

Music and Drama

(BY BAYREUTE.)

BOOKINGS.

(Dates Subject to Alteration.)

AUCKLAND—MIS MAJESTY'S
 June 7 to June 26—West's Pictures.
 June 28 to July 3—Hamilton Dramatic Company.
 July 5 to July 24—Hamilton Dramatic Company.
 July 26 to August 7—J. C. Williamson.
 August 24 to September 7—Hamilton Dramatic Company.
THE OPERA HOUSE.
 In season—Meynell and Gunn Pantomime Company.
 Monday, June 14—Meynell and Gunn, "Ride of Majfair."

WELLINGTON—OPERA HOUSE.

In season—Allan Hamilton Company.
 July 19 to July 24—Allan Hamilton.
 July 26 to August 12—Pollard Opera Co.
 August 18 to 28—G. Mugrove.
 August 30 to September 12—J. C. Williamson.
 September 14 to October 1—J. C. Williamson.
 October 2 to 16—Allan Hamilton.
 October 26 to November 13—J. C. Williamson.
 November 15 to December 9—J. C. Williamson.
 December 27 to January 16—J. C. Williamson.

TOWN HALL.

July 4 to 28—West's Pictures.

PALMERSTON NORTH—MUNICIPAL OPERA HOUSE.

August 4, 5—Allan Hamilton's Dramatic Co.
 August 12, 13—J. C. Williamson's "Jack and Jill" Co.
 August 27—Mechanica Elman's Concert.
 Sept. 20, 21—J. C. Williamson's Julius Knight Co.
 October 6 and 7—J. C. Williamson.
 Nov. 1 to 6—Hugh Ward's Musical Comedy Co.
 Nov. 20 to 22—J. C. Williamson.
 Jan. 17, 18—Carter, the Magician.
 Jan. 30 to 24—J. C. Williamson.
 Feb. 14, 15—The Scarlet Ironbrosoms.
 March 28 to 31—Allan Hamilton.
 May 10, 20—J. C. Williamson.
 June 8, 9—J. C. Williamson.
 July 30 to 25—Fred H. Graham's Musical Comedy Co.
 June 23, 30—J. C. Williamson.
 July 1, 2—Meynell and Gunn.
 August 18, 19—J. C. Williamson.
 Sept. 30—J. C. Williamson.
 October 1—J. C. Williamson.
 Nov. 1 to 5—Allan Hamilton.
 Nov. 16, 17—J. C. Williamson.

"An Englishman's Home" in Berlin.

"An Englishman's Home" when produced in Berlin recently, had a very suggestive reception at the hands of theatre-goers in the German capital. Seldom had a piece been looked forward to—on behalf of the British residents in Berlin—with so much interest as the play we are to see shortly in New Zealand. The Germans were not particularly interested one way or the other, although several of the leading papers had denounced the undertaking as unpatriotic and tactless. The house was crowded, the cast bore the names of excellent and popular artists, and the programme announced the fact that the scenery was new for the occasion. The curtain went up, and the audience—the happy, well-disposed holiday one, with the customary batch of first-night critics—listened to everything attentively, laughing pleasantly at times. At the close of the first act, the applause was cordial, but intermingled with hisses from a small minority, and then the house retired for a lengthy interval to discuss beer and the prospects of the play. Alas for impresarios, managers, and artists! The second act produced a storm absolutely unprecedented in Berlin theatre annals. The exaggerated twaddle of the local Volunteers aroused the indignation to boiling-point. Stamping, cat-calling, whistles, and roars of sarcastic laughter alternated with storms of hisses; while a few cries of "Order!" were drowned. The audience acted, the stage was mere dumb show. In the last act things looked dangerous; many people left the theatre, others yelled "Curtain down!" "Finit!" and similar demands. Strangers shouted backwards and forwards to each other from the galleries expressing indignation at having paid money to listen to such "rot," and the storm continued. The customary good temper of Berlin audiences, however, prevailed, and the majority, fortu-

nately, took the comic view. When Mr. Brown took up a rifle, there were shouts of "Bravo!" and applause drowned all his remarks. When the Volunteers were ordered to retire, the entire house—shaking with laughter—echoed the order. In a word, "An Englishman's Home" was an absolute and complete fiasco, and the sympathies of the more intelligent section of the audience went out to the unlucky artists. The piece was given again a day or two later, with the same results, but less tumultuously, owing to the smallness of the audience.

What the Emperor Thought.

The German Emperor has given his opinion of the disorderly scene at the production of "An Englishman's Home" in Berlin. The Emperor said he was acquainted with the contents of the piece. In recent years not only long articles and books had been written on the subject of all conceivable invasion possibilities, but, unfortunately, resort had also been had to the stage for the embodiment of political theories. That such dramatic works were bound to operate with crass anti-Germans (meaning the militarists in Britain, of course) went without saying; but it was well that it was so, for the rather exacting German public was always repelled by the crass in the treatment of a matter. Moreover, it was by no means favourable to the relations of nations to one another that they should be presented on the stage in antagonism. "An Englishman's Home" was a piece written for a certain group of Englishmen, and, consequently it was impossible that one should like very kindly to it in Germany. The rejection of it was therefore no more than just, and also showed that Germans were far from feeling gratification at the weaknesses of other countries which were set before them. As he (the Emperor) knew English family life, it in no way resembled that presented in the play.

Is It Justified?

The remarks of the German Emperor are fairly pertinent and to the point. The question that has exercised the public mind in England is "does 'An Englishman's Home' give a truthful and accurate statement of the case, or does it merely pander to the jingoistic instincts of a section of the British public, who hate anything that has the suspicion of a German taint in it?" The latter seems to be the more probable. The play is written by an Army officer. A man who by temperament takes to the military life and has its teaching developed and intensified in his own nature, is usually deficient in what is known as humanitarianism. The demoralising effects of a war upon a nation he sees, as a rule, unable to appreciate or grasp. It is something lacking in his disposition. There may be exceptions, of course, but that does not apply to the typical military gentleman whose views on what is best for the nation, or what will take mankind a stage higher in evolution are

usually founded on very superficial and somewhat transparent reasoning. The Duke of Wellington was a notable example of a great general reduced in politics to an incompetent and utterly prejudiced man of affairs. The reason that his fame has not reached the circle of patriotic admiration that Nelson's did was that the hero of Trafalgar had the good fortune to die in the limelight of a brilliant achievement. Wellington, as a man, had many more virile and masculine qualities in comparison to the sentimentality of his contemporary.

Soldier Statesmen.

The man, who perfects himself in the art of killing, has neither the experience nor the training requisite to the statesman whose aim is the intellectual and moral welfare of the race and the greatest good for the greatest number. Major Du Maurier, the author of the sensational play we are shortly to witness in New Zealand through the enterprise of Mr J. C. Williamson, belongs to a school of military thought which is identified with what the Kaiser has termed the "crass anti-Germans." There is no doubt that the Kaiser, with his imperialistic chancellor and that section of the German populace, who are best known by their Anglophobia, are just as much to blame for keeping the historic hostility to Germany in existence in England. That is not the point. The relevancy to Germany in existence in "An Englishman's Home" is that they are written in a more or less jingoistic spirit, and are designed to act upon a susceptible public imagination purely in the interests of party politics. So far as England is concerned they must stand on their merits. But when they are imported to the colonies, bringing with them their class prejudice and political leanings, it is time something was said to reveal to the more thoughtful side of the New Zealand public the real character of such a production.

A Word on Patriotism.

This is not written out of any unpatriotic spleen or anti-imperial spirit. There is no country in the world which has such a healthy spirit of patriotism and belief in the higher aims of Empire building as New Zealand. As a patriotic Maorilander, I do not want to see that spirit taken advantage of by a play of such an insidious and misleading character as "The Englishman's Home" unquestionably is. It is by reason of its sensational staging and theme, bound to draw large audiences in the Dominion, and no doubt work upon the public imagination as it has done elsewhere. From the purely dramatic point of view it is no doubt a fine draw and nobody wishes Mr Williamson success in his venture more heartily than I do. But as a piece of political party propaganda it will be hard to find its equal.

A Different Sort of "Play With a Purpose."

London has lately been stirred by a play of an altogether different, and if I might say so, superior, class to "An Englishman's Home." It is entitled, "The Earth," written by J. B. Fagan, and presented by Miss Lena Ashwell and Mr. Otto Stewart at the Kingsway Theatre. The Kingsway has been a remarkable success since Lena Ashwell took it in hand barely three years

ago, and presented a class of play which on the whole has caught the more thoughtful side of London theatre-goers. There are always intellect and interest in any drama presented at the Kingsway, and "The Earth" is no exception to the rule. It is an energetic protest against the modern system of the ownership of numerous newspapers by one proprietor—a "journalistic Trust," as one of the characters describes it. Mr. Fagan, for the purposes of his play, rather exaggerates the power of the daily Press and of the pluralist proprietor. But he makes effective use of what we may call the "Farnell motive," already employed in "The Bumble Shop" and "Waste." "The Earth" is a deeply interesting, strongly serious, and entirely "up-to-date" and vitally important piece, dealing with a social problem in earnest and mastery style.

"The Earth" is avowedly a "play with a purpose," a dramatic satire, and a "showing up" of alleged abuses. The author of "The Prayer of the Sword" is very bitter indeed against the alleged tyranny of the newspaper Trust.

The Menace of the Trust.

To understand the object of the play, it is necessary to know that the Press of London and Manchester has passed largely into the hands of two large commercial combinations, at the head of which is Alfred Harcourt, now Lord Northcliffe, on the one hand, and Sir Arthur Pearson on the other. The tactics of both combinations have broken down a good many of the earlier traditions of the British Press, and their daily publications have been designated at times "yellow journals." Whatever may be the character of the papers themselves, the proprietors have brought about more or less what is known now as a Trust movement in British journalism. It is against that the author has directed his attack.


The Story.

The "combat" of the drama is between Sir Felix Janion, a rich newspaper proprietor, and the Rt. Hon. Denzil Trevena, a philanthropic M.P., whose Wages Bill, which has for its principal object the prevention of "sweating," is about to be presented to the House of Commons. Janion is strongly opposed to the bill, which, he says, will cause a "commercial chaos," and is using all his influence to get the Government to "drop" it. Unfortunately, Trevena is carrying on an intrigue with the wife of an indebted and insoucious Irish nobleman, the Earl of Killone; and Janion, through a French window leading to his lawn, sees them embracing. He immediately orders his henchman, Michael Dickson, to have the guilty pair watched; and the result is that Janion turns up at Trevena's chambers in Queen Anne's Gate, armed with complete evidence of the misconduct of the parties. "Unless you promise me that you will abandon the bill," he says to Trevena, "I shall go at once to Lord Killone and give him this information. He will immediately institute proceedings for a divorce, and your career will be at an end." Trevena is willing to risk political extinction, but he shrinks from the shame

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