



Back to Musical Comedy.

The presentation of "The Merry Widow," that charming musical comedy by Adrian Ross and Franz Lehár, was presented on Monday evening last at His Majesty's Theatre with all the completeness for which Williamson productions are already noted in South Africa as well as in other spheres where their activities operate. Considering that it is only some few years ago since this piece was staged at the same theatre, it is not surprising that mental comparisons were made, but it must be admitted that these comparisons were not to the disadvantage of the present company. It is true that Miss Margaret Paton, who plays Sonia, is not as fine as Maudie Thornton was, but she is infinitely better than the latter lady's successors. Possessed of remarkable histrionic ability, Miss Paton acted the part as well as sang the songs, and as a result achieved a notable success. Mr. Andrews as the Vicomte Camille de Jolidon, sang admirably, though he appears much older on the stage than he really is, while the Nisch of Mr. Edwin Brett was a remarkably clever study, admirably carried out. As Natalie, Baron Popoff's wife, Miss Hilda Guiver played the role in which she first appeared before Johannesburg audiences, and it must be admitted that she played it with a verve and vivacity that was as alluring as before. Sprightly and well figured as she appears in pantomime, I certainly prefer her in musical comedy, and the part of Natalie is one that apparently appeals to her, since she invests it with a spontaneous brilliancy that never fails to charm. Mr. Leonard as the Marsovian Ambassador, was even better than the original local interpreter of the part. Throughout the whole piece he succeeds in creating roars of laughter, which were none the less enjoyed for occasionally being involuntary. I cannot say that I was greatly impressed with the Danilo of Mr. Greene, tall and fine looking though he undoubtedly is. Not only does he lack the light baritone that one is inclined to associate with the part, but there is a heaviness about his style that one cannot appreciate after the refined elasticity of Alec Worcester. Still, it is better than Blackman or Frank

Wheeler was, and if he can only be induced to tone down a little, may afford an admirable presentation. All the rest of the parts were well cast, the Maxim girls being particularly bright and lively, their delightful appearance greatly enhanced by the beauty of the dresses they wore. In "The Merry Widow" I think that Williamson's have got another winner, and they certainly deserve it in view of the fact that such minute care has been taken in the acquirement of such beautiful dresses and in the general completeness which pervades the entire production.

"Dick Whittington."

In the anxiety that the first production shall be the complete success that the time and work lavished



MISS NITA PARKER, the handsome, well-figured young lady who essays her first speaking part as Captain of the Ship.

on its preparation entitles them to expect, the management of the Standard Theatre have delayed the starting of the pantomime until this very evening, when Dick Whittington, in the charming personality of Miss Kitty Storrow, will make his first bow to a Johannesburg audi-

ence. Miss Lorna Verne will be the Alice, and Miss Gladwys St. Vincent the Fairy Queen, and Miss Marjorie Clifton the Princess of Morocco. Mr. Halford Hamlyn is to be the Emperor of Morocco, whose palace is rid of the rats by Whittington's faithful cat, and Mr. Kenneth Gwynne will play Tom Bowling. On the comedy side, Mr. Lago Clifford, who is responsible for the entire production, will play the cook, Mr. T. G. Vane, who has done pantomime work in several of the English provincial towns, is Idle Jack, and Mr. David James will present Alderman Fitzwarren. The photograph which we publish is that of Miss Nita Parker, who plays the Captain of the Ship, and as she is an excellent sample of the bright and beautiful chorus, it will be readily understood that "Dick Whittington" will provide a charming evening's entertainment. At the conclusion of the pantomime proper there will be an old-fashioned harlequinade, a new feature in this country, while other items of interest include the very well trained performing Chimpanzee, General Darwin, whose antics we are told are almost human. We understand no money has been spared in order that the presentation may be entirely complete, and that the scenery is both beautiful and artistic, while the dresses are elaborate and costly. The old story has been strictly adhered to, and the production should be a complete success.

Wish Wynne's Season.

There are two outstanding features contained in this week's Empire programme. The first is Miss

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Wish Wynne's return visit to this town, and it is she who is at present the great attraction. Although it must be five years since this artiste was in our midst, there is absolutely no personal change visible in her, except that she has improved immensely. She instantly re-established herself in the hearts of her former admirers, and is increasing their number nightly by hosts of new ones. She gained her reputation through character studies, and as "The London Slavey," "The Country Lass," and the "London School Girl," and it is in her impersonations that she scores heavily. The applause which rewards her efforts is enthusiastic and well deserved. The other "star" which ornaments the proceedings at the Empire is Miss Mabel Bunyea, who presents a mystic, novel and ingenious production called "Fantasma." Her singing is far above the average, whilst her movements are graceful, heightened by her personal charm and beauty, in which her sparkling eyes play quite a great part. The exotic mystery is produced by Mr. Henry Clive, who himself gives a remarkable performance of leger-witz with witty impromptu patter, making his whole act very spicy and interesting. The Ally Oakley septette are a company of clever versatile artists, who indulge in singing, dancing and instrumental music, in which Olly takes a leading part as a clever banjoist. The night of our visit he played, among other pieces, Spindler's "Hussars' Ride" in a masterly manner, also the Barcarol from "Tales of Hoffman," and other popular tunes, for which he was heartily applauded. Another very interesting turn is that of little Joe Pacey, the child comedian, mimic and instrumentalist. She is a child of great promise and is sure to make a big name yet for herself. Miss Elaine Alfred has a pleasant soprano voice, and Len Lynn does some surprising upside down dancing. The bioscope shows some interesting South African features, which bring a pleasant evening's entertainment to a successful conclusion.

Under the editorship of the well-known Zionist writer, Schmarja Corelik, a new Yiddish weekly paper, "The Jewish Word," has been started in Geneva.

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RACING NOTES.

TURFFONTEIN.

The monthly fixture of the Turf Club takes place on Saturday, and the usual programme of six events will be gone through. For the January Handicap, 1½ miles, only eleven horses are entered. The Mede and Dick Whittington share honour of place with 9st. each, a nice galloping weight. Curwella, the Cape champion, is entered 4lb. below them, and as it is difficult to get a line as to his abilities, I shall leave him out. The Mede, provided that he is well, should at equal weights over this distance, hold Dick Whittington safe. Loch Eck (8st. 6lb.) I fancy is a light of bygone days, and besides the distance is really too short for him, but Tip Top (7st. 12lb.), if he is any good at all, should trouble the judge.

I suppose that After Dark II. (7st. 7lb.) has not come to hand yet, and Tonypandy (7st. 10lb.) seems to have seen his best days. Sirius (7st. 3lb.) must be seriously considered, though her failure to concede 3lb. to Falmouth over an easy course does not stamp him as something extra good. Cherisette (6st. 13lb.) and Patsy (6st. 7lb.) both should run well.

In the Trial Handicap, 7 furlongs, I see little to beat Athens (8st. 3lb.) now that he has struck form. Highland (7st.) and Sir Starr (6st. 11lb.) look the only danger, though Chastity (7st. 4lb.), if she has not lost her brilliancy altogether, may well be expected to make a fight of it. Minuet (6st.), on some of her form, is handicapped to win, but who will back a mare which for more than a year has not earned her oats?

The Stewards' Handicap will be run over the T.Y.O. course, and Lodestar again holds the post of honour with the heavy impost of 10st. 2lb. The Rosary (8st. 4lb.) should about win unless Call Duck (7st. 4lb.) or Atlantic Ocean (8st. 4lb.) unexpectedly turn up the trick for their respective owners.

In the Flying Handicap (Tops), six furlongs, Ulex (8st. 4lb.) looks a real good thing, and I will take Evening Glow (8st. 9lb.) and Cape (6st.) to fill the places. If everything one hears about Barrister (9st.) is true, the Flying Handicap bottoms is a gift for him. Anyway, his trainer, Randall, should, through Alan Quartermain, know where he stands. If fit and well, the two three-year-olds, Embassy (8st. 7lb.) and Sarkota at the same weight would take some beating.

In the Moderate Handicap, 9 furlongs, I will still pin my faith to Ravil (7st. 4lb.), who gets 13lb. from Allright, another possibility. Landrail (8st. 2lb.) should also make some show here, and may possibly turn out the winner. Nor-

man (9st. 7lb.) will have, anyway, all his work cut out to get a place.

AUCKLAND PARK.

The programme for next Saturday comprises two horse and five pony races. In the Auckland Park Plate, one mile, I expect Riedel (7st. 3lb.) to run, who may have most to fear from Economist (7st. 6lb.) and Pick (9st.). In the Junior Plate, Steenie (9st.), on Turffontein form, looks well handicapped, and Ethar (7st. 7lb.) and Pat Supple (7st. 10lb.) may divide place honours between them.

The pony races are for second, third and fourth class, and my selections will be found below.

My final selections are:—

Turffontein.

- 2.0 p.m., Trial Handicap, 7 furlongs.—Athens, Sir Starr, Chastity.
- 2.40 p.m., Stewards' Handicap, T.Y.O.—The Rosary, Call Duck, Atlantic Ocean.
- 3.20 p.m., January Handicap, 1½ miles.—Sirius, Patsy, Cherisette.
- 4.0 p.m., Flying Handicap (Bottoms), 6 furlongs.—Barrister, Embassy, Sarkota.
- 4.40 p.m., Moderate Handicap, 9 furlongs.—Ravil, Allright, Landrail.
- 5.20 p.m., Flying Handicap (Tops), 6 furlongs.—Ulex, Evening Glow, Cape.

Auckland Park.

- 12.30 p.m., 3rd Class Pony Handicap, B Division, 5 furlongs.—Chapman, Ensign, Stitches.
- 1.15 p.m., 4th Class Pony Handicap, 7 furlongs.—Slozel, Duchess, Harmony.
- 2.5 p.m., 2nd Class Pony Handicap, A Division, 6 furlongs.—Swampy, Recipe, Stephen.
- 3.0 p.m., Auckland Park Plate, 1 mile.—Riedel, Economist, Pick.
- 3.45 p.m., 3rd Class Pony Handicap, A Division, 1 mile.—Quartz, Victory II., Eudocia.
- 4.30 p.m., Auckland Park Junior Plate, 1 mile.—Steenie, Ethne, Pat Supple.
- 5.15 p.m., 2nd Class Pony Handicap, B Division, 4 furlongs.—Cabaret, Kingston, Yellow Slave.

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