

SOUTHERN STAGE NOTES.

(By Telegraph.)

WELLINGTON, June 20.

The one word to most adequately describe the J. C. Williamson pantomime "Mother Goose," which opened a Dominion tour at the Grand Opera House this evening, is "brilliant." After that might be added "gorgeous," and then the theatregoer could run through the whole list of adjectival eulogisms and still be within bounds. The pantomime certainly touches the limit of brightness, freshness and humour. The theatre was packed to the doors, and there is no reason why this eminently satisfactory condition should not prevail throughout the season. It may be taken for granted that every one in the huge audience who witnessed the extravaganza went home and "boosted" it up to the skies. If this were not so then the recurring manifestations of delight and appreciation during the whole performance were sham and delusions. But the person who would maintain such an obviously absurd opinion has yet to be found. What a treat it was to sit through a performance which still retained the bloom of youth.

Mr. J. Hickory Wood has strung the "book" together in as lively a manner as any of his previous librettos for pantomime extravaganza. "Mother Goose" is not the "Mother Goose" of Fairyland. She is a market woman in a model village—not a model village in the town-planning sense, but according to Toyland interpretation. The village has its toy houses, toy trees, toy soldiers, and toy nursemaids, who join in a little wooden and clock-work ballet. Mother Goose cannot pay her rent to the Mayor of Borderland. She has not met quarter day within the memory of the oldest inhabitant, so she comes under the benign sway of the fairy Heartsease, who adds gratuitously to Mother Goose's poultry yard the original goose that lays the golden eggs. The golden eggs transfer Mother Goose to marble halls, gown her in the latest creations of the London dressmakers, and make her a mark for fortune-hunters, especially the Mayor of Moortown and the Laird himself. But she says she is a bride for a king, or an American insurance agent. She does not make the error of slaying the goose, as the owner does in the authorised version of the tale. She falls under the malign influence of the Demon King, and the desire for beauty constitutes the snare that robs her of the golden goose and golden eggs. Mother Goose wants to be beautiful, and does not take the obvious course of consulting a beauty specialist, but dips herself in the Wishing Well. Away then flies the golden goose to Gooseland, and the bank of golden eggs is broken.

Every one of the many scenes possesses an exquisite grace and piquancy, and one is almost compelled to the conclusion that all the Graces stood godmother to this lovely production. The music is highly interesting, whilst the brilliant spectacular effects, the smart and witty local references, the gorgeousness of the ballets, and the dainty sparkling gaiety of the artistes combined to

fascinate the large audience. From the opening scene outside "the ruins" to the fairyland spectacle of "Gooseland," which rings down the curtain, there is a charming grace of beauty and a laughing spirit of delightful extravagance. In Australia "Mother Goose" was called "The Beauty Show," and the title is fully justified because the chorus and ballet were selected not merely on the standard of singing and dancing, but also on that of good looks.

Miss Lillian De Venny is an exceptionally tall and good-looking principal boy and in the character of Colin quickly worked her way into favour both as an actress and a singer. Miss Maude Fane was completely successful as the principal girl. She is good to look at and especially good to hear. Mr. Arthur Stigant, as the Dame, was splendid. Mr. Victor Kelly, as Jack, seemed to have mastered the secret of perpetual motion, and his tumbling is clever beyond the ordinary standard. He is billed as an eccentric comedian, and, having studied the small boy—the Buster Brown sort of small boy—at his worst moments, he lives up to everything that the bill means to suggest by its description. On his shoulders and those of Mr. Albert Felino (the Goose) falls the burden of keeping the audience in good humour. The goose is the cunningest bird that ever walked a poultry yard, and is sure to be the delight of all New Zealand youngsters that are lucky enough to see the manipulation of its eyes.

Miss Gladys Moncrieff looks and sings the part of the Fairy Queen to perfection, and that is saying much less than her grace and personal merits deserve. Miss Maggie Dickenson is a dainty Gretchen, but has not as much dancing as one would like. Mr. Charles Howard sang impressively and played the character of the Demon King with appropriate sinister purpose. Mr. Le Brun's impersonation, first as a donkey and secondly as a horse, gave delectable amusement to the young folk. Mr. Arthur Reynolds, as the Laird of Borderdale, Mr. Rupert Darrell, as the Mayor of Moortown, and Miss Queenie Paul as Eric, all did good work.

The work of the chorus and ballet was just about as perfect as it well could be, and amongst the scenes that attracted special attention were the model village, the beautiful "Hall of Gold," "The Magic Pool" and the "Rolling Ship," in which Jack is turned topsy-turvy with all his cabin impedimenta. Ross and Falls also provide some astonishing acrobatic novelties which are regular eye-openers in the way of daring. The orchestra also deserve a word of praise for the good work they do.

The following dates have been booked for the Dominion tour of the "Mother Goose" pantomime:—Wellington, June 20 to 30; Wanganui, July 1; Hawera, July 3; New Plymouth, July 4; Palmerston North, July 5 and 6; Hastings, July 7; Napier, July 8 to 10; Gisborne, July 12 and 14; Auckland, July 17 to 25; Christchurch, July 28 to August 4; Dunedin, August 5 to 11. It is possible that Oamaru and Timaru will also be visited.

The Pink Dandies are now in their second week at the Town Hall Concert Chamber and right from the opening the business has been consistently good. The combination is one of the most versatile of its class that has ever visited the Dominion, and the entertainment they provide is of a high standard of excellence, and suitable to all tastes.

Mr. Frank Levy, the touring representative of the Allan Doone Dramatic Company is expected to arrive in Wellington next Saturday morning to arrange for the opening of the popular Irish actor at the Grand Opera House on Saturday, July 8, in the drama "O'Leary, V.C." The season will extend over 13 nights.

A very fine all-star programme is being submitted to the patrons of His Majesty's Theatre this week, and the big audiences who nightly visit the Messrs. Fullers' cosy vaudeville house are not slow in showing their appreciation of the many good things provided. The chief attraction is the Victor Prince Company in the rollicking revue "The Midnight Club." Mr. Prince's combination is a very strong one, and all do good work, but special praise is due to Miss Lillian Colenso, Mr. Charles Zoli and Mr. Prince for keeping the fun going at top speed.

A DAILY TREAT is that superb beverage, Desert Gold Tea. Fresh and full-flavoured, delicious and refreshing, wholesome and satisfying. Once tested, always used.

MUSIC NOTES.

(By "G" String.)

By last week's mail I received a parcel of music from the well-known publishers, Messrs. Chappell and Co., Ltd., of 235 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, and 50 New Bond Street, London, W. Under one cover are "Two Little Southern Songs," the words being by Fred. G. Bowles and the music by Montague Ring. The first is a "Kentucky Love Song," charming in the rhythmic figuration of the accompaniment and in its melodic contours which are "doubled" in the pianoforte part, and enriched with sweet harmonies of thirds and sixths. The second is entitled "June in Kentucky" and is a well-contrasted poetic songlet, flowing along with a grandiose phrase. High and low. "My Little Red Rose," words by D. Eardley-Wilmot, music by Hermann Lohr, is an admirable piece of work, though there is not the same freshness and thought about it as displayed in some of this composer's other work. In D, E flat and F. "Sunshine and Cloud," words by William Akermann, music by Hermann Lohr, is an old

In Italy, despite the war, the 100th anniversary of the immortal "Barber of Seville" has been celebrated by special performances from far away Udine to Milan, from sleepy Pesaro to Torino, from Venice, wrapped in gloom, to Genoa. In an April number of "Cultura Moderna" the story is told of how Rossini was received at Vienna in 1882, when he gave a supper in honour of his newly-wedded wife, Colibrán, the prima donna. During the banquet the crowd outside called for songs, and the composer sang the duet from "Armida" with his wife from the balcony, adding "Figaro la, Figaro qua," and then retired, and put up his shutters. Thereupon, by way of gratitude, the "gay Viennese" smashed his windows! In reading this one has to remember, perhaps, that Austria and Italy are still at war!

The Wellington Amateur Operatic Society has now got its own rehearsal room in the Exchange Buildings, Lambton Quay. It is capable of seating 150 people, being also well appointed. The society has its own piano, and a serviceable wardrobe, which is carefully packed away in wicker baskets. The rehearsals of



MISS THELMA RAYE, the cute copper-topped artist of the Tivoli Follies, opening at His Majesty's Theatre, Auckland, on July 10.

theme pleasingly and touchingly treated. In C, D, and F. "Love Laughed as he Ran Away," words by Julian Gade, music by Montague F. Phillips, is a good example of this composer's work, which is always characterised by freshness and originality. In F and G. "Wait," words by Arthur L. Salmon, music by Guy D. Hardelots, is an artistic composition. In E flat, F and G. "Enfant Au Front Divin" ("Little Child From Heaven") is a pleasing setting of Louise de Clercq's verses by Cath. Van Rennes, the English words are by Adrian Ross. The verses depict with loving tenderness the happiness of the young mother. In F and G.

"San Toy," which is a particularly bright and melodious musical play, is progressing satisfactorily. The committee expects to announce the cast of characters shortly.

A quaint story is told of Caruso. He had been singing in "Pagliacci," and a New York critic, greatly daring, opined that the great tenor "was not in his best voice, though he has improved over his opening performances, and his Ridi Pagliacci was not the cry of yore." After reading the offending words Caruso, it is said, "took a blue pencil and wrote across the article in large letters 'liar!' then signed it with his name, adding the well-known pigtail flourish."



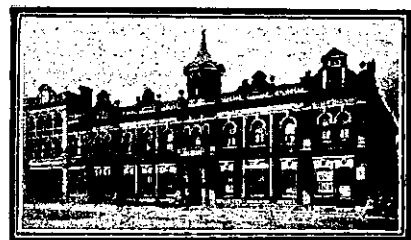
BILLY REGO, the diminutive one, who is to appear with the Tivoli Follies.

Voice Production and Singing.

MR. WALTER GRAY

Formerly Principal Tenor of Royal Carl Rosa Opera Company, of Covent Garden Theatre, London, and recently Professor of Singing at Glasgow College of Music.

STUDIO:
BRUNSWICK BUILDINGS,
QUEEN STREET, AUCKLAND.



Where to Stay in Invercargill—The RAILWAY PRIVATE HOTEL

The Favourite and Most Popular Hotel. Opposite Railway Station, Invercargill. Patrons called in time to catch early trains. Early breakfast a specialty. Tourists' favourite house. Ladies' Private Sitting Rooms. Favourite house with Commercial Travellers, Travelling Public and Theatrical Profession. Tariff moderate. Electric light. Telephone 503. P.O. Box 222.

P. J. BELLETT

Proprietor.