

It is stated that as soon as the leases of the four shops adjacent to the Rotunda Building in Bourke-street, Melbourne, expire, which is very shortly, a new and up-to-date theatre will be erected on the ground occupied by the old building and shops. There can be no doubt that if the statement is correct, the theatre would pay from its opening date, for another theatre in Melbourne is badly wanted. Many managers at present have to pass this city by or book the Bijou, and in the latter case it is generally a losing game. "It is cheaper," as a well-known manager recently expressed himself, "to lay your company up for a time than to pay the £60 per week rent at the Bijou, with its unsavoury approaches and wretched surroundings."

A lively campaign has been going on in Rome. A body of young men have made it their business to go constantly to the theatres, and when there to remonstrate with ladies whose large hats, however beautiful in themselves, effectually prevent their neighbours from enjoying the play. The public, which has been much tried of late by the want of consideration shown by some ladies, was almost universally on the side of the grumblers. At last their efforts have been crowned with success. The Perfect of Rome has issued an order to the attendants at theatres to allow only ladies without hats in the stalls, the dress circle, and the pit.

Mr Edmund Payne, who is playing in "The Spring Chicken" at the London Gaiety, was naturally considerably impressed at a recent performance by the fact that some man in the upper circle hissed him every time he appeared. The stranger was politely shown the door, and was then asked the reason for his conduct, when he explained that it was because Mr Payne had reminded him of a man he didn't like. In amused comment on this circumstance, in a letter to the "Daily Express," Mr Payne remarks:—"Such an argument opens up a wide field for the Hissing Brigade. The next time I am hissed at I shouldn't be surprised to hear from the hisser that it was because I wore the same size in boots as a man who owed him money and wouldn't pay."

CARSTAN

NAVY CUT TOBACCO "THAT'S ALL"

Since the demolition of the Lyceum as the headquarters of the British drama Mr Beerbohm Tree has been regarded as the metropolitan of the theatrical profession in this country (says the "Licensed Victuallers' Gazette"), and by his election as president of the Theatrical Managers' Association in succession to the late Sir Henry Irving he has been installed as the official "chief" by the unanimous voice of the London and provincial executive. It was universally recognised that no other choice was possible, and it was a significant fact that no other name was submitted to the meeting of the Association held recently. After Sir Henry Irving no other actor in England has done more than Mr Tree for dramatic art (coupled with the name of Shakespeare), for the actor, and for the playgoer. During a long but not unsurpassed period of responsible management he has never faltered in his high sense of his duty as a custodian of art. He has had his failures, but he never produced anything that was intrinsically unworthy of success. He has risked his commercial solvency on behalf of the home drama, and on one occasion when the seriousness of his risks were urged upon him he made the historic reply in defence of his decision: "But what a splendid play it is to go bankrupt over!" In this spirit, backed by unequalled power of imagination and a thorough knowledge of the technique of his medium, he has made Shakespeare the daily food of human nature, and has taught the public that poetic drama is a thing to be desired. And his influence in the behind-the-scenes part of the theatre has been no less important, if less apparent, than what he has effected in the sight of the public. His Majesty's has always been the best school of acting and the most successful class for dramatists in London. He has taken in writers

for the stage and turned out playwrights; he has engaged the raw histrionic material and fashioned it into the proved and workmanlike article. The public have long since recognised Mr Tree's work at its proper value, and if you talk of the players who have served under his banner and the dramatists who have been through his hands, you will understand why the profession could have no other head than the manager of His Majesty's Theatre.

A recent item on the programme at the St. George's Hall, London, was "The Artist's Dream," written by the late Mel. B. Spurr.

It is stated in well-informed circles that Mr Harry Rickards has secured a half-interest in the Cremorne Gardens, Perth, W.A.

"It is quite possible," says a London exchange, "that the biography of the late Sir Henry Irving will be written by his two sons, Messrs H. B. and Lawrence Irving. The compiling of such a work could not be in better hands, if they decide to carry it out."

Keith Kennedy, a talented young Australian violinist of fourteen years of age, is to tour New Zealand shortly. He has successfully toured Australia, and during his coming visit to this colony will be supported by a company of artists.

Mrs Israel Zangwill, wife of the well-known author and playwright, has entered the literary world, and has published a novel entitled "The First Mrs Mollivar." It is said to be full of dramatic incident, and it is understood that it will shortly be adapted for the stage.

The "Municipal Journal," speaking of municipal theatres in Germany, says that no town caring for its reputation is without one; the promotion of dramatic art is part of the duty of the public authority. Municipalities lend the theatres to lessees, rarely charging rent, but dividing profits; the town's percentage rarely covers interest, and a subsidy is frequently added to maintain the house. Cologne maintains an old theatre, as well as a new opera house; the latter cost—building £122,600, stage equipment £27,000, decorations and costumes £29,000. The restaurant attached cost £19,600. The object being to popularise theatrical performances as a counter-attraction to beer-gardens, the charges, arranged in three grades according to the length of the run, are fixed so as to give all classes an opportunity of seeing the same piece. Most towns have several Shakespearian performances every season. Plays by leading contemporary dramatists are produced as soon as possible.

The remaining New Zealand dates of the Knight-Jeffries Company are:—Wellington, December 26th to January 13th, 1906; Masterton, January 15th; Palmerston North, January 16th and 17th; Wanganui, January 18th and 19th; Hastings, January 20th; Napier, January 22nd and 23rd; Gisborne, January 24th, 25th, and 26th; Auckland, January 29th to February 17th. The company sails for Sydney on February 19th.

Mr R. G. Knowles, who will visit the colonies under Mr Williamson's management next year, is appearing with much success in South Africa. His own performance includes music, dancing and anecdote, while he is assisted by Mrs Knowles, who plays the accompaniments and does wonderful things on the banjo, and some fine pictures shown by Mr E. C. Coates with the biograph.

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