

SOUTHERN STAGE NOTES.

(By "Lorgnette.")

WELLINGTON, April 20.

It was originally intended that the George Willoughby pantomime, "The Babes in the Wood," should have opened its season on Monday evening, but in these stirring times "the best laid schemes gang aft a-glee." Owing to steamer arrangements being altered at the last moment the company could not get away from Lyttelton until Monday night, so that the Wellington season could not possibly be opened earlier than this evening, but when the curtain rose the seating capacity of the Grand Opera House was fully occupied by an enthusiastic audience. The "Babes in the Wood" is an entertainment of a varied, amusing and attractive kind, and won for itself a popularity not less marked than that of those which have preceded it, and the number is legion. It contains a successful combination of pantomime, with its gorgeousness of spectacle, pleasing music, boisterous fun, brilliant ballets and vaudeville "star" turns.

From a plethora of attractive items in the first act the most pleasing were Daisy Jerome's "Don't Care," "I'd Like to Go Your Way Home," and "In the Heart of the City" (which was her most successful item); Ruby Davies in "Tipperary" and "Follow Me Home," Elsie Sloan in "Dream Boat," Dan Thomas in "The Tin Drum" and "Naming the Day," Nellie Fallon and Henry Marcell in "Teach Me to Float on the Rolling Sea." The musical numbers in the second act are also very fine, especially "Roll on Missouri." The work done by the chorus and ballet is simply first-class.

Miss Daisy Jerome scores a great success as the principal girl, Maid Marian. Miss Ruby Davies makes an ideal Robin Hood (principal boy), singing and acting splendidly. Mr. Dan Thomas, as the Dame, was a complete success. He is a fine dancer and a real hard worker, and has already established himself a great favourite with Wellington playgoers. It would take columns to enumerate all the good things in "The Babes in the Wood," but special mention must be made of the acrobatic work of Hanlon, Dean and Manion, the Josephine Gassman specialty, and the good all-round work of Bert Le Blanc, Ted Stanley, Bert Barton, Willie Watson, Henry Marcel, Nellie Fallon and Elsie Sloan.

Two of the scenic spectacles are decidedly vivid and original, and stirred the audience to great enthusiasm. One was the great "Flag Tableau," a striking apotheosis of patriotism, in which something like one thousand lights are used for the display of the Allies' colours and heroes. The other is the escalator or moving staircase illusion. The Wellington season will extend until Tuesday. Two matinees will also be given.

The Wellington season of the Nellie Stewart Company was brought to a close last Saturday with a performance of "Sweet Nell." It is gratifying to be able to state that the season was a great success, not only from an artistic view, but also from a financial standpoint. The company opened in Christchurch last evening with "Du Barry."

The Fuller-Brennan vaudeville combination continues to do good business at His Majesty's Theatre.

Mr. Harry Roberts, of the Nellie Stewart Company, had a most distressing experience last Monday and Tuesday evenings, during the performance of "Dorothy o' th' Hall." Just before the rise of the curtain he had the misfortune to burst a small blood-vessel in the nose, with the result that it bled all through the performance. It must have been very trying, besides weakening, for Mr. Roberts to continue playing under such circumstances, and he deserves to be congratulated on his pluck.

The Cherniavskys opened a four nights' season in the Town Hall Concert Chamber on Saturday night. There was a large audience, who thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment provided by this clever trio of musicians. The second concert will be given on Wednesday, the third on Thursday, and the farewell concert on Saturday.

I am sorry to have to state that during the Wellington season of the Nellie Stewart Company Mr. James B. Atholwood was under the doctor. This clever character actor is a martyr to asthma, and during his stay in Wellington had a rather severe attack of the complaint. Notwithstanding this serious drawback, he managed to appear every evening, and what is

more to the point, give a finished interpretation of the character he portrayed.

MUSIC NOTES.

(By "G" String.)

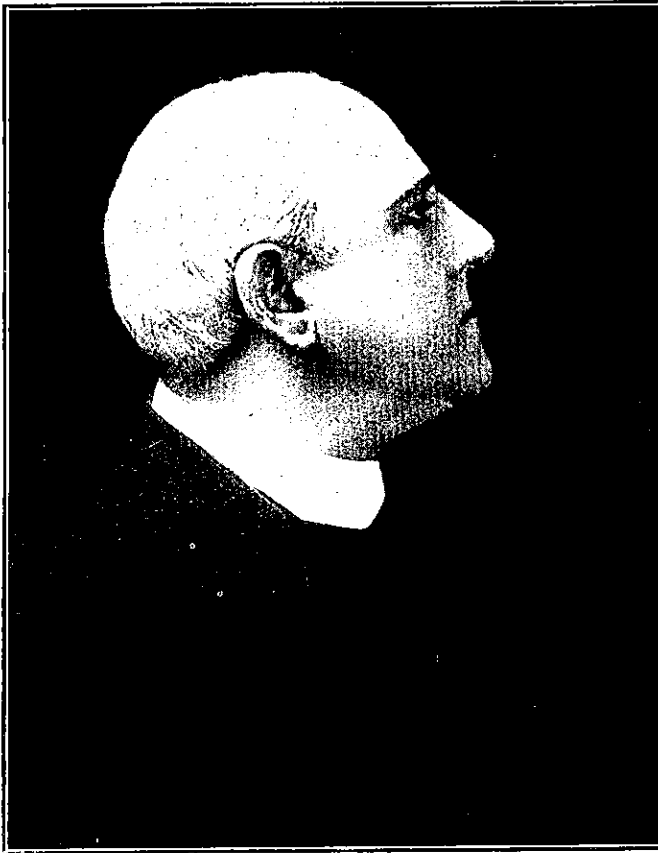
I have to acknowledge receipt of another parcel of music from Messrs. Chappell and Co., Limited, the well-known music publishers and piano-forte manufacturers, of 235, Flinders Lane, Melbourne, and 50 New Bond Street, London, W. Under one cover are two songs, "When You Come" and "Kisses," words by Roy Martin, music by Mary Watson, and both are brief and joyous. Of the two "Kisses" is decidedly the better. No. 1 low. No. 2 high. "How I Shall Miss You," words by W. B. Yeats (from "Yeats' Poems"), is a cradle song set to music by Teresa Del Riego, and the atmosphere surrounding it gives sincerity to the sentiment, and it should prove

composition; No. 1 in G, No. 2 in B flat. Under one cover are published "Four Indian Songs" (from "The Garden of Kama"), the words being by Laurence Hope and the music by Hermann Lohr. The first is entitled "Starlight," the second "Just in the Hush Before the Dawn," the third "The Passion is But an Ember," and the fourth "On the City Wall." The whole four are good drawing-room imitations of Oriental moods, but Nos. 1 and 3 are decidedly the best of the quartette.

Mr. David Bispham, who toured Australia last year and is booked for another tour this year, which will this time include New Zealand, has since his return to America been fulfilling the Christian injunction, visiting those in prison. At Sing Sing the inmates have not been without moving pictures, plays, and lectures, but it remained for the eminent baritone to reach them as they had never been reached before. He gave his recital

music. I do not think I ever felt it so strongly before. I knew that there were many present who had heard me in concert and at the New York Metropolitan Opera House, but I felt that those songs went deeper than we know, deeper than songs usually go."

No centenary celebrations are, in these stirring times, likely to be held to commemorate the birth of the famous song writer Robert Franz, who was born at Halle, Handel's birth-place, on June 2nd, 1815. Like Handel, Franz met with parental opposition in his first attempts to study music, and, like Beethoven, he became deaf at a comparatively early age. But, unlike either, Franz restricted himself almost exclusively to one form of composition—the song. In this he did work finer in some respects than Schumann, and came second only to Schubert. The scope of his emotion was not, perhaps, large; he left the stronger passion almost severely alone and his "dark" moods are only moderately successful. Yet none has handled the quieter phases of passion with so much conviction. In things of this order Franz sings as melodiously as an Italian, but with all the deeper earnestness of a Northern. As someone has remarked, Franz could not have come if he had not been preceded by most of the masters, on whose work he obviously built. Nevertheless, Franz had genuine originality, a rich inventive faculty, and a technical mastery which enabled him to make every one of his compositions perfectly express his meaning. In addition, he had a critical sense so highly developed that only works which fully satisfied him were given out for publication. As a result, no really bad songs of Franz's exist—a comforting reflection for the student of singing.



MR. HARRINGTON REYNOLDS, who takes the part of Dr. Wallace in the "Seven Little Australians."

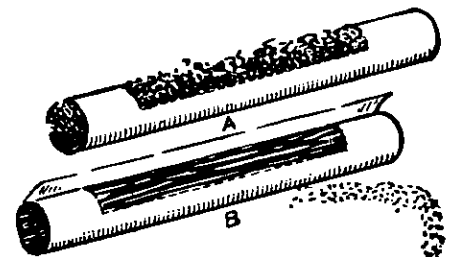
a popular contralto number at a high-class concert. No. 1 in E flat, No. 2 in F. "Didn't You Know," words by Gerald Gould, music by Liza Lehmann, is a well written piece of song composition, and is a regular gem for an encore number. In C and E flat. "By Mendip Side," words by P. J. O'Reilly, music by Eric Coates, is attractively harmonised, and may be welcomed as a refined and taking love song; No. 1 in C, No. 2 in B flat. "Love's Garden of Roses," words by Ruth Rutherford, music by Haydn Wood, is an artistic

twice over, the chapel only accommodating one-half of the prisoners who number about 1600. The artist writes: "This was one of the greatest experiences of my life. Toughs (black and white, young and old), murderers, bank robbers, confidence men, educated and uneducated, clever and stupid, and some who are no doubt innocent—all held by the power of song. I did not feel my own personality in connection with what joy these men were getting. I only felt the power of song, the sublimity of



MAUD AND GEE, an extraordinary comedy acrobatic act which opens at the Auckland Opera House on Monday next.

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