

A TROUBLOUS TOUR.

Miss Hardinge-Maltby, of the "Charley's Aunt" Company, is one of the professionals of that bright little Wellington coterie. Miss Maltby comes from a well-known English theatrical family, and was through Australia and New Zealand with the Willoughby-Geach Company some years ago. During her residence in Wellington she has frequently been called upon at short notice to undertake parts with visiting companies owing to the illness of some member. Miss Maltby has firmly established herself in Wellington as a teacher of elocution and an active participator in the Shakespearean Club.

In a chat to a "Review" representative she said the entry of the "Charley's Aunt" company into two of the cities was marked with nerve-racking episodes. In Auckland, owing to the late arrival of the boat they did not commence their performance till 9.30. "It was a rough passage, and at 6 p.m.—three hours off landing—some of us were nibbling a piece of toast and wondering how we would get our sea legs, and also congratulating ourselves that we would not have to give a performance that night, word having been sent at the eleventh hour to that effect. But, alas for our hopes! Before the ropes were made fast at the wharf, Mr. Bauer and Mr. Aitken were in communication, and to our horror we were fixed up to play. It seemed as if the whole of the Westralia exerted itself to get us off. I've never seen stewards anything but calm and collected. But even they got excited, and put everyone aside for us. 'We must get these "Charley's Aunts" off first,' was the general cry! Defenceless passengers made way for us, and with parcels in each hand and staggering under the effects of mal de mer we ran down the gangway, were bundled into cabs and taxis, hustled up to the theatre, and were on the stage before we knew where we were, making ourselves up almost as we went on! Truly it was an experience. And we all agreed that the Auckland audience showed its sporting blood in waiting so long and forbearingly."

"Christchurch, too, gave us cause to remember our first night," continued Miss Maltby. "We had just come over from the West Coast, and after a strenuous time of travelling—two trains and a coach, not to mention an annoying wait—we got into the theatre at 10 past 7, with long queues waiting for the early doors to open. We soon got busy with our make-ups; when Mr. Norman Aitken burst on the scene. 'Has anyone seen my little bag?' he demanded wildly. 'What was in it?' we asked. 'Only my "Charley's Aunt" cap and wig!' he answered helplessly. We all looked aghast. Charley's Aunt without the cap and wig, and nearly time to go on! It was unthinkable! 'I must have left it in the taxi and I don't know the number!' poor Mr. Aitken wailed. And off he rushed to all the hairdressers' shops in the city. After several fruitless visits, he encountered the very wig to suit him. 'You can't have that,' said the hairdresser. 'It's an order for an amateur recital.' 'Can't I,' answered Mr. Aitken, with the audacity born of despair. And the urgency of the situation being explained, he obtained the coveted possession and arrived back to his harassed colleagues breathless but triumphant.

"We feel now," added Miss Maltby, "that we could give a performance from an aeroplane or in the trenches of the Allies!"

David Belasco says it seems to him that the real test of a play's success is the number of suits for plagiarism brought against the author.

A concert given at the Town Hall, Melbourne, on April 27, by Madame Melba, in aid of the Belgian Relief Fund, realised £6100. During the concert a number of flags were sold by auction, and the proceeds amounted to £2400. The remaining £3700 was made up of takings and donations.

GREENROOM GOSSIP.

Miss Thelma Raye, who has come to Australia to appear in the J. C. Williamson production of "The Marriage Market" on May 22, at Her Majesty's, Melbourne, is one of the best-known of London musical comedy artists, who has won a name for herself in a long series of musical plays at Daly's, the Gaiety, and other leading theatres.

Mr. Bauer, custodian of His Majesty's Theatre, was the guest of honour at a supper given by the "Charley's Aunt" Company at the conclusion of their Auckland season. Mr. Bauer had rendered the company much valuable assistance during their stay in the city, and it was through his efforts that the company were able to keep faith with the audience and give their opening performance, in spite of steamer disabilities making them nearly two hours late. In other ways, too, Mr. Bauer tendered the benefit of his experience and to express their gratitude the company presented him with a gold mounted cigar-holder and a substantial cheque.



MR. HARRY BORRADALE, elocutionist and light comedian with the Red Dandies appearing at the Concert Chamber, Auckland.

News has been received of the death, at about 40 years of age, of the Australian comedian Billy Williams. He died in England after an operation. Known as "The man in the velvet suit," Williams achieved popularity in all parts of the United Kingdom shortly after his arrival with cosier songs. "I must go home tonight" was one of his greatest hits. He lived at Brixton Hill, S.W.

Miss Nella Webb, who is appearing on the Tivoli circuit in Sydney, had a most successful season of bookings after her departure from Australia two years ago. Her engagements included appearances at the leading theatres in England and America.

Two interesting personalities arrived in Wellington last week in Madame Lina Nyberg and Mons Paul Crets Saldaigue, two Belgian grand opera artists with Continental reputations. These two artists were both in the middle of a successful season of grand opera at the Antwerp Theatre Royal when war broke out, and they remained in the city until the German guns actually started the bombardment of the city. Mr. John Hopkins has approached the singers with a view to securing their appearance on the stage in Wellington.

Mr. Leonard Griffiths, the pianist of the sunny smile with the "Red Dandies," paid his first visit to New Zealand with the old Scarlet Troubadours, the first of the Branscombe attractions to come to the Dominion. "Griff," as Mr. Griffiths is familiarly known both on and off the stage, gained some prominence as an organist in London before he joined one of George Edwardes' comic opera companies as leading man, and he toured for some time with the "Duchess of Dantzic" Company in the English provinces.

The war play "The Man Who Stayed at Home," which is running to enormous business in London, and is shortly to be staged in Sydney and Melbourne by J. C. Williamson, Ltd., has been produced in New York under the title of "The White Feather." The American correspondent of the London "Stage" says that "it is a genuine success, and I have not seen a single deprecatory notice in any paper, and that means a great deal in New York, where the German population is enormous, and bears considerable influence with a number of papers."

The Kennedys paid one of their brief but pleasurable visits to Auckland last week, and left further delightful memories with three concerts at His Majesty's Theatre. The gifted quartette, adamantly gifted quartette, Madame Kennedy and her three sons—Laurie, Lance and Keith—are instrumentalists worthy of the attention of the most exacting audiences, while the inclusion of Miss Dorothy Grace (soprano) and Miss Rose Fitzgerald (contralto) added diversity to the programme. Mr. Laure Kennedy, the cellist, displayed mastery of his art in his interpretative handling of Saint Saen's "Concerto in A minor," and had a warm ovation and insistent encores, while his obligatos to several songs considerably enhanced their value. Mr. Keith Kennedy (violinist) is likewise an executant of a high order, showing delicate perception and brilliant technique. Mr. Lance Kennedy, as hautist and baritone, made another big success of his selections, and the audience throughout were lavish in their appreciation. Madame Kennedy proved a most satisfying accompanist, her poetic insight also being discernible in the ensembles. The vocalists, too, have much warmth of sentiment, and were enthusiastically received for their respective numbers, while their voices blended harmoniously in duets. Altogether it is a combination that stands alone for musicianly accomplishments. Her Excellency the Countess of Liverpool was present at the final performance.

Mr. Fred Cambourne, who plays the aristocratic butler in the Fred Niblo production of "Broadway Jones" at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, claims to have the longest association with the J. C. Williamson companies of any actor playing important parts under the management of the firm. Twenty eight years, on and off, is his record. His first engagement under the firm's management was to play Caderousse in "Monte Christo, Jun," the opening production of Fred Leslie and Nellie Farren. Mr. Cambourne has supported many stars, including Grattan Riggs, Harry Paulton and Alma Stanley, Andrew Mack, the Broughs, George Darrell, Jennie Lee, Tittell Brune, Julius Knight, and others. He has been associated with

Fred Niblo during the three years' season of the comedian in Australia.

Says Melbourne "Punch": Julius Knight has rosy expectations from the provincial tour he is about to begin. He takes Nellie Bramley as his leading lady. New South Wales and Queensland are first to be tested, and then Victoria and New Zealand. The party with which Julius the Superb will travel are "A Royal Divorce," "David Garrick" and "The Lady of Lyons."

For a musical comedy, in which ambitious scenic effects are not generally looked for, "The Marriage Market," to be staged by the J. C. Williamson Royal Comic Opera Company at Her Majesty's, Melbourne, on May 22, provides some unusual spectacle opportunities. The second act will take the whole space of the stage representing the full deck of the yacht Mariposa, anchored in the Bay of San Francisco. This shows the bridge and top hamper of the yacht, upon which is gathered a brilliant company of guests, and a full complement of crew. The green-clad hills provide an imposing background. This scene promises to provide one of the biggest and most ambitious settings ever attempted in musical comedy. The first act, a ranch in Southern California, and the third, the millionaire's palace in San Francisco, are also scenes of striking stage effect.

One of the most popular entertainments organised in Auckland in aid of the Belgian Relief Fund was that given by the Bohemian Orchestra last Thursday. Attracted by the worthiness of the object and the fame of the orchestra, the Town Hall was crowded, amongst the audience being His Excellency the Governor and the Countess of Liverpool, the Consuls, the Mayor (Mr. J. H. Gunson), and other prominent citizens. An appropriate display of flags, and the impressive rendering of the National Anthem and the Belgian Anthem by the orchestra and the Auckland Garrison Band, emphasised the motive of the gathering. Particular enjoyment was derived from the selections of the Bohemian Orchestra (conducted by Mr. Colin Muston), which included, with other delightful little gems, Sibelius' tone poem "Finlandia" and Tschaiakowsky's memorable "1812" overture. Vocal numbers were represented by Madame Bella Russell and Mr. J. Wallace Atkinson, variety being lent by Mr. T. Harris in a recitation and Mr. S. Sly in a trombone solo. Mr. Harold Gregson acted as accompanist. The sale of programmes ranging from 6d. to £5 (the latter being specially bound and autographed by the Governor), brought the result up to £300.



MAY AND SEON BROWN, two amazingly clever little Dunedinites, who carried off between them nine first prizes at the recent Christchurch Competitions. They are winners of 31 first prizes in two years at Dunedin, Invercargill, Christchurch and Wellington.

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