

THE STAGE

OPERA HOUSE.

"THE MANLESS ISLE."

The Walter Johnson Revue Company have settled down to a good run in Auckland, vaudeville patrons recognising they cannot find a happier medium for light diversion. The fourth production was given on Monday night to a large audience, "The Manless Isle" serving as a substantial prop to support a pot-pourri of melody and frivol, backed up with ballets and choruses. The setting has a Chinese flavour, and as the Queen had issued a mandate that all the pretty girls must marry the ugliest men, the situations from a comedy point of view may be imagined. Miss Lola Hunt concealed her attractive personality in the guise of the repulsive-looking queen "Fun Fun," and caused much hilarity when her own choice of a husband fell on a hapless shipwrecked sailor named Mike Maginnis. Mr. Harry Burgess as the latter convulsed the audience with his ludicrous make-up, and Mr. Gus Franks as Spike Cohen, a mate of Maginnis, kept the ball of merriment rolling steadily. Mr. Walter Johnson, as the captain, took command of the humorous situations, his telepathetic demonstration in conjunction with Mr. Franks being an amusing piece of burlesque work. Miss Lydia Carne captivated everyone with her charm of manner, and had a great ovation for her dainty dance, "Ching-a-Ling," in which she was ably partnered with Mr. Ernest Lashbrooke. "Everybody's Dippy" was another of Miss Carne's successes, a lively chorus adding to the effect. Mr. George Taylor and Miss Naomi McQuoin, who have recently joined the company, gave much pleasure with their tasteful rendering of "To Mandalay," and also proved their value in the respective characters of the Imperial Adviser and his daughter. The two Starrs made a big hit with their "Chinese Fandango" interlude, and the finale, "America, I Love You," made a striking tableau. The first half of the programme consisted of all-star acts. The Royle

Trio re-appeared after a successful season in the south, and had an enthusiastic reception from old friends in front. Expert dancers, they presented an act expressive of the artistry of motion, dainty Miss Royle, besides giving classical expositions, joining in with her nimble male partners in simultaneous step-dances. Rose and Dell, acrobats, cyclists and humorists, also re-appeared, and earned tremendous applause for their clever work. Charlene and Charlene, in their juggling, comedy and musical act, would alone make a visit worth while, and they were again accorded an enthusiastic reception. Clivall and his intelligent dog Sport rounded off a first-class bill.

KING'S THEATRE.

Admirers of the Brandon-Cremer Dramatic Company thronged King's Theatre as usual on Saturday night to see their favourites in "The Girl Who Knew a Bit." The piece abounds in sensational and unexpected happenings typical of this form of drama, and the audience were kept on the qui vive through four well-staged acts, demonstrating their sympathy with virtue and their disapproval of villainy as the story developed itself. The plot revolves round the efforts of the Hon. Marcus Blathwaite to secure an heiress' fortune, and excitement is lent in the intervention of "the girl who knew a bit." Miss Kathleen Arnold in the title role gave an admirable portrayal of the character, readily sizing up the situations. Mr. Maurice Tuohy played the young lover with his customary excellence. Mr. Kenneth Carlisle emphasised every point in the game of villainy and had an able coadjutor in Miss Mabel Hardinge. Mr. Frank Neil evoked shouts of laughter with his humorous propensities as a fish vendor. Miss Alice Rede, Miss Biddie Hawthorne, Mr. Frank Reis, Mr. Edgar Kenna and Miss Stella Gray adequately fitted into the remaining parts. Mr. Baird's scenic effects were particularly good, a fire scene in the final act being loudly applauded.

"After Dark," a powerful four-act drama, the work of the late Dion Boucicault, will be presented on Saturday. It depicts life in the under world of London, and gives the capable actor abundant chances for characterisation. Scenes representing London Bridge by night and the train emerging from the tunnel constitute the principal sensations of the piece. The plot of "After Dark" has been thoroughly worked out, and it secures the attention of the audience from the rising of the curtain. The comedy element is of the clean, wholesome sort. The drama had a successful revival in London recently.

A CLEVER PRODUCTION.

MISS HALL'S DANCE RECITAL.

Local dance recitals have resolved themselves into elaborate entertainments nowadays, and the keenest interest is always aroused in these events. One of the most popular is the annual carnival given by Miss Cecil Hall and her pupils, which took place at His Majesty's Theatre last Friday and Saturday. The programme was a most ambitious one, and demonstrated the high standard of excellence Miss Hall has achieved. Many original ideas were carried out both in costuming and design, and the audience were loud in their expressions of admiration. One of the most spectacular features was an Egyptian scene entitled "Vengeance," Miss Hall as the Princess revealing her interpretative art in emphasising the note of tragedy. Mr. W. J. Meredith was the slave of the Temple, with Miss Vera Ziman as the Golden Idol and Miss Eleanore Miller as the Spirit of Evil. Slaves, priestesses and flower maidens in choruses and dances added to the effect. A most delightful extravaganza was the "Christmas Eve Phantasy," which unfolded all the joys of Yuletide, and included the dance of the Christmas trees, the dance of the Christmas bonbons,

dance of the snowflakes, "The Land of Nod," with pyjama and lantern chorus, and the "Plum-pudding Fairy." Very charming were the dear little Kewpies, led by Cupid (Keith Leaning), while a special appeal was made by Miss Muriel Philcox in her descriptive monologue, "The Land of Children's Dreams." Another elaborate scene was a "Gipsy Divertisement" with a Spanish setting. Mrs. Patrick Cole enlivened proceedings with her spirited acting as "Carmen." A Dutch specialty, "A Wooden Wedding," with Misses Muriel Brown and Beryl Nettleton as the contracting couple, also evoked ardent admiration, the effect being heightened with the bevy of Dutch dancers. "Carnival" was truly expressed in a Paris divertisement depicting the harlequin, columbine and taxi-trot ballet. The individual classical dancing and posturing came in for special notice, amongst those of outstanding merit being Misses Lyla Bennett ("The Wind"), Jocelyn Dixon ("Vanity"), Muriel Philcox ("Spirit of the Mist"), Dorothy and Marjorie Turner ("Danse du Champagne"), Mary McKenzie ("Polka Caprice"), and Margaret Miller ("Dance Captivante"). Other dainty soloists were little Ellice Allison, Patricia Cole, Phyllis Hunt, Mona Craig, Bettina Edwards, Edna Schnauer, Elsie de Turret, Phyllis Bath, Inez Rostgard, Marjorie Mills, Muriel Brown, and Amber Jones. A pretty little dance story was conveyed in "The Orchid," charmingly represented by Jocelyn Dixon and an array of sunbeams. The latter youthful maiden also danced a Russian Trepak with much zest. Variety was lent in "The Sailor's Hornpipe," into which Dorothy Spencer and Ailsa Ronayne infused the necessary vivacity. An "Early Victorian Romance" was quaintly represented by Jocelyn Dixon and Biddy Philcox, while another charming dance sketch was "The Spectre of the Rose," by Amber Jones and Muriel Philcox. Little Phyllis Bath had a great reception for her exposition of "La France," and she also figured with Biddy Philcox in "Danse Coquette." Altogether the entertainment was a tribute to Miss Hall's interpretative genius and her facility for imparting her gift. The voluntary orchestra was directed by Mr. S. Green, while Miss Marian Aitken proved an efficient pianist. Mr. Alan McElwain was stage manager of the production. The proceeds are to be given to the Returned Soldiers' Association. Owing to the success of the two nights' season and the number of people that could not obtain admission, a third performance is to be given to-night (Wednesday).

Mr. Jack O'Sullivan, who is well-known in theatrical circles, has set off for Hongkong as touring manager for Mr. Edgar Warwick's "Court Cards." The members of the newly-constituted company include Geo. Titchener (comedian), Albert Keats (pianist), Miss Rosina Palmerston (recently on the Fuller circuit), Miss Vic. Parsons, Miss Grace, and W. Walton (Joker). Miss Maud Fane remains in Australia as principal lady in the J. C. Williamson Musical Comedy Company.

Strikes and dislocated steamer service notwithstanding, Mr. Frank Kenny braved the opposing forces and managed to negotiate the distance between Sydney and Auckland. Allen Doone's former well-known manager is over this time to advance the musical combination "Look Who's Here" (Sydney James and Jack Waller), and has left for Gisborne to prepare for the opening there, which (S.V.) takes place at the end of the month.

A clever young dancer in the "Mr. Manhattan" company is Miss Maudie Amery, who is another example of the fine material the J. C. Williamson firm is able to draw from its various companies. Miss Amery has youth, charm, and personality, added to her art as a dancer. The dance makes a big hit at every performance.

Lieutenant W. R. Coleman, son of the J. C. Williamson scenic artist at Her Majesty's, Melbourne, has received an important staff appointment in England, after two years of active service in Egypt and France. Young Coleman was assistant to his father prior to leaving Melbourne with the Light Horse, and did some fine work, particularly in pantomime. The black and white scene, which was one of the features of the "Forty Thieves" pantomime, was painted by him. Another son of Mr. W. R. Coleman (Jack) was mentioned in despatches in Egypt for his work with the Duke of Westminster's armoured car expedition against the Senussi. He left Australia with the first contingent.

Miss Margaret Calvert, the English actress who plays the important role of Mrs. Blasco in "Turn to the Right," to be played in New Zealand shortly, is the daughter of a shipmaster of the R.N.R., who happened to be the skipper in charge of Lord Cardigan's yacht when she visited Sydney many years ago. Miss Calvert studied elocution at the Guildhall School of Music, London, and after going on the stage married the well-known actor the late Alexander Calvert. In England she was one of the most popular actresses who essayed the role of Mercia in "The Sign of the Cross" in the provinces. Miss Calvert married into one of the most distinguished of theatrical families, for her husband's father, the late Charles Calvert, was an ornament to the English stage, and his wife was an extremely gifted actress, who only a few years ago appeared in support of Miss Marie Tempest in "Penelope." In 1911 Mrs. Calvert, sen., appeared as Dame Quickly in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" before the King and Queen, on which occasion the cast included Miss Ellen Terry and Mrs. Kendall. Miss Calvert's Maw in "Turn to the Right" is said to be a very appealing creation.



MR. WALTER JOHNSON, whose Musical Revue productions are the principal attraction at the Auckland Opera House.



MISS BELLE MILLETTE, director of the ballets which are outstanding features of the Walter Johnson revues.

In "L'Aiglon," at Melbourne Theatre Royal, Kathleen MacDonell as the Duke de Reichstadt has one of the longest parts ever written. It comprises 169 "sides" (or pages), which is longer than the role of Hamlet. Yet Miss MacDonell committed it to memory and was word perfect in five days—a wonderful feat of memory, all the more remarkable by reason of the fact that the "business" in the part is of a most intricate character and is crowded with detail.

"The Pink Lady" has caught on everywhere it has been staged. It is described as a merry, musical, metrical morsel; bright and tuneful, gleeful, stimulating and witty.