

GREENROOM GOSSIP

Dame Nellie Melba recently gave an autographed photo of herself to be auctioned for the East London Hospital for Children. The Earl of Erril acted as auctioneer, and the splendid sum of £100 was given for the said photo. At the same sale, the Diva herself auctioned a silver box belonging to the Duke of Portland.

Arthur Tauchert is said to be the living embodiment of C. J. Dennis' "Sentimental Bloke," which is to be screened in Auckland shortly. In face, physique and mannerisms he is true to type. Miss Lottie Lyle plays opposite Mr. Tauchert as Doreen in "The Sentimental Bloke" picture. Gilbert Emery, probably remembered for his fine character studies with the Clarke and Meynell Companies, gives a fine study of Ginger Mick.

Frederic Shipman's second company for the East sailed from Sydney by the Montoro last month. This company is modelled along the Paul Dufault lines, and will be known as the Cahill-Brooke Company. It includes George Brooke, the Queensland tenor; Edward Cahill, the pianist, and Rita Erle, soprano. The company will be under the personal management of Mary Laing-Meason, and will open in Singapore a fortnight later than the Third Fantastics.

"Theodore and Co.," which the J. C. Williamson Royal Comic Opera Company is to play at Her Majesty's, Melbourne, shortly, comes from the Gaiety Theatre, London, where it ran for many weeks. The libretto, by H. M. Harwood and George Grossmith, is founded on the French of P. Gavault, and the music is by Ivor Novello and Jerome D. Kern, with lyrics by Adrian Ross and Clifford Grey. The new play will introduce for the first time in Australia Theo. Leonard, a comedian who was engaged in South Africa by J. C. Williamson, Ltd., who specially sent a representative of the firm to secure him for their Australian musical comedy productions. In a farewell eulogy prior to his departure, the "Natal Advertiser" referred to Mr. Leonard as "the funniest comedian South Africa has ever laughed at."

The funeral of the late Mr. Harrington Reynolds took place at the Bromley Cemetery, Christchurch. The cortege included practically all the members of the theatrical profession now appearing in Christchurch, while there was also a good attendance of Freemasons and of other friends of the late Mr. Reynolds. The service at the graveside was conducted by the Rev. A. H. Julius, of Akaroa, and the pall-bearers were Messrs. Fred Bluett, Walter Dyer, Paul Stanhope, Ernest Pitcher, Trueman Neilson and Walter C. Helsdon. Mr. Frank Kenny represented the Allan Wilkie Company, several members of which were present. Mr. W. C. Helsdon represented Fullers' Theatres, Ltd. Numerous telegrams of sympathy were received from all parts of New Zealand, and amongst the many who sent wreaths were Messrs. Ben. and John Fuller, Mr. Walter Fuller, the staff of the local Opera House, artists now appearing at the Opera House, the staff and members of the Allan Wilkie Company, and Mr. T. Tansey and family, of the Excelsior Hotel.

A remarkable feature of the production of "The Eyes of Youth" by the J. and N. Tait Company is the speed with which the many scenes will be staged. This is made possible by the fact of the whole of the play being acted upon platforms on wheels raised about six inches above the level of the floor of the ordinary stage. As soon as the last word is spoken in the one scene there is a "black out" and a quick curtain, and even as the curtain falls the platform on which the scene just witnessed is wheeled to one side of the stage and the other platform, all ready set for the next scene is wheeled round in its place. The whole operation takes about a minute, whereas six or seven minutes at least would be taken in the ordinary way to effect the complete change necessary. The idea was used most effectively in "The Masquerader" with Mr. Guy Bates Post in Sydney and Melbourne, when the changes were performed in a few seconds, much to the amazement of the audiences.

Among the members of the Emelie Polini Company, now in Auckland, is Mr. Arthur Greenaway, an actor who is well known to New Zealand audiences. Mr. Greenaway relates that when he was in America, eight or nine years ago, he toured the States with Miss Nance O'Neil, and among the members of the company, in a very humble capacity was an actor named Dave Griffiths. He was not by any means what one would describe as a good actor, being somewhat eccentric and a kicker at conventional methods. That actor was now D. W. Griffiths, the giant among picture producers, who has shown the world the possibilities of "the movies" in producing masterpieces on the screen.

There was no mistaking the impression made by Miss Emelie Polini on her opening performance in "De Luxe Annie" in Wellington. The part of the unfortunate lady who, through an accidental blow on the head, loses her memory of the past and takes up with a notorious "crook," is one demanding a great deal of talent over a wide range of expression, because essentially Annie, or Nan Delmore, as she is called in crook circles, is a good woman morally. Something psychological in her make-up keeps her "straight" in one respect, whilst it permits her to be the partner in clever confidence deceptions, practised on susceptible old gentlemen. The rainbow passions that illumine the play are those reflected in her beautiful love for the young architect who is designing her new summer residence (who in reality is her husband, trying by subtle means to recall the memory of his errant wife); her devotion, in another sense, to Jimmy Fitzpatrick, her working partner, and in the appealing scene at the end, when, after an operation on the brain, the veil is lifted and once more she is able to recognise her husband,



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whilst Jimmy, who has a dog-like devotion for his partner, becomes an utter stranger. The play is fascinating throughout, and the extreme naturalness of Miss Polini is an object lesson to all strugglers along the dramatic way. At the conclusion the curtain had to be raised and lowered six times before the applause of the big audience died down.

Mr. Oscar Asche's production of "Chu Chin Chow" at His Majesty's Theatre, London, has created a world's record, 1467 performances having been given, thus exceeding the record of "Charley's Aunt."

One of the reasons for the wonderful success of "Lightnin'" is the fact that it was written by an ideal collaboration between actor and playwright. Frank Bacon has been a character actor for nearly thirty years. Winchell Smith has written some of the most successful comedies the stage has ever known, including "Turn to the Right," "The Boomerang," "The Fortune Hunter," "Brewster's Millions," and others. If these two do not know what the public wants nobody knows. They have combined the knowledge of actor and playwright to such advantage that in "Lightnin'" the audience find just all those things they love best—humour, pathos, melodrama, action and incident, human nature, all cleverly blended, with a dash of love and youth to add a sparkle and zest to the mixture.

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During the past year 1738 kinematograph films, amounting to 3,479,860 feet, have been examined by the censor, and fees amounting to £1160 have been received. The receipts were in excess of the expenditure.

Mr. John Tait, of the firm of J. and N. Tait, states that the firm hopes to get Mr. Guy Bates Post to return to Australia, and, this time, to New Zealand, in about a year's time. The famous actor, who broke all existing records in Australia last year, is not under contract to come, but he has given his word that if his arrangements in America permit he will certainly endeavour to make a dash for the land of sunshine. Mr. Tait describes Mr. Post as a genius with a kink for acting.

An interesting review of Miss Florence Young's life appears in the "Sydney Theatre." After tracing her career since her first professional appearance with the George Musgrove-Nellie Stewart Company in Melbourne in 1890, she concludes: "All going well I shall in November, 1920, have seen thirty years of stage life since beginning with J. C. Williamson, Ltd. Of that period I have worked pretty well twenty-five years for the firm in question. At least ten times prima donnas have been brought to Australia with the very legitimate object of satisfying the public demand for change—for freshness and variety—in the performers entertaining them. But it has always ended up in my going back again. My appearances outside musical comedy and comic opera include the playing of principal boy in the following J.C.W. pantomimes:—'Djin-Djin,' 'Matsa,' 'Mother Goose,' and 'Humpty-Dumpty.' The first two were given in successive years, and similarly the last two—in successive years. But through being required elsewhere I had in 'Humpty-Dumpty' to finish with the Melbourne season. With the completion of my thirty years I intend retiring into private life, or if not then at any rate very shortly afterwards. I shall keenly miss all the stage has long meant to me. But my decision has been well thought out, and it is not at all likely that I shall depart from it."

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