court flunkey to the core, declines to license the production, and thus shatters in one blow six months' labour upon which the living of the dramatist depends. England is sublimely tolerant of those offences of stupidity against intelligence. It is little wonder that all the leading dramatists have united in a joint protest against such a proceeding.

Modern Wits—Some Good Stories.

Seymour Hicks, the well-known London comedy actor, has collected stories and sayings of most of the modern wits, and deftly woven them in with the recital of his own experiences. The result is a very amusing book of 300 odd pages. I quote a few of his stories, only stopping to mention that there are many scores more:

A Line for the Bills.

"Criticisms on me generally say: 'His amazing vitality' or 'He seemed to perspire more than usual on this occasion'; a notice of this kind drawing from Mr. Pinero the remark: 'Seymour, if I were you, I should not advertise "Doors open at eight." I should alter it to "Pores open at nine!" '"

Rutland Barrington in Tune.

"On one of the Gilbert premieres Mr. Gilbert was seated in a box watching his work when a young lady turned to him and said: 'Oh, Mr. Gilbert, Rutland Barrington is singing in tune.' 'It's only first night nervousness; he'll get over it,' said Gilbert.'

Chaffing Wyndham.

"Henry Hamilton, entering the reading-room of the Green Room Club one day, saw Sir Charles Wyndham, who was at that time delighting London by his beautiful performance of Garrick at the Criterion Theatre. 'Ah!' said Hamilton to our greatest light comedian, 'More like Garrick every day and less like him every night.' "

Brookfield and Grossmith.

"On his return to England, after his recitals in America, Mr. George Grossmith began comparing the art of entertaining with that of acting. 'You fellows,' he said, 'have to take out scenery, properties, plays, and a large company, while I just landed in New York with my piano and a dress suit, and I made £30,000.' 'I daresay,' snapped Charles Brookfield, 'but we don't all look so d—— funny in our dress suits.' "

The "Richard III." Make-up.

"Talking of my Richard III., I met Claude Carton, who said to me: 'Seymour, I hear you are going to play Richard.' I said 'Yes.' 'Ah! well,' said the witty author, 'you'll be saved some trouble in the make-up. You won't have to wear the hump.' 'Why not?' I inquired. 'Oh, the audience will have that,' he said."

The Critics' Play.

"Clement Scott did some play-writing. His adaption of 'Denise' had been in the hands of several London managers for a considerable period, each in turn paying a sum of money on account of fees, which became forfeit to Scott on non-production. At last, Augustus Harris took an option on it, paying £200 on account of royalties. Being in want of a piece, Harris decided to try the play. A friend of Scott's, rushing to the author's house, shouted: 'All my congratulations, old man: Harris is going to do your play!' 'Is he, by George!' said Scott. 'Then I am ruined!' "

A Self-possessed Show Lady.

"On a Monday night at the Gaiety Theatre the show ladies always talked more than on any other night in the week. Having been away for the week-end they had many notes to compare. On this evening one lovely lady was relating some experience so loudly as I sang that she knocked all the words out of my head. I said to Caryll: 'One moment,' and the band stopped. I turned to her of the wagging tongue, and said: 'Dear lady, will you finish your story or shall I finish my song?' Not in the least taken aback, she said: 'Do you know, dearie, it's a matter of the utmost indifference to me what you do.' The house laughed heartily at the way I had been scored off."

Australian Grand Opera Tour.

There is an unlikely rumour abroad that the conductor for Melba's Opera Company to tour Australasia next year will be Mr. Landon Ronald, best known on the other side by his exceedingly clever songs, one of which, "Down in the Forest," Melba herself sang frequently at her last concert season in Melbourne with popular acclamation. Mr. Ronald has a good reputation in London, not only for his work as a composer, but for his feats as a conductor. Next to Henry J. Wood and Thomas Beecham, he is the chief of the younger generation of those who go in for original interpretation with the baton. He is also one of the many brilliant Jewish artists who predominate in the world of music to-day. In London he conducts the New Symphony Orchestra, and at present is running a series of splendid Sunday concerts at the Albert Hall, at which leading artists are appearing. He was appointed to the New Symphony Orchestra after Mr. Thomas Beecham gave it up to take up a wider work in the spread of musical culture.

Why the Rumour Is Unlikely.

The latest news concerning him is that he has just been appointed to the directorship of the London Guildhall School of Music. Mr. Ronald's ambition is to make the Guildhall School not only the best centre of musical training in England, but equal in every respect to the finest conservatories of the Continent.

Speaking to an interviewer in regard to the appointment, he said: "I want to make the school equal to any establishment for musical education, English or foreign, that can be named. For this purpose I shall surround myself with the finest staff of professors it is possible to obtain. It is too early yet to mention names, but I can assure you the list, when it is published, will be a surprise."

"What particular side of the school's activity will you be especially interested in?" he was asked.

"The orchestral and choral. I mean to make the students' orchestra of the Guildhall School as fine a body of instrumentalists as can be formed with the students constantly changing. It will be at least 110 strong. I shall not train the band on hackneyed lines. I believe in familiarising young musicians with the works of modern composers, both light and otherwise."

Mr. Landon Ronald will retain the baton over the New Symphony Orchestra, a decision that will be appreciated by those who know what a finished body of players he has made of them.

"Of course, to do the two things will mean very heavy work," he said, "but I think I shall be able to manage it."

Mr. Ronald, who is only 37, will have a salary of £1,000. At the early age of 18 he became second conductor at Covent Garden, and four years later he conducted his first opera there. Later he was associated with Madame Melba, and when the London Symphony Orchestra was formed he became conductor. Mr. Ronald is the composer of about 100 songs and a number of orchestral works. It is not likely now that he will visit Australia with Melba.

Christmas Pantomime at Drury Lane.

Choice has fallen on the favourite old nursery story of "Jack and the Beanstalk" as the subject for the pantomime to be produced at Drury Lane Theatre, in London, on Boxing night.

Messrs. J. Hickory Wood, Frank Dix, and Arthur Collins are jointly responsible for the book, and Mr. J. M. Glover is supplying the music. An important character in the production will be the cow (represented by Mr. Arthur Conquest), whose sale by the luckless Jack for five beans leads to such unforeseen results. When the curtain rises on the second part, the monster beanstalk is seen towering to a great height, and Jack ascends into the land of giants. This year the giant, who falls out of his kingdom on to our earth, proves to be ex-President Roosevelt, whose colossal body extends the whole width of the ample stage.

Novel and striking scenic effects will be introduced, one of the most curious being a whirlwind in the scene representing a market place, which is swept clear of its stalls and their occupants.

Miss Dolly Castles has been engaged as the principal girl.

Elocutionist for New Zealand.

Mr. Laurence Campbell, an elocutionist of considerable reputation in Australia, who adjudicated for several years at the Ballarat Competitions, commences a tour of New Zealand at Wellington on Christmas Night at the Opera House. Before coming to Australia Mr. Campbell made his appearance in London, where it was said of his entertainments by the "Daily News," "They may be recommended as healthy, as they are in the highest sense enjoyable." He has a considerable repertoire, including Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," Le Fann's "Shamus O'Brien," Kipling's "Fuzzy Wuzzy," and numerous humorous and musical monologues as well. His Shakesperian recitals are as follows:—"Henry VIII.," Act III., Sc. 2, Cardinal Wolsey and Cromwell; "Othello," Act I., Sc. 3, Duke, Othello, Brabantio, Iago, and Desdemona; "As You Like It," Act II., Scenes 1 and 3, Duke Senior, Amiens, Jaques, First Lord and Orlando; "Merchant of Venice," Act I., Sc. 3, Shylock, Antonio and Bassanio; "Julius Caesar," Act I., Sc. 1, Flavius, Marullus, Shoemaker and Carpenter; and "Macbeth," Act IV., Sc. 3, Macduff, Malcolm and Rosse. The elocutionist brings with him a Russian baritone, M. Eugene Ossipoff, who sings operatic selections; and Miss Rene Lees, accompanist. After playing several nights at Wellington, the party visit various country towns, and arrive at Auckland in time to give recitals on 14th, 16th, and 17th January.

Mr. Ernie E. Booth, the well-known "All Black" footballer, and captain of Sydney's premier team, "Newtown," is making the necessary arrangements for the recitals at the different centres of the Dominion.

"Behind the Veil"—Psychic Drama.

A curious play, entitled "Behind the Veil," written by Mr. Cecil Raleigh, has been produced in London with somewhat mixed results. Some of the critics refuse to take it seriously, and in their notices there is a general spirit of levity not usually conspicuous in the dramatic writings of London dailies. The play is classed by the author as psychic drama. Prince Maurice Le Noir—the name is symbolic—is to be regarded as the embodiment of what we are wont to qualify as "psychic force." He is a seeker after the unknowable, the unseeable, the unattainable. But that by no means exhausts the range of potentialities. He is also a victim to morphia, a noted viveur, a dissolute rimagate, a profligate. In consequence he is held in righteous horror by his saintly cousin, Lady Margaret Courtenay, Mother Superior of a French convent. Nor does she scruple to tell him so in the plainest terms when he pays her an occasional visit. Just before his coming, another cousin, pretty, golden-haired, and full of womanly sympathy, has arrived from Australia. By way of a joke, she dons the Mother Superior's robes, and having, from dread of discovery, concealed herself on the Prince's entrance, unwillingly overhears a heated controversy between Lady Margaret and the Prince, towards the close of which the latter hysterically announces his intention of using his wonderful will-power in order to restore to his elderly companion her pristine youth and beauty. Lady Margaret conveniently slips away, and, just as a tremendous thunderstorm bursts over the convent, the other Margaret takes her place, throws off her nun's disguise, lets down her golden hair, and in the full blaze of sudden limelight announces that the miracle has happened!

The "Daily Telegraph's" critic refuses to be inspired by any such thrilling climax. He treats the play not too seriously when he offers the following as criticism: "Her sole excuse for this extraordinary step is that she sees no other way by which to rescue the Prince's soul from perdition. The dispassionate onlooker will probably suggest that she would almost certainly have been quite as successful, and, incidentally, have saved herself and others a lot of trouble, had she depended on her own powers as a charming and fascinating maiden, equipped with no more formidable armour than her girlish sweetness and persuasive loveliness. That, however, would have brought the play to a premature conclusion, and deprived the Prince of innumerable opportunities of airing his views respecting the world and its birth, protoplasm, the riddle of the earth, and, among other things, the origin of species. All this he discusses at very considerable length. Also, he fights a duel, and, being wounded, becomes more hysterically 'psychic' than ever. With the view of curing him, Margaret, on the advice of an eminent brain specialist, pretends that she is no better than she should be, joins in the revels organised by the most debauched of the Prince's old comrades, and altogether makes a very good show of throwing her bonnet over the windmills.