

"A NOSE FOR LAUGHS."

"I've been associated with a few stars in my time," said Mr Maurice Dudley to a Sydney reporter, "and I can honestly say that Mr Fred Niblo is the most unselfish comedian I have ever known. It is not unusual in our profession to find a star making laughs impossible for anyone but himself to get. Mr Niblo doesn't care who gets them as long as they're got. He goes for the good of the piece. The more laughs, the better the play. That, in my judgment, is the secret of his remarkable success in Australia. He has got them all working to the one end. He will work as hard and as skilfully for someone else to laud a laugh as he will to spring one himself. After an act I have seen him go to one of the company and say 'You got a new laugh to-night. Just what did you do to bring it? We'll come down to-morrow morning and run through that scene just to make certain of making that laugh a permanent one!' Then, again, he'll say, if the occasion demands it, 'Mr So-and-so, you lost your laugh in such and such a scene to-night. Do you know how it happened?' If he doesn't, Mr Niblo will explain it. He has the technical side of the laughter business down to a fine point. It's an instinct, you know. Some reporters have a natural nose for news, as you are aware. Fred Niblo has a nose for laughs. If there's one on the 'script he'll find it. It doesn't matter whose part it's in. If the actor can't find it himself Mr Niblo will put him on to it and show him just how it can be won."

Mr. E. Pirie Bush, the Wellingtonian, is scoring well with his part of Sammy in "Broadway Jones" at the Criterion, Sydney.

SOUTHERN STAGE NOTES.

(By "Lorgnette.")

WELLINGTON, January 25.

Judging from the manner in which the Wellington playgoers rushed the Bristol Piano Depot this (Monday) morning to book seats for the season of the Gilbert and Sullivan Repertoire Company, the management will not have much cause to complain at the financial aspect of the season. The season opens on Wednesday with "The Gondoliers," which will be played for three nights. The other operas will be staged in the following order:—"The Yeomen of the Guard," three nights; "Iolanthe," three nights; "The Mikado," three nights; "H.M.S. Pinafore," two nights; and "The Pirates of Penzance," two nights.

The George Willoughby Dramatic Company will bring its Wellington season to a close to-morrow evening. During the season of eight nights "The Ever Open Door," "Under Two Flags," and "Camille" were staged. "The Ever Open Door" is one of the better class melodrama, and with "Under Two Flags" ought to be a sure money winner for the management during the Company's stay in the North Island.

This week's programme at His Majesty's Theatre must rank as one of the best the Brennan-Fuller management have presented for the approval of Wellington playgoers for quite a while. The "stellar" attraction is Madame Schell and her African lions.

Miss Vera Remeé, the leading lady of the George Willoughby Dramatic Company, has not been enjoying the best of health during the company's stay in Wellington.

Signor Truda has resigned from the position of conductor of the orchestra of the King's Theatre, having decided to devote all his time in future to the teaching of music. Before severing his connection with the King's he was presented by the management and staff with a handsome cigarette case.

DUNEDIN.

(From our Dunedin Correspondent.)

"Deserted are our own good halls," sings the poet, with special application to our two leading theatres, His Majesty's and the Princess, which have been and are still totally void of any attractions. There is no sign that the boards of His Majesty's will resound to human foot—unless it be that of the caretaker—for some weeks to come. It was stated that the Dunedin season of the looked-for revivals of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas would open the first week in March. Though nothing is certain these war times, I have received no contradiction of the statement, which fact is at least hopeful.

It is so long since Dunedin has had anything specially attractive in opera that there should be no doubt of the success of the season when it does eventuate. The Williamson management, whatever its experience with musical comedy and pantomime, has never had any reason to regret its ventures in Dunedin with opera. In the meantime we await definite information from the touring manager, John Farrell, respecting the dates and the repertoire.

The Princess Theatre is no longer the permanent address of the Fuller-Brennan Vaudeville Company, but it may be that in the course of a week or two the firm will hang up the sign "business as usual" at the old address. A company which includes the well-known Corrick Family, and with the Davenport's in their presentation of classic statuary as headliners, will revive vaudeville for another period on February 1.

Miss Grace Palotta and Mr. Edward Nable are doing musical sketches in a tour of India and the East. It may appear curious that Miss Palotta could

heroic little Belgium alone, it is somewhat amusing to carry one's thoughts back a few months to the agitation which was started in America against young students of music, especially girls, being allowed to run the risks of great cities, away from the watchfulness and experience of their proper guardians. That agitation was taken in very ill part in Germany, and especially in Berlin, many of the German newspapers giving vent to the most ill-natured comments on America and American music. We need not reproduce the exact epithets; it is enough to say that they were coarsely vituperative, the Berlin comic paper "Ulk" publishing a savage cartoon, which was typical of the Teutonic contempt for trans-Atlantic musical pretensions. Now the German eagle is screaming as gently as any sucking dove, and nothing is so dear to it as the bird of similar name, but of very different breed, that typifies the great Republic. The contrast is distinctly amusing, but we doubt whether the humour of it is as apparent to the Germans as it must be to Americans. Humour is no yoke-fellow with blood and iron."



THE LYRICAL FOUR, prominent members of the "Magpies," who are re-appearing at the Auckland Opera House this week.

not get a lucrative engagement in Australia. She probably could, but an Eastern tour is more lucrative when things are right than any other. It was in India on her first visit that Miss Palotta scored a big success with the Hugh Ward Co.

MUSIC NOTES.

(By "G" String.)

The London Philharmonic Society is continuing its regular concerts of the 1914-15 season. The performing members are being paid reduced fees on account of the depression in art matters caused by the war, but provided funds are available the deficiency is to be made up as far as possible by the payment of a bonus at the end of the season.

Schilling-Zemssen, a conductor from the Frankfurt Opera, and who fulfilled an engagement at Covent Garden last year, is now serving as a German captain of artillery, and is one of the tens of thousands who have already been presented with the doubtful distinction of the Iron Cross by the Kaiser.

Mr. David Bispham, the American baritone, who visited Australia some months ago, and who during most of last year was free-lancing—that is, his engagements were not managed by anyone in particular—is again under the exclusive management of Mr. Frederic Shipman. The energetic Canadian manager has already booked an extensive tour of the United States for the distinguished baritone, and he has likewise projected another Bispham visit to Australia. If the tour comes off it is to be hoped New Zealand will be included in it.

Under the heading "Then and Now," the London "Musical Times," in a recent issue, publishes a thoughtful paragraph on the past and present attitude of Germans towards Americans. Says the writer: "Taking into consideration the frantic attempts being made by Germany to conciliate public opinion in the United States, and to gloss over the slaughter of inoffensive non-combatants and the wanton destruction of treasures that belonged to the world rather than to

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