

A remarkable play was produced at the Court Theatre, London, just before the departure of the last English mail. This was "The Charity That Began at Home," by Mr St. John Hankin, a comedy absolutely destitute of the action which is supposed to be the essential of all forms of drama. "Nothing to speak of happens during its four acts," says one critic, and descriptions show that the play relies for its effects wholly upon its characterisation and dialogue. It is a daring experiment, and although the play is widely praised, it seems almost impossible that it should prove financially successful.

The following are a few of the vocal gems in the musical comedy "The Orchard," which is to be presented here shortly by the Royal Comic Opera Company:—"I Must Propose to You," Miss Olive Godwin's delightful number, and her duet with Mr J. Ralston, "A Lack-a-Day"; "Little Mary," a famous skit on J. M. Barrie's celebrated comedy of that name. It convulsed London for over two years, and is sung with charming demureness by Miss Evelyn Scott; "The Unemployed," by Mr George Lauri and Mr Arthur Crane; "From Far Peru" is rendered distinctive by the really remarkable dancing of Mr Fred Leslie; "Liza Ann" is a number in which Mr Fred Leslie's wonderful terpsichorean feats again feature, and he is ably supported by Miss Evelyn Scott; "Advertisements" and "Fancy Dress" sung by Miss Clara Clifton, are full of unctious humour; "Come Along with Me" with its chorus and Pierrot Ballet is one of the hits of the piece; "Pushful" is a number which owes much to the clever handling of Mr C. R. Bantock; "The Lady Secretary" introduces a new and delightful lady member of the company in the person of Miss Connie Milne; "I Do all the Dirty Work" is deliciously funny in the hands of that droll comedian, Mr George Lauri.

A Christmas card comes from the Black Family, who are now touring Queensland. "Right through business has been good and the tour has been a most successful one, the Family taking on with the public immensely. Australia is a big country to work, and it will take us years to do it thoroughly. We are all in good health (writes Mr Black) and enjoying the trip very much indeed.

Mr Edward German's new comic opera based on the adventures of "Tom Jones," will first be seen in London in the late spring. It will be presented by Mr Robert Courtneidge at Manchester at Easter, where it will be played for a period of three weeks, and it will then be brought to London. It has not yet been definitely

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decided where in London it will be presented though there is some talk of it being the successor to "The Dairymaids," at the Apollo Theatre.

Mr Ernest Shipman, general manager for Sweely, Shipman and Company, the American theatrical firm, is suffering from nervous collapse in New York, and will take a long vacation and a complete rest. Mr Shipman is a brother of Mr

Fred Shipman, who is managing Miss Marie Narelle's Australian and New Zealand tour.

Mr Luscombe Searell, who it will be recollected produced the opera of "Estrella," some years ago, and who is the brother of Mr R. Trist Searell, the well-known musician, has produced a Biblical play set to music, "Mizpah" in New York with a good deal of success.

Allan Hamilton will pay only a flying visit to Auckland in connection with "The Little Stranger" season, as he is due in Sydney, January 18, to complete all arrangements for Mr Harry Rickards' new English Dramatic Company, which opens at the Criterion Theatre, Sydney, on February 2. The Australasian tour will be under Mr Hamilton's management.



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