

# THE STAGE

## OPERA HOUSE.

One of the best aggregations of vaudeville turns presented for some time holds the attention of Opera House habitués this week. Two new acts of distinction mark the bill. Romaine, a violinist of rare attainments, had an ovation from the whole house for his exquisite playing, his numbers including classical solos and ragtime melodies, disclosing poetic temperament and rhythmic energy. As the "roaming" violinist he kept to his title in appropriate garb, and furnished a note of unconvention. Decidedly out of the ordinary was the act of the Faynes. In full stage Miss Verl Fayne introduced in snatches of song her partner, Syd, who performed some marvellous contortionist feats, concluding by bending backwards, clasping an ankle with each hand, and in that uncomfortable pose dancing to the singing of Miss Fayne. The latter, who in between times made several changes of frocks, also gave a clever imitation of a mouth organ, and helped with her liveliness to build up a crisp act. Miss Ethel Vaughn, an artist of individuality, whose mode of procedure is entirely different to others, gave a breezy little interlude, consisting of coon songs, pointed verse and imitations. Ray and Gray in patter and song proved a diverting couple, while the thrills of the evening were supplied by the Togos in their "slide for life" act. The Al Bruce Revue Company found abundant scope for merry-making in their latest offering, "Lulu," with Miss Mabelle Morgan in the title role. The Rosebuds prouetted gaily through half a dozen tasteful ballets in well-thought-out costumes, giving pleasing support to the various solos and being enthusiastically applauded.

## DOLORES ON TOUR AGAIN.

### A TRUCE FROM KNITTING!

Mdlle. Antonia Dolores, sweet-voiced singer and woman of ineffable charm, is back again once more in the Dominion after an absence of nearly five years, spending a couple of days in Auckland last week on her way to Wellington, where her present tour opened. The war upsetting her plans for a projected visit to the East, Dolores remained in Australia and retired from professional life, deciding that she would not make use of her art for mercenary purposes during the war. So for three and a-half years her only appearances in public have been made for the cause of patriotism, her energies being devoted mainly to giving concerts throughout Australia in aid of the Red Cross funds. By her efforts a large sum was obtained, but Dolores modestly disclaims any praise in this direction. In her spare time she has knitted socks for soldiers, until the clicking of the needles has become an accustomed accompaniment.

On the signing of the armistice Mdlle. Dolores started once more on her own concert work, and enjoyed triumphal seasons at Hobart (the starting point), Queensland and Sydney. The influenza scourge necessitating the closing of theatres, concerts which had been arranged for her in the Sydney Town Hall this month had to be cancelled. Hence an earlier visit to New Zealand than was intended.

"For the time being," says Dolores, "everything in Australia is dead regarding amusement, and concert and theatrical organisations are making a rush to get over to the Dominion without delay."

The final performance of "Nothing but the Truth" with Mr. M. B. Figman in the leading role was given at His Majesty's Theatre on Saturday night, a large audience showing keen appreciation of an outstanding comedy and an outstanding comedian. Mr. Figman can imply so much in a gesture alone, and his achievement with words makes his art a sheer delight. Auckland playgoers are hoping to see him shortly in another of his big successes, "The Man on the Box."

## AMERICA'S THE LIFE!

### E. J. TAIT'S IMPRESSIONS.

Mr. E. J. Tait, of the Australian firm of entrepreneurs, sends a newsy line from New York. He writes:—

"I really cannot describe New York adequately, but when one walks out in the street you seem to see nothing but men with overcoats—some with fur collars—millions of 'little women'; and on Broadway everybody seems to be acting—at least, their 'make-up' makes you think so. It is like one vast stage, and had William Shakespeare lived in this age I can well imagine him having written that famous quotation 'All the World's a Stage, etc.' after having traversed Broadway. Up to the present we (Mr. Harald Bowden is with him) have seen over fifty shows in three months. Just think of it! Doesn't it seem incredulous? The most famous of these are 'Jack o' Lantern' and 'Polly With a Past,' both in Chicago after a year in New York; 'Lightnin,' a wonderful comedy by Winchell Smith and Frank Bacon, which has been running for over five months, and is one of the big hits of the year; 'Daddies,' a typical Belasco show, wonderfully cast, and a great production; 'Three Wise Fools,' a play by Austin Strong, which has been fathered by that wonderful play doctor, Mr. Winchell Smith (this is rather unique for a new management like Smith and Golden—who sprang into fame with their production of 'Turn to the Right'—to have two big Broadway successes running in 'Lightnin' and 'Three Wise Fools'); 'Friendly Enemies,' a comedy-drama, which is still running here after three months, although the ending of the war makes war plays rather risky. We have seen many failures, and few outstanding successes. Just now there are many new productions striking Broadway, and I will write you later on regarding their success or otherwise.

### THE ZIEGFELD FOLLIES.

The Ziegfeld Follies had their usual enormous financial success in New York City, and the receipts on tour are simply enormous. This Ziegfeld show, to my mind, is the greatest I have ever seen, and they seem to do better every year. Naturally Ziegfeld has his detractors, and I must quote what the opposition paper said of him just three weeks ago on the occasion of his having gone out of his own line of picking the most beautiful women in America for his shows, to produce an English comedy drama "By Pigeon Post." The "New York Revue" offered the following remarks, "Ziegfeld may know all about chickens, but when it comes to pigeons—Oh, fie!" The finale is not exactly verbatim, but it meant that it was a pity Ziegfeld did not stick to Follies shows, which are made up principally of very young and very beautiful girls. I had the pleasure of attending several rehearsals of the new Midnight Frolic, which is a different attraction to his Follies. Last night Mr. and Mrs. Harald Bowden and myself were Mr. Ziegfeld's guests, attended by Mr. David Stamper (who wrote all the music for the shows) and, believe me, it is a wonderful sight atop the New Amsterdam Theatre. We sat out the two shows—9 p.m. and midnight. Mr. Stamper, I am glad to say, has consented to come out to Australia under our management, and I am hoping to give Australia a show nearly as good as Ziegfeld.

### COSTLY CABARETS.

Some of these are wonderful. The costuming is exquisite. We are greatly handicapped in Australia, as we cannot buy the materials out there, and even if we could, the people would not pay the prices to see the shows. Can you imagine, I saw the Palais Royal show the night before Mrs. Tait left for Australia, and our dinner bill alone (without wines and extras) totalled up to 18dol. (about £3 15s.) Naturally a manager cannot afford to spend £20,000 on a show when one has to consider the enormous rail fares and

freights, added to our limited population of theatrical public.

### A PROMISE OF THE FUTURE.

Guy Bates Post is still playing in New York City in "The Masquerader," and I am hoping that the time is not far distant when this wonderful actor will return to Australia and New Zealand, in Tait theatres. Our office here in New York seems to be the happy hunting ground of all Australians, or anyone who has been in Australia, and nearly everyone is anxious to return. We must average fully 20 callers a day, all talking Australia. Our 'phone bill is enormous. Up to a few days ago it was 10 cents (5d.) a call, but now it has been reduced to 2½d. (5 cents) per call.

### HARRY LAUDER

Harry Lauder has just finished a phenomenal season in New York. I went twice, and the house, which holds over 3500, was sold right out on every occasion. He opens in Australia at Easter, and we are now busy arranging his support. We will endeavour to give Australia and New Zealand something out of the ordinary as regards this wonderful artist's supporting programme.

Glad to say we are both strong and hearty, and so far this big city has not got us down. The favourite saying in America is "It's a great life if you don't weaken." If you do weaken in this city it is—"Good Night!"



MR. HARRY DEARTH as Kin Foo in "Shanghai" at Drury Lane Theatre, the musical play in which Miss Dorothy Brunton made her London debut.

[Photo., Bassano.]

The outbreak of influenza in Australia has caused an influx of J. C. Williamson attractions over here. The Musical Comedy Company, playing "Going Up," "Oh! Boy," and "The Three Twins," are in Dunedin; "Business Before Pleasure" is also in the South Island, and the M. B. Figman "Nothing But the Truth" Company are making for Wellington. The super-film "Hearts of the World" is another Williamson venture that is in the Dominion at present.

The "I Will Still Love You" favourites, Maude Courtney and Mr. C., are due at the Opera House next Monday.

During her short stay in Auckland Mdlle. Dolores and her friend, Madame Zelle Baudour, were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Bennett, Parnell.

Miss Marie Ney, who was leading lady with Allan Wilkie's Company, plays the heroine in Beaumont Smith's racing film "Desert Gold."

Miss Maude Fane leaves for America shortly to try her luck in the States.

J. and N. Tait's "De Luxe Annie" registered its one hundredth Sydney performance on January 21.

Frank Neil and Maurice Tuohy were in the cast of Fuller's "Bluebeard" pantomime at the Newtown (Sydney) Majestic.

The late Harold Lockwood, Metro film star, left an estate of 45,000dol. (£9000).

Mr. E. Pirie Bush, the Wellington boy who made his theatrical mark with Fred Niblo, has in "Nothing But the Truth" one of those ingenuous roles to which he can adapt himself with such naivety and correctness as to always secure a laugh.

A recent issue of the New York "Times" traces interestingly the growth of the J. and N. Tait firm under the heading of "Australia and the Tait's," prefacing the article with a comment on the increasing tendency of the Australian theatre to rely upon America rather than England for its dramatic fare—albeit the Australian theatrical taste is in many respects akin to that of England.

Miss Lolita Robertson (Mrs. Figman) numbers among her hats one of historic interest. It belonged to an Italian bersagliero (sharpshooters) and was given her by the mother of an Italian soldier long before the great war. With its bunch of dark green plumes of cock's feathers it makes just the smartest thing in chapeaux.

Mr. Claude Flemming has been engaged to play a principal part in "My Lady Frayle," the musical comedy to be staged at the Tivoli, Sydney, as soon as the influenza ban is lifted. Mr. Flemming is perhaps best known to Australians as the producer of "The Lure of the Bush," the "Snowy" Baker picture. He has, however, enjoyed a varied career on the stage and in the motion picture field.

Mr. Bert Clark, who was in Australia eight years ago with a star vaudeville act coupled with Hamilton, has come over from America as principal comedian for H. D. McIntosh in "My Lady Frayle."

Miss Mabelle Morgan, whose personality and alluring contour add materially to the success of the Al Bruce revues, was last in New Zealand some seven and a-half years ago, when she was principal boy in the J. C. Williamson pantomime "Jack and the Beanstalk." Miss Morgan had figured twice previously for the firm in that capacity in "Mother Goose" and "Humpty Dumpty." Since her last visit here the handsome Australian has spent most of her time in America, with alternate engagements in London, and has done everything, she says, from grand opera to burlesque work, including a season in drama, when she played the lead in "The Yellow Ticket." Returning to Australia on America's entry into the war, Miss Morgan had a starring engagement under the Hugh D. McIntosh banner, subsequently joining the Fullers, her versatility and experience making her a valuable asset to a firm of such wide ramifications. "But pantomimes are my special weakness," she confesses.