters, and the same young men, and the same old man, and the same rascal who wants to marry the Widow for her dollars. The only addition is a lady who is mother to one of the young men. And an admirable addition she is, too, as played by that clever actress Miss Stella Thebaud, who has heretofore been seen in parts much smaller than her talent. The programme embraces a rich store of music and dancing, and succeeds in filling the house with wholesome delight and merriment. Last night the company appeared in "Naughty Nancy."

THE FRAWLEY DRAMATIC COMPANY.

Mr Daniel Frawley and his company, specially imported from America by Mr J. C. Williamson, is about the biggest thing we have yet had from the States in the theatrical line. In America the name of Daniel Frawley stands for "the best," and his specially selected company of

American artists has throughout his Australian tour done full justice to the reputation of its chief and his charming leading lady. Miss Mary Van Buren, whose picture graces our columns this week. The opening play next Monday, October 12, at His Majesty's Theatre, will be the striking American drama "Arizona," which so caught on in its native land that it is now in its fourth year and still running. It is a tale of the rough South-west, full of military interest, and so fitted the English taste that it ran for 300 nights in London. While in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane the company has awakened enthusiasm from start to finish of its brilliant and extensive repertoire. The company has early engagements to keep in Africa, and consequently the time is limited for their New Zealand tour. In order that Mr Frawley may be seen in as many of his principal characters as possible, Mr J. C. Williamson has decided upon a series of rapid changes of bill, which, of course, adds considerably to the cost of the tour, but is only characteristic of the lavish scale upon which Australia's premier manager invariably caters for his patrons.

The second piece will be "Barbara Freitchie," a powerful drama from the pen of Clyde Fitch. It is a story of the Civil War, full of dramatic interest, and said to be the author's best play.

OPERA HOUSE.

THE WOODS-WILLIAMSON COMPANY.

This clever company showed what they could do in the lighter walks of the drama last week, when Mr Sydney Grundy's amusing three-act farce "The Arabian Nights" was staged. The play went with great spirit from the start. Miss Williamson was the bright, particular star of the cast as the irrepressible mother-in-law, showing unmistakably that her talents are by no means restricted to the exposition of the deeper shades of human sentiment. There is always at hand the temptation to "over-do" such characters, but Miss Williamson is much too gifted and experienced to be led astray by transient impulses. Mr Woods was extremely good as the son-in-law who gets into a scrape and sinks deeper in the effort to extricate himself, but comedy is not this artist's forte. Messrs Beaumont, Buckler, Hassel, and Miss Carleon ably seconded the principals. The comedy will be repeated, and all who want a couple of hours amusement should go and see it.



MISS EDNA LEIGHTON, of John F. Sheridan's Co., formerly known as Renee Lees, the brilliant child pianist.

On Monday the company returned to the serious side, and gave a first-rate representation of the late Tom Taylor's drama, "The Master Passion." The play has always enjoyed a large measure of popularity for several reasons. It is semi-historical; it deals with a romantic period; it affords immense scope for the display of passionate rhetoric, and it is a costume play. It was correctly and efficiently staged, and the principal characters found sympathetic exponents in the leading members of the company. In the exacting part of the hero, Henri du Neuville, Mr Woods rose to considerable heights, but the chief honours must be paid to Miss Williamson for her telling presentation of the woman who, noble in all other respects, falls a victim to the wretched passion for gambling. Mr Boothman gave an exceedingly powerful reading of the part of Fouche, Napoleon's Minister of Police, and Mr Buckler was a most capable Desmarests, Chief of the Secret Police. The other parts were well filled.

Last night there was a revival of "The Gates of Bondage," to-night "The Arabian Nights" will be presented, to be followed by revivals of "A Woman's Sin" to-morrow evening, "Hands Across the Sea" on Saturday, and for the first time in this Colony, on Monday night, "In Old Madrid," a dramatisation by Miss Williamson of Mr F. Marion Crawford's splendid romance, "In the Palace of the King." The season closes on Wednesday.

THE CITY HALL.

FULLER'S ENTERTAINERS.

Time goes round very quickly, finding John Fuller in his eleventh week at the City Hall, and still going strong, with a cheerful determination to please and be pleased. His liberal and spirited policy in making rapid changes and sticking to good quality has produced the inevitable result, and the taste for vaudeville is increasing week by week. The present programme, which was inaugurated on Saturday last, is quite up to the Fuller standard. Jessie Dell, the new "serio," has quickly established herself as a prime favourite in her song "The Diamond Queen," while her darning causes huge delight. Young Thomas McDonald has a sweet alto voice, and his song, "When the Harvest Days are Over," rouses the house to the pitch of enthusiasm. Thomas nightly has to respond to encores without number. The Clare Sisters are a bewitching pair who add much to the attraction of the show, while Charles Waite sings several ballads in a pleasing style and also acts as interlocutor. The remaining members of the company, Bob Bell, Joe Watts, Madge Lucas, Miss Kinnaid, the Driscoll Boys, and John Fuller himself, all do their best to maintain the gaiety of this portion of the Empire. Further changes are promised on Saturday.

On Thursday last the 107th "open evening" for visitors took place at Mr W. H. Webbe's School of Music, Grafton Road, inaugurating the 21st year. The ensemble pieces included four piano quartettes contributed by Misses E. Spooner, M. Anderson, M. Webbe, G. Spooner, A. Webbe, S. Clarke, E. Cole, M. Willerton, V. Henderson, L. Burns, A. Dawson, Mr F. Morton, Mrs Ferguson, Misses L. Cutts, A. Jeavons, J. Heath. Piano duo by Misses D. Nichol and D. Henderson; pianoforte solos, which were mostly played from memory, by Misses V. Henderson, M. Webbe, and G. Spooner. These included selections from Beethoven, Scharwenka, and Chopin. The ensemble playing was exceedingly good, while the soloists were evidently experienced hands. Mr Webbe, by request, contributed a couple of clever improvisations, which proved of great interest, particularly to the students and a number of professional musicians, who were amongst the visitors. Mr Webbe and his assistant teacher, Miss M. Spooner, are to be congratulated on the success of their pupils. The visitors' items included songs contributed by Miss H. Evans, and Mr Hamilton Hodges, and a violin and piano duo, Sonata Beethoven, by Misses A. Steuenson and A. Law, which were heartily appreciated. The large music room was well filled by a critical and appreciative assembly.

My Wellington correspondent writes, under date October 1st:—The Musgrove Opera Coy. are scoring heavily with "The Fortune Teller" at the Opera House. The piece will run only five nights, when "The Serenade" goes on. Some of the old favorites were warmly received, especially Miss May Beatty, who captivated her hearers. She seems to have improved in vocal powers since her last visit, and can adapt herself to circumstances much better than the usual run of operatic stars. Mr Lempriere Pringle and J. C. Piddock are also favorites. Dix's Gaiety Coy. are putting up a new musical sketch to-night, entitled "Monte Carlo." There will also be added four new faces. Misses Addie Fredericks, in her cloud swing speciality, and Malvena Moore, serio and dancer, are getting lots of applause nightly, and the De Wynne Bros. (in their last nights) are also well received. The Delevalles, in their singing and cycling specialities, are getting along famously. Fuller's Entertainers are attracting attention at the Choral Hall with their people. The last nights are announced of the Jones Bros., Albert M'Kisson and Ada Duval. Miss Bessie Young reappeared this week, and is a warm favorite. The Phillips Sisters also reappeared. Hawtrey Comedy Coy. passed through Wellington yesterday for the West Coast tour.

Mr Harry Rickards has closed down at Adelaide.



ALFRED WOODS as "Dan Mylrea" in "The Gates of Bondage."