

THE COMING OF THE "VERSATILES."

In 1911 whilst F. Stuart Whyte was en route to the old country from the land of the Southern Cross, fate ordained that he should stop over for a few days in Vancouver, B. C.

Realizing that English Bay was an ideal spot for open air concerts (usually designated al fresco entertainments in England), he ascertained that such a style of amusement was unknown in British Columbia.

As Stuart-Whyte's "Versatiles" were just then terminating a long and successful run in London and the Provinces, arrangements were speedily made with the Vancouver Park Commissioners and the "Versatiles" were cabled for and finally opened under the personal direction of their originator.

This was the first introduction of charming Pierette and Behemian Pierrot to Pacific audiences, and judging from the "Versatiles'" popularity which extends from coast to coast, we take it that F. Stuart-Whyte and his merry band of strolling players (who only increase in numbers and talent as years go by) have come to stay, and whenever you observe the presence of the "Versatiles" on the Pacific Coast, like the swallow, it is a true sign that summer is near.

The natural beauties of Stadacona Park have been turned to good account in making it one of the summer homes of the "Versatiles," and Victorians have turned out in their thousands to welcome this little band of talented old country artistes.

Stuart-Whyte attributes no small measure of his success to the fact that his companies are just happy families.

This season's new recruits to the "Versatiles" ranks (ten in number) come direct from the old country, and the periodical visits to New York and England of their promoter enables the companies to be up to the minute in their work.

Miss Zara Clinton (frontispiece) will ever remain the inimitable Pierette, the idol alike of Prairie and Pacific audiences, and she is bound to get you singing "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" or "Joshua!" before the season is through.

Comediennes are born not made, and Mr. Stork was undoubtedly on the best of terms with himself when he carried Zara to the door where dwell her parents.

Harry Hoyland is as funny as ever and Miss Emeline Berryman and Billie Conley are winning fresh laurels with their magnificent voices.

Of the new comes both Edith and Harriet Fawn (daughters of that dear old comedian, James Fawn, who, by the way, is still in harness), have scored a decided success. They, together with Charlie Cardel, admit they prefer the Pacific Coast to South Africa where they have just concluded a two years' tour with the "Merry Mascots." The one thing about the "Versatiles" of 1913 is the absence of any weak spot in the entire company, and Billie Oswald (the John Bunny of the combination) is absolutely the biggest joke-smith who ever left the shores of Bonnie Scotland.

The "Versatiles'" repertoire contains upwards of nine hundred of the latest song hits (English and American) as well as numerous gems from the modern musical comedies and grand operas.

Should you wish to hear any of the classics or see low comedy put over in a refined manner and prefer the open air and a cigar to the four walls of a theatre, a visit to the "Versatiles'" enclosure at Stadacona Park, Victoria, or English Bay, Vancouver, will convince you that the most optimistic citizen can forget for a few hours that such a thing as real estate ever existed. Stuart-White should be able to make his first payment on a 33-foot lot on Tuxedo Island if the elements are in his favor this season.

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