

ON THE STAGE

HIS MAJESTY'S.

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SEASON.

POPULAR REVIVALS.

Lovers of the quaint Gilbertian dialogue and the melodious Sullivan music are familiarising themselves gladly with the repertoire presented by the J. C. Williamson Company. The favourite "Gondoliers" was replaced last Thursday by "The Yeomen of the Guard," with Mr. Charles R. Walenn as Jack Point. Mr. Walenn, in his portrait of the jester, showed that comedy and tragedy go hand in hand, and gave telling evidence of his skill in drawing Gilbertian characters. Miss Pearl Ladd took full advantage of her opportunities as Elsie Maynard, acting and singing with nice understanding. Miss Katie May as Phoebe Meryll marked her part with charming vivacity. Mr. Albert Kavanagh as the gaoler, and Mr. Edward McKeown as the gallant Colonel Fairfax lent the necessary atmosphere in the presentment of their respective roles.

The ever-popular "Mikado" went up on Monday, and delighted a large audience. First produced in 1885, no opera has been played more frequently, and every rising amateur company has included it in its repertoire. Mr. Charles Walenn was cast as Koko, a part he has played hundreds of times, and which he treats on broad comedy lines. Mr. Walenn gave a finished study of the role, in spite of the license he allowed himself, and his rollicking interpretation conveyed itself to his colleagues, the house rocking with laughter and applause. His "Tit-Willow" song called forth a triple encore. Mr. Edward McKeown made a handsome Nanki-Poo, singing with admirable ease and effect, and evoking warm admiration for his rendering of "A Wandering Minstrel I." Mr. Frank Wilson was strikingly true to the Gilbertian traditions in his drawing of the Mikado, while Mr. C. Villiers Arnold made an artistic success of the part of Pish-Tush. Three alluring wards were disclosed in Miss Gladys Moncrieff, Miss Katie May and Miss Maud Miles, Miss Moncrieff meeting with an enormous reception for her charming rendering of "The Sun Whose Rays." Mr. Albert Kavanagh gave due pomposity to the part of Pooh-Bah, while Miss Ethel Morrison as the rejected Katisha struck the right note. The choruses were particularly sprightly and were an attractive feature of the production.

The "Mikado" will be replaced on Friday by "H.M.S. Pinafore," and "Trial by Jury," and will hold the boards till January 13, when "Pirates of Penzance" will be produced for two nights. The season closes on January 15 and 16 with "Iolanthe."

OPERA HOUSE.

Messrs Fuller-Brennan have found a big drawing card in Madame Schell and her lions, the turn being of sensational interest, and capacity business was again the order of things on Monday night. A brilliant bill was presented in support, and met with strong approval. Conspicuous amongst the newcomers were Helen, Leach and Wallin, a trio of slack-wire experts whose performance strikes the high water mark of thrills. With only their teeth to grip, two of the members suspended the wire, upon which No 3 went through a series of gymnastics, winding up with a dazzling exhibition of revolutions that produced a furore of applause. The turn is further characterised with the attractive dressing and personality of the iron jawed artistes. Mr George Melrose also made his first appearance and made a distinctly favourable impression with his impersonations of Australian actors. A trapeze act served to introduce Madame Rose Lorenz in some daring feats which riveted close attention.

Mr George Hall, the "Yankee Story-teller" made another big hit with a fresh stock of "Dooley" stories, character songs and dramatic recitals, and had to respond to an insistent encore. Wykeham and Preston gave another laughable sketch "Not in These" and had the audience well with them. That clever pair of acrobats, Keen and Waller, again made good with their most excellent work, no less for their daring than for their eccentricities. Mr. Geo. Whitehead was well received for his baritone numbers and is well up on the popularity list. Mr Charles Bartholomew had a good hearing for his vocal numbers and had to submit to a recall. Brown and Scobie with an interlude of gags and songs rounded off a taking holiday bill. The usual matinees will be held on Wednesday and Saturday.

Miss Gladys Moncrieff's beautiful voice (writes a Sydney critic commenting on "H.M.S. Pinafore") carried her brilliantly through the apostrophe to the "Gods of Love and Reason," which formed the big aria of the second act, where she closed on a wonderful E flat in altissimo which brought down the house.



MISS GLADYS MONCRIEFF, the brilliant young Australian soprano with J. C. Williamson's Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company.

"THE COURT CARDS."

Though the performances of the "Court Cards" are reminiscent of those of the Scarlet Troubadours, three of whom, in Miss Fane, Messrs. Warwick and Manering, are with the present pack, many advances upon the original style have been introduced, leading to the unanimous press verdict that the "Court Cards" raise their entertainments to a much higher plane. Miss Maude Fane, the Queen of Hearts, captivates her listeners through the very chic manner in which she sings and acts. The Queen of Diamonds, Miss Renee Maude, possesses a cultivated soprano voice, while Miss Winifred Mitchell, as the Queen of Clubs, produces much melody in her specialty turns. Mr. Sydney Mannerling, the tenor, is already well known throughout New Zealand, a remark which applies equally to Mr. Edward Warwick, the Joker. In Mr. George Graystone, the basso, the Cards possess an exceedingly strong trump, always led at the right time. Mr. George Titchener is a merry-maker who brings voice, face and feet into action, while at the piano is Mr. Albert Keats. "The Cards" are said to excel in

humorous concerted work, in well-balanced male quartettes, and in fine "scenas." The box plan for the Auckland season, commencing on January 18, will be opened at Wildman and Arey's on Wednesday, January 18.

IN PERSONAL TOUCH.

Mr J. J. O'Sullivan, business manager of the Court Cards Costume Concert Company, is well known through New Zealand. Mr O'Sullivan toured the smalls of the Dominion as manager of the O'Connor Operatic Company a short time ago, and has had many years' association with the theatrical business. He is a brother of Mr Tom Pollard.

Mr Walenn claims that he has Gilbert's warrant for every bit of business that may seem new to audiences in this part of the world.

The extra special demonstration reserved by Sydney playgoers for "One of their own," says the Australasian was given to Miss Dorothy Brunton when she appeared at Her Majesty's in the name part of "The Girl in the Film."

La Milo is illuminating American vaudeville at present. New York "Variety" and "Star" devoted much pictorial space and matter to the famous poseuse in a recent number. Says the "Star" Stage Pictorial; "Of all the big girls in the world, La Milo is among the few who possess the correct measurements according to classical proportions. She is a beautiful girl and that is still more in her favour, for good looks go the greatest way in the race for popularity. Nevertheless, it is in her figure that is her chief beauty. She is perfect in every measurement. Artists seeing her say she is a new Venus de Milo. Even her flesh is marble."

Miss Maude Fane, the dainty comedienne of the "Court Cards," has already been making decided hits with several exclusive numbers specially written for her at Home. Her rendering of "Piccadilly Percy," "Beautiful Eggs," and "Sister Susie's Sewing Shirts for Soldiers" have proved decided trumps as interpreted by the Queen of Hearts.

Mr. A. A. Hintz, advance manager of the "Court Cards," reports excellent business in the South, and has gone on to Hamilton to prepare for the company's appearance in the Waikato. The "Cards" open their Auckland season on January 18.

At the farewell gathering of the Austral Salon in Melbourne for 1914. Mr. Walter Kirby was presented with a blue enamel and gold star—the Salon badge. Mrs. Thomas Baker (vice-president) said it was a token of the esteem of the members, all of whom felt a personal interest in his career, as it was at the Salon he had made his debut, and they regarded him as one of their most successful proteges. In responding, Mr. Kirby said he considered that the Austral Salon had done good service in helping the young artists of Australia to gain a footing which in many instances had led to musical or dramatic advancement.

Miss Gladys Moncrieff, before she left Sydney, was presented with a bouquet from the Sydney board of directors of the Australian Natives' Association on behalf of the Townsville branch, of which Miss Moncrieff was a member, congratulating her on her brilliant success.

Mr. Edward McKeown will take the part of Ralph Rackstraw in "Pinafore" on Friday night. He is said to express the spirit of the music to a nicety.

PETER DAWSON.

In response to the earnest request of the various musical centres, Mr. Peter Dawson, the world famous baritone, has decided to make a thorough tour of New Zealand under the direction of J. and N. Tait. Every town with a hall accommodation large enough to offer sufficient inducement will be visited by the renowned singer and his accomplished colleagues. Among the singers whose names have resounded loudly throughout the world of music Peter Dawson steps into the foremost rank. His London and provincial successes have extended over a period of eight years, during which time he has accomplished that which few others have done. His name is now a household word. He has fought his way up the ladder of fame in London. His gramophone records have made him famous throughout the English speaking world. It is but a few years since he first sang before and incidentally captivated a London audience, and to-day he is a principal figure at the Royal Albert Hall Sunday afternoon concerts, the Royal Opera Covent Garden, the Chappell ballad concerts, the Royal Hall promenade concerts, etc.

Mr. Dawson and his brilliant company will open their Auckland season on January 23 in the Town Hall.

Madame Schell claims to be the smallest wild animal tamer in the world. She is under 4ft 8in in height.