

Music and Drama.

By BAYREUTH.

BOOKINGS.

(Dates subject to alteration.)

HIS MAJESTY'S, AUCKLAND.

October 29 to November 9—Auckland Amateurs, "The Mikado."

TOWN HALL.

November 6 Herbert Bloy's Concert.

AUCKLAND PICTURE SHOWS.

The Lyric Theatre, Synnotts Street—Nightly.
Royal Albert Hall, Albert Street—Nightly.

WELLINGTON OPERA HOUSE.

October 16 to November 2—Oscar Asche-Lilly Brayton Co.

Sarah Bernhardt's Triumph.

DESCRIBING the appearance of Mme. Sarah Bernhardt at the Coliseum in London last month, the critic of the "Daily News" says: "At the end of the third act of Victor Hugo's 'Lucrece Borgia' Mme. Sarah Bernhardt actually quailed before the applause at the Coliseum. That was not acting. Bouquet after bouquet was handed over the footlights—some in humorous circumstances—and the wonderful little actress was half hidden behind the flowers. It must have been a wonderful thing for Sarah Bernhardt to know that she is held in such love and admiration, by many, too, who cannot have seen her at her best. But Londoners are hero-worshippers when once a man or woman has pierced their Cockney indifference. Sarah Bernhardt is acknowledged to have been the finest actress within living memory, and the audience at the Coliseum left her in no doubt of its admiration. The critic must perforce join in this general adulation, although he knows full well that the great actress is only a glorious shadow of her old self. But she is a glorious shadow, and Sarah Bernhardt at the end of her career is a greater actress than any now on the stage."

Interesting Memories.

The news of the tribute to be presented from her English admirers was first communicated to Mme. Bernhardt by a representative of the "Daily Telegraph" who found her at her celebrated retreat at Belle Isle, that beautiful island south of Guernsey where the "Chateau Sarah Bernhardt" is perched on a high promontory overlooking the sea. Here she is cut off entirely from immediate intercourse with the rest of the world, and is absorbed when she pleases in the study of her favourite authors, or spends her time in the contemplation of nature and enjoying the magnificent panorama of the sea which lies at the foot of her summer stronghold. Here she sometimes also entertains a few of her most intimate friends, and they are surprised to find her quite a different Sarah, smiling in fishermen's boats, climbing the rocky cliffs, or walking for hours on the high plateau and enthusiastically breathing the strong sea air at a time of life when most of us prefer to take our exercise gently in a rocking chair.

She expressed her delight at this unexpected honor in characteristic fashion and proceeded:

"Yes, it is nearly thirty-five years since first I appeared in London, with the troupe of the Comedie Francaise, before an English audience. How they did receive me! What an enthusiasm! It kept growing every day, and I wondered myself where it would end! I shall never forget it!"

I reminded her that it was as far back as 1878 that her first appearance took place in London. It was after her struggles and battles with Monsieur Perrin, the director of the Comedie Francaise, the terrible Perrin! The man, for whose office she used to go prepared to fall on her knees if he would only let her play a certain part, and whom she left slapping the door regularly in his face because he had refused to let her play it!

"London Made My Fame."

"London was the making of my fame," she said. "It was the London public that first appreciated me, and laid the foundation for what celebrity I have acquired. I do not hesitate to say it; and now when I look back it is all still vivid before me! It was a critical period for me! The battles that we fought

in London on that first visit of the Comedie defy all description."

The famous actress had some interesting remarks to make concerning the stage traditions in England and France, and the imposition of restrictions which are sometimes considered necessary to suit Continental plays for presentation on an English stage. "I fully approve," she said, "the restrictions imposed in England in certain matters; but, on the other hand, when foreign plays are concerned, it is ridiculous to wish to impose them when they will not fit. Take as an example the 'Dame aux Camelias.' The play is completely destroyed if you change it from illegitimate to legitimate love. You then introduce either very sordid or futile motives, and instead of being a masterpiece it becomes a worthless, insipid thing, and had better not be played at all. Besides, it in no wise represents English customs. It is based on other traditions, on the customs of another people, and to wish to adapt English traditions to it is absurd. Thus, when I act parts in such plays, I conceive them strictly as adapted to the manners and customs of another country, and there can be no offence."

The subject was one in which she was deeply interested, and on which she spoke with great emphasis. But personally she never had any trouble in England, where her views were fully understood. I referred to her creation of Hamlet, so different in many respects, from the traditional conception in England. Why had she been tempted to create a part which was not generally supposed to be within the province of a woman?

Lack of Good Heroines.

"Simply," she declared, "because there are not enough really good plays in which women can appear as the heroines and at their best. The leading parts in all the most famous plays are always written for men. I do not know why authors do not write just as many leading and heroic parts for women. You cannot imagine what difficulty we have in finding suitable parts for us. Dramatists should have more consideration for us. A woman's role, as a rule, in even the best plays, is mediocre or insipid. She is never given the strength, the intelligence, the versatility of the hero. Do they think that we are not capable of it? I have tried the impossible, to discover plays with suitable heroines, and I have found very few or none at all. It was for this reason that I turned my attention to some heroes whose role might be interpreted by a woman. I found Hamlet one of them. It is a part full of intellectual vigour, versatile in character, and which lends itself to a good deal of shading. There is tenderness and pathos, as well as a keen mentality, in Hamlet, and it is this which is usually wanting in women's roles, but it is not beyond our capacity. I have shown it by creating Hamlet according to my own conception, and showing Shakespeare's hero in a new light. 'La Aiglon' is quite a different character, and does not come under the same category. The character is one of effeminacy, weak mentality, dreaminess, and nothing more. I tried other famous roles, among them Mephistopheles. I worked hard over the Mephistopheles of Balthus and finally gave it up, not without some regret. It was not what I thought could be made out of it for me. But it shows what a difficulty we women have to find suitable roles. Did writers give us more true heroines we would not bother seeking for characters among their heroes. Lady Macbeth is good in a way, but, after all, she is not the principal character in the play, and she shows only one extreme of a woman's nature."

"Everywoman" in London.

This autumn Drury Lane is not the home of sporting melodrama. Villains no longer machinate against the happiness of heroes and heroines. Instead, London audiences have "Everywoman" which recently toured New Zealand. Mr. E. A. Baughan remarks that "Everywoman" has not the atmosphere of Bunyan or of the old morality plays, but has kinship with the ordinary Drury Lane drama.

"Everywoman" is our old friend the heroine who, clad in decent black, nearly dies in a snowstorm after many persecutions," he says. "Instead of one villain there are two—Passion, who

almost overwhelms Everywoman, and Wealth, who seeks to encompass her ruin, and spurns her (in a snowstorm) when Beauty and Youth have left her.

The moral of the piece is dubious if comfortable, however. Apparently vice becomes virtue after it has had its fling, for Everywoman finds Love—a good wholesome, domestic love, who is waiting by her blazing hearth—when everything else has left her. Although I wish to be just and fair to Everywoman, I must say that not until she has had her good time and has drunk the cup of vice to the dregs does she recognise the beauty of Truth and Love. It is even doubtful if she would have come out of the quest so well if Wealth had not spurned her. That is why I have said the moral is dubious, if comfortable. Moreover, the denouement is a trifle hard on Love."

"The Great John Ganton."

The latest of the American plays to be produced in London is "The Great John Ganton," founded on a novel by Arthur J. Eddy. One English critic characterises the new play as a simple-minded melodrama with rhetorical outbursts on "graff."

John Ganton is a hustler and believes in taking business morally as he finds it. If the Austrian Government forbids the importation of his tinned pork, he squares the Austrian Government's inspectors. Also, when he receives a cable informing him of the prohibition, he engineers a rumour that Vienna is moderating its attitude, and then sells his futures in "hogs" and as such his present stock as he can without causing comment. When his stockyard hands strike he bribes the leaders. His son Will has quite other ideas on business, for he has been educated at Harvard, apparently a University with a moral sense.

Revenge by Dividend.

In other respects, however, Will's morality seems to be a trifle shaky. He buys a large block of Union Copper shares on the strength of a tip that a dividend is to be declared, although he has not the money to take them up. The dividend is passed on the motion of Jack Wilton, a director, who has given the tip to a Mr. Delaney, who has passed it on to Will. Delaney was seen at a golf club dinner embracing Wilton's wife, and the "passing" of the dividend is the little revenge of the injured husband.

Will Ganton's opposition to his father is based on the certainty of making a pile out of Union Copper. Not only does the son oppose the father on the matter of graft, but he is also determined to marry May Kating, the daughter of a man who tried to ruin Ganton, but was beaten, and had to shoot himself. The copper deal lands young Ganton on the wrong side to the tune of £23,000. The father will pay this if the son will give up all idea of marriage, but the son refuses, and sells his share in the business to his father, and is shown the door. John Ganton has then to stand the racket of rhetorical abuse from May Kating, but does not budge.

How to Be a Porkpacker.

However, all ends happily. John Ganton has a stroke of some sort, apparently brought about by a mixture of unrestrained anger and the ceaseless chewing of cigars. The old man just loves May for having stood up to him, and the son has regained his affection through having been injured by the strikers. Before a minor operation takes place John Gan-

ton hands over his business to his son and gives his blessing to the two young people.

"I gather from this play," says the writer referred to above, "that to run a large business as a pork-packer a man must be able to chew cigars all day long; that he must be able to read important letters and dictate their an-

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