

'THE FREE LANCE' PUT ON AT THE NEW AMSTERDAM

Sousa Supplied the Music, Harry
B. Smith the Words.

BOTH TUNEFUL AND BRIGHT

Pretty Girls Aplenty and Enough of a
Plot to Serve Comic Opera Ends

Made First Night a Success.

Stegmund Lump.....	Joseph Cawthorn
Duke of Graftiana.....	Albert Hart
Emperor of Braggadocia.....	Felix Haney
Pertinax	Sim Pulen
Prince Florian.....	George Tallman
Dagonet.....	Louis Sainra
Herald	Charles Santra
Princess Yolande.....	Nella Bergen
Griselda	Jeanette Lowrie
Mopsa	Junia Allen
Leandre	Geraldine Malone
Silvandre	Monte Elmo
Jacqueline	Estelle Thebaud
Diane	Dorothy Southwick

At the New Amsterdam Theatre last night the Easter offering was "The Free Lance," a new comic opera by John Philip Sousa and Harry B. Smith which has not been heard until now in New York. The authors are said to have meant the piece as a return to genuine old-fashioned comic opera, in which fun and music are wedded, and not merely flirting with each other.

In this particular case both contracting parties come to the ceremony in high spirits and make a jolly evening's work of it. There is an emperor of somewhere or other who thinks he can do anything from writing grand opera to running a continent. He does it all by proxy. His taste is so exquisite that he can not bear the idea of a standing army of men, so he has regiments of beautiful Amazons that he can take some pleasure in reviewing.

Over against the Emperor's land of Braggadocia is the Dukedom of Graftiana. The Duke is a fire-eating, swash-buckling son of thunder who chews nails and maintains an army of handsome young giants.

By grace of the plot the Duke has a son, Prince Florian, who is to marry the Emperor's daughter, the Princess Yolande. The young people have not met. Rather than marry a man she has never seen the Princess runs away and changes places with a goose girl, Griselda. Prince Florian runs away, too, rather than marry a girl he does not know, and changes clothes with a goatherd, Siegmund Lump.

The Duke and the Emperor make the best of a bad business and try to fool each other with a goose-girl Princess and a goat-keeping Prince. Meanwhile, of course, the real Prince and Princess fall happily in love in the fields.

Griselda and Siegmund happen to be married anyway, so everything balances beautifully. But when Siegmund finds that his promised royal bride is just plain Griselda he has a moment of natural disappointment. "Every time I'm invited out to dinner," he sighs, "I always get just what I have at home."

The Duke and the Emperor try to borrow money of each other. Neither has any, which brings on war. At the border line between the two kingdoms the man-army faces the lady-army across a pretty green hedge. The man-army threatens to surrender. Each ruler makes Siegmund his proxy for the fight. Siegmund, finding himself fighting on both sides with nobody else in sight, winds up the war, and everybody falls into couples for the final curtain.

A large audience spared no effort to show its approval of the piece. Upon Joseph Cawthorn, as the brigand goatherd, fell most of the funmaking responsibilities, and his songs, "Hair," "The Mystery of History," and "Conundrums" were tirelessly encored. Nella Bergen as the Princess won hearty applause by her songs, notably "Three Love Stories" and "The Carrier Pigeon."

The most decided hit of the evening was Jeanette Lowrie in the rôle of the flaxen-haired goose girl. Her song, "The Goose Girl," proved one of the best in the piece.

Albert Hart as the Duke, Felix Haney as the Emperor, and George Tallman as Prince Florian won their share of approval.

The lines of "The Free Lance" are full of chuckles, the costumes are pretty, the music has the characteristic Sousa touch and go—and something more.

At the end of the first act there is a march, "On to Victory," sung by the whole cast. Last night Mr. Sousa conducted this number himself. The audience gave him six curtain calls for his pains, and insisted on a speech. The composer refused to tell anything more serious than a joke or two.

"Clansman" Audience in the Wings.

Part of last night's audience in the Broadway Theatre, Brooklyn, viewed the performance of "The Clansman" from the stage wings. At 7 o'clock all seats were sold. At 7:30 the standing room sale ceased, and soon afterward the fire officials announced that unless the aisles were cleared of the standees the curtain would not be permitted to go up. To obviate this, the persons who were standing were invited to go on the stage to witness the performance from the wings.

MRS. JOHNSTON HONORED.

Founder of Little Mothers' Aid Association Gets a Loving Cup.

Mrs. Alma Calder Johnston, founder and honorary President of the Little Mothers' Aid Association, had a reception at the "Happy Day House" of the association, 236 Second Avenue, yesterday afternoon. The old Canda mansion, which the Little Mothers occupy, was filled with guests, at least 400 of them who came to shake hands with the founder of the organization, listen to an interesting musical programme, and take tea in the big salon on the second floor of the house.

Mrs. Clarence Burns, President of the association, presented to Mrs. Johnston a loving cup bearing an inscription showing that it was given "by her associates and coworkers, with love and esteem, and in recognition of her years of devotion and service to the uplifting industrially and socially of the needy children of wage-earning mothers in our community."

Mrs. Johnston began the work of the Little Mothers in her own home in Stuyvesant Square sixteen years ago, when she became interested in the little girls of the neighborhood who came to sit in the park with their small brothers and sisters. The work grew until it was found necessary to take a small flat, then half a house, the whole house, and now the association has bought the Canda mansion for its headquarters, and has four branches in different parts of the city and a Summer home at Pelham Park.