

GREENROOM GOSSIP

A PERFECT LADY!

CHARLES HOLT, STAR OF THE AUSSIES.

With his airs and artifices and truly feminine way of wearing beauteous garments, Mr. Charles Holt is a picture that creates envy and admiration amongst the sex he so cleverly portrays. Producer and leading "lady" of the Australian Smart Set Diggers, he is here, there and everywhere making his presence felt and catching the eye of all beholders. His costumes and hats are a wonder to behold, and he wears the most approved décolleté gowns with distinction.

"It was great fun selecting our dresses in Paris," he says. The girls screamed with laughter to see an Aussie choosing the most delicate lingerie and the latest fashionable frocks and dresses. They found the visitor was a keen buyer. He would not purchase until the mannikins had paraded before him time after time. On one occasion he took three whole days selecting additions to his wardrobe. The famous Gaby Deslys presented Mr. Holt with the skeleton of one hat he still wears. "I met Gaby Deslys twice," remarked Mr. Holt, "once in London and once in Paris, at the Globe where we played before the Prince of Wales. Dorothy Brunton was with us there, and the house was packed with Diggers. After the performance the Prince of Wales sent for us and personally congratulated us collectively and individually."

Mr. Holt was with the 13th Field Artillery (4th division) A.I.F., and they played to the boys practically in the firing line. Many of them got gassed, Mr. Holt among them. He talks entertainingly of experiences at the front bearing on the lighter side.

Here it is in his own words: "I had left my dresses in a place called Merris, while we advanced five miles further on. The Hun at that time was consistently shelling a small town some four miles in front of us. Suddenly Fritz changed his tactics and shelled the town we had just left. I had returned from Paris only two days previously with a wardrobe which cost over £120. For one dress alone I paid £30 odd, and here it looked as if all were to be destroyed. I talked to a mate and after some argument he agreed to take me on his motor bicycle. I shall never forget that run. We passed dead horses and at intervals wounded men straggling onwards. Now and again a big hole in the road marked where a shell had landed and we had to dismount and push the bike through it. Finally we reached the house where the wardrobe was stored. The inhabitants had fled, but my mate and myself tied some on the bike, then gathered all we could in our arms and set out for our line. We got there all right, and the dresses were saved, but I would not repeat the ride for £1000. On another occasion the company were playing at Allanvale in a barn. The performance was due to start about 7 o'clock, and the Huns had never previously shelled the place. About half-past four a shell dropped near and was followed by another a few moments later. We waited anxiously but no more landed. Then shortly after 7 p.m., when the performance had just commenced a shell landed near the side of the building and blew the wall in. Seventeen bodies were afterwards taken out and over 150 wounded. Some of the company's best bandmen were included in the roll of those gone West."

Accidents that happened on the stage were recalled with a hearty laugh, "but I did not think them so humorous at the time," remarked Mr. Holt. On one occasion he was dancing with another artist and at the conclusion the latter was to grasp the "girl" under the armpits and throw "her" into the air, catching "her" on the downward flight. Unfortunately the male partner planted a firm No. 7 on each side of the dress. The result was disastrous. The "girl" went into the air all right but the dress remained on the stage, and the upward flight was made in a lace camisole and a handsome pair of pink bloomers. The audience roared with laughter, but the blushing artist fled. "No," said Mr. Holt in conclusion. "I don't think I'd like to be a girl. Too much time is lost in dressing. Why, for our appearance on the stage, it takes almost exactly one hour's preparation, and for the street we require half that time again. I don't envy the girls at all."

"TIGER ROSE."

THE GREAT STORM SCENE.

In the second act of "Tiger Rose," the new sensational play to be produced by Messrs. J. and N. Tait at His Majesty's Theatre on Thursday, October 7, occurs what is known as the "Great Storm Scene," a feature that invariably calls for wonderment and admiration. The whistling of the wind is produced by silk stretched on wooden drums and scraped by wooden cogs, two "supers" being employed to turn the handles which bring about this result. Electric torches operated from the wings supply lightning, and four electric fans, placed in suitable positions, cause the agitation of the curtains. The rain comes from an overhead main placed in the flies, the water pattering upon a large sheet of canvas and escaping through pipes into a tank below the stage. Various grades of thunder are manufactured by a variety of methods. Cannon balls are rolled down an inclined wooden gangway, muskets are fired into an iron tank, a big drum is beaten, and so, too, are a large sheet of iron suspended from the flies



MISS MARIE ILKA as Rose Bocion in the new J. and N. Tait production, "Tiger Rose."

and an empty iron tank. When the wind is expected to shriek more loudly than usual a special electrical apparatus, from which air is suddenly released, is brought into use. The stage hands are not expected merely to make a loud noise on general principles. Each man has his "part" and is only permitted to produce his particular brand of noise when he receives his cue. Each burst of thunder is numbered and described, the parts reading: "No. 1, rumble; No. 2, crash," and so forth. Cues are given by means of coloured electric lights, operated by the stage manager, who stands beside the switchboard. A blue light may mean that the man in charge of the lightning is expected to get busy; a red light may indicate that it is time for the thunder to rumble more loudly than usual; and other colours convey other meanings. It is really an exceptionally well-organised storm, and everything connected with it happens with clock-work precision.

WELLINGTON NOTES.

(By "Lorgnette.")

WELLINGTON, October 4. The next big dramatic attraction to be staged at the Grand Opera House will be Ian Hay's play "Tilly of Bloomsbury." It includes a tremendous diversity of characters, from a



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AUCKLAND.

Babu law student to a decided old aristocrat, from a flapper to a grandmother of '81, not forgetting the bailiff. It is said that the artists speak real English, through their larynxes and not through their noses. It must be real good to hear the English language on the stage again after so much of the American. Surely it is now about time that the English playwright came into his own.

We were promised a visitation of the musical comedy "Irene" at the end of last month, but the enormous success of the Sydney season precludes it. We will have to wait for a few weeks longer before "Irene" drops her visiting card on our steps. It is said that in "Irene" the music is much superior to that of the ordinary musical show, and, indeed, there are many who perceive a Gilbert and Sullivan resemblance in some of its finer lyrics and concerted numbers.

Carter, the magician, who is now touring the Dominion under the direction of J. C. Williamson, Ltd., is proving that when the quickness of the hand deceives the eye nothing seems impossible. Carter is said to stage his entertainment on a most elaborate scale, one of his big features being "Beauty and the Lion," an ornate act with a spectacular Oriental setting.

MUSIC NOTES.

(By "G" String.)

According to many people "art and sport do not row in the same boat," but Mr. Verbruggen in a recent lecture at the Sydney Conservatorium showed the fallacy of that contention. There is, however, a greater misunderstanding of music than this. The man of business is apt to be more interested in accumulation and conservation than in creation or evolution. To him, generally speaking, all artistic activity is waste of good time and energy—and music is the least excusable form of waste. And he is not altogether to blame, for the musician should cultivate a better, loftier, and more serious conception of his art. He should demonstrate beyond question that music is a science, that it ranks with the highest intellectual pursuits, and that its level is far above the plane of common observation.

John Amadio, Melbourne's favourite flautist, who, not content with the favours and financial tributes of his native city (he cleared £800 out of his last concert), packed his life and betook himself to London to shake the little old place up a bit, has been getting it severely from the critics in the Big Smoke, says the "Bulletin." They find all sorts of defects in his breathing and fingering, and are discovering other important technical

defects. By them, John, who had been accepted as easily Australia's best (where does John Lemmon come in? "G String" asks), is relegated to the second class, three seats back, but is comforted with the promise that if he is a good boy and practises assiduously under a master he may be able to play the flute quite well one of these days. And all this in spite of the fact that Melba boomed John assiduously, and gave every assurance that his living equal with the fife was not visible above the horizon.

A novelty in the shape of an all-Japanese picture with Sessue Hayakawa starred is "The Dragon Painter." Every member of the cast is a Jap and the atmosphere is entirely Japanese. Beautifully produced, it is a poem of a picture, and shows the Japanese star at his best.

Connie Talmadge in her first National, "A Virtuous Vamp," is responsible for not one triangle, but a score of them. It's just spicy enough to be audacious, but has the necessary delicacy to provide exquisite entertainment.

Playgoers throughout Australia to whom the name of Howard Vernon is familiar will be interested to know that J. C. Williamson Ltd. have arranged for a Benefit Matinee to be tendered him at Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne. It is appropriate that the recognition of Mr. Vernon's brilliant and memorable work extending over many years on the Australian stage should take place during the present season of Gilbert and Sullivan Opera at Her Majesty's, for it was in this play that the veteran made himself world-famous. "The Mikado" will be played at the benefit matinee, with Mr. Howard Vernon as Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner. According to present arrangements, the date will be Thursday afternoon, October 21.

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