

TESTING THE CHORUS GIRL.

FOND ILLUSIONS DISPELLED.

Over 150 voices were tried at Her Majesty's Sydney, in answer to a call for choristers for the J. C. Williamson Royal Comic Opera Company. The "Sun" gives a newsy account of the trials. Mr. Andrew McCunn made the vocal test, and Miss Minnie Everett ran her eye over the applicants to see whether they measured up to the standard set for appearance.

There were 20 women to every man. The ladies were taken first.

Gustave Slapoffski, when conducting a voice trial some years ago, coined a descriptive phrase that has never been equalled in the theatre. He reported that it was mostly "domestic singing" that he had heard. It was very prevalent that day.

What, however, struck those who "stopped, looked and listened" while the voice trial was in progress was the great illusion under which numbers of people labour.

It had its pathetic side. If it had not it would have been humorous. But one could not laugh when women

well. Then back to Australia, where I was attached to the Cyril Maude company. Mr. Maude brought his company with him, so I had only an insignificant part in 'Grumpy,' but I have an excellent part in his second production, 'General John Regan.' We open in San Francisco in March. Mrs. Scanlan, who is at present in Paris, after travelling all through Algeria and Tunisia, joins me there. (Mr. Scanlan married in Johannesburg Miss Olive Brook, who came out with the Herbert Landeck Sketch Company.) I understand we do seasons in the principal cities, and wind up in New York. I have a great admiration for New Zealand, with its genuinely hospitable inhabitants. It is a wholly delightful country, and the kindness extended to the stranger is a boon to poor devils like myself, who have to career round the world to get a living. Scenically it is a joy to the eye, and theatrically considered, except for the heavy cost of transport, it is a good proposition. The audiences in Wellington, Auckland and Christchurch are exceptionally good to play to, and I was amazed to find in several small towns (10,000 to 12,000 inhabitants) magni-

Mr. Messenger Bellis, of the Allan Wilkie company, is studying Maori lore while on the New Zealand tour, and spends his spare time unearthing native legends.

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A TOUCHING SCENE IN "THE STORY OF THE ROSARY," the dashing military play which is being presented at His Majesty's Theatre, Auckland, by the Allan Wilkie Company.

in the late forties of ample figure, cherished the idea that the stage offered a career to them.

There were, of course, many bright, attractive girls, but their vocal limitations were against them for the most part. It was a study to watch each candidate being put through it. Some were intensely nervous, some confident as could be, and it was generally the nervous ones who showed vocal quality.

In every case the applicants were asked to sing the scale. One would take it with an impetuous rush, another with a dreamy legato, while one or two would stop for breath and resume the offensive.

Out of the number who submitted themselves to the test 14 were regarded as likely to fill requirements. Of these a few had been with the management before.

The lesson of the voice trial was that the chorus girl is a highly specialised product. The girl who can pass the test, vocal and physical, is not easy to find. It gives one quite a new idea of the chorus girl.

There are, no doubt, many who imagine that the qualifications are those possessed by the average flapper. Many who attended at Her Majesty's that day no doubt cherished this illusion.

In the case of about 140 the idea, however, was dispelled.

Mr. Stephen Scanlan, the very able actor who was recently in New Zealand with the Cyril Maude company, writes interestingly of his doings to "Stage and Cinema," the newsy little Johannesburg theatrical medium. "I've had constant work and a fairly easy time (I have only played sever parts since leaving South Africa). As the Doctor in 'Damaged Goods,' I lectured on syphilis for five months throughout Australia and New Zealand, playing to capacity business. I was then sent round New Zealand again (still under the J. C. Williamson management), supporting an American star, Miss Florence Rock-

ficiently equipped Municipal Opera Houses. These are let to travelling companies at an average rental of £20 per night—a pretty stiff figure, but, as far as I could see, a paying arrangement for both sides. When I finally (D.V.) reach my little flat in far-off Hampstead, I feel sure New Zealand and South Africa will both call me strongly."



PRIVATE CHARLES G. SPARROW, of Mosgiel, Otago. Died from wounds.

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