

STAGE GOSSIP.

FROM NAVY TO STAGE.

Mr. Frank Harvey, whose acting of the role of Joe Allan, the burglar who does twenty years in "Sealed Orders," was just before coming to Australia appearing at the Lyceum, London, in the same productions as Miss Tittell Brune.

"Miss Brune," he says, "often spoke of Australia and how she looked forward to revisiting the country. She is very popular with Lyceum audiences. Her performance in the name-part of 'Neil Gwynne' scored a big hit. I was cast as Fairfax, her lover, in that. I also played Robin Hood in 'Ivanhoe,' Miss Brune playing Rebecca, and I was Cecil Barclay in 'Under Two Flags,' she, of course, being Cigarette.

"Most people experience great difficulty in getting a part when they want to go on the stage," reflected Mr. Harvey. "I must have been an exception to the rule. The first engagement I got they gave me five parts to play. The audience received me with a roar of laughter at every entrance, on account of recognising me from the last part. In the first act I was a funkey, in the second a general who was speedily murdered, in the third a gendarme who arrested the murderer, in the fourth I was reincarnated as the funkey, to the great joy of the house.

"Up to ten years ago I was at the Naval College at Portsmouth. The idea that I was to be one of the bulwarks of Empire. It seems quite remarkable, now I look back, that not one of the three who slept in my dormitory ever went into the service. One died from typhoid immediately on passing out, the second slipped on the quarter-deck immediately he went on board his ship, and received injuries incapacitating him for life. He is now a coal expert in Wales for the navy. I failed in the eyesight test.

"They were great days, though. I remember one day at Portsmouth there was a very willing fight between two dockers. We inveigled them to the dry moat of an old fort, and they went at it with murder in their hearts. One of the officers of the engineers was directing the hostilities, but he was interrupted every now and again by a square-set man who wanted to referee. At last the officer said, 'If you don't take your crimson self out of the way I'll punch you.' 'If you do,' the other said, 'I'll stop the fight. My name is Fisher.' It was Admiral Fisher—Jack Fisher. He refereed the fight from that on.

"We had a born strategist at the college. I wouldn't be surprised if he become a sea lord in time. One instance of his mastery of a difficult situation was shown when five of us boys felt like a feed, and could only muster eighteen pence among us. There was an eating shop off the Hard kept by an Italian. It was a gloomy, dingy place, lit by an old lamp and candles. The dago's rule was that a boy could eat as much for eighteen pence as he could get away with at a sitting. Our master strategist went in first, had his fill, got out the window, and was replaced by a second. He ate to repletion and slid through the window, to be replaced in turn. We all got our fill this way. The Italian still tells—if he is there to-day—of the boy with the biggest stomach in the wide world."

POPULAR STAGE HEROES.

Women in the past have almost always been credited with having an admiration for good looking men on the stage. Now, however, it seems ideas on this subject are undergoing a change, for we learn, and from no less an interesting and handsome actor than Mr. Matheson Lang (who recently gave his views on the subject to "The Daily Mirror") that the handsome hero no longer calls forth the greatest admiration from women theatregoers, but the man "who plays strong, masterful, even repulsive characters, is apparently the most popular, and this very popular actor mentioned such characters as Mr. Wu (a terrible Chinaman), Othello, Shylock, and The Old Hag in that popular drama "The Scarlet Pimpernel." Mr. Matheson Lang's idea is that women playgoers allow their emotions more scope than men, and so extend their sympathy more readily to any arresting and dominating character being acted. To quote from "The Daily Mirror":—"In other words, they admire principally in a male character on the stage exactly the same

qualities that 'sex interest' makes a natural woman admire in a man in real life—power and strength, not merely good looks." "No actor loses any 'Matinee Girl' admiration through playing such a character as Mr. Wu." Mr. Lang concluded: "We all value that admiration, whatever any of us may pretend to the contrary—for are not women notoriously the best playgoers and the most delightful audiences to play to?"

The benefit matinee to Mr. W. Holman (one of the oldest actors in New South Wales) was a brilliant success. Mr. Holman's announcement that Miss Ellen Terry had telegraphed her good wishes together with regrets at being unable to be present, was greeted with vigorous plaudits, and a wildly enthusiastic reception signalled the appearance of an old favourite in Miss Maggie Moore (Mrs. H. R. Roberts). "I scarce can speak to thank you for myself," quoted Mr. Holman.

The lilt of Mr. Lauder's tunes is extraordinarily haunting. Celt and Sassenach both feel their fascination. When he was playing at Lewisham recently, as soon as his turn was finished a woman in the audience hurried out. "The programme is not nearly finished yet," said the attendant, "there are some fine turns coming on." "Och, I dinna want to hear any mair," she said. "I want to get home with Harry Lauder's songs in my heid to keep them there as long as I can."

Loud rolls the drum, with a rum-tum-tum,
The bugles blare, but our boy's not there;
He is home in bed
With an aching head,
He did not parade
(By the 'fu' delayed)—
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