

Theatrical Topics.

"Othello" will be one of the features of the Asche-Brayton tour. Oscar Asche's fame could rest upon his interpretation of the Moor alone, and this fame is world-wide. Salvini himself, one of the most notable exponents of this tragic role, is said to have been eclipsed when Oscar Asche appeared as "Othello." Miss Lily Brayton will be "Desdemona," a part in which she has created an immense success.

Drama apparently holds pride of place with the picture patrons in Auckland, judging by a popular vote taken at one of the leading picture houses recently. Out of a total of some 770, 593 cast their votes for dramas, while comedies and scenic views were next with 189 and 180 respectively.

Apropos of the opening of the New Zealand tour of the Asche-Brayton Co. with "Kismet," it is interesting to learn on the author's own authority that the piece was offered to manager after manager before it eventually secured acceptance at the hands of Mr Oscar Asche. This is another example of how difficult it is to gauge the chances of a play. At the suggestion of a well-known London manager, Mr Knoblauch was engaged re-writing his piece at the moment when the original was shown to Mr Asche, who unhesitatingly declared in favour of the latter. "Kismet" is the outcome of a prolonged study of "The Arabian Nights," and so abundant is the material collected by Mr Knoblauch during its writing, that he contemplates weaving a new play out of the surplus at his disposal.

"They'd call you the child of shame, would they? Then I'd have them know there is one who puts you above the highest lady in the land, and I'll work like a nigger to earn you money so's you can take your place with the best."—"Nobody's Daughter."

"Just Meat," a story by Jack London, has been dramatised by Richard Kirschner, who has made of it a one-act piece called "Burglars."

"The sketch failed," explained the pro., pompously, "because it was beyond the grasp of the average intellect. You can't make money nowadays with a show that's over the heads of the audience." "Ah, but you could once," chuckled the old-timer. "Look at the shekels I made with my flying trapeze act—always over their heads, you know." And the other "heads" all claimed a share in the drinks round they let him in for.

In reviewing "Nobody's Daughter" at Wyndham's Theatre, the London "Daily Telegraph" wrote: "Here is a play, 'Nobody's Daughter,' which escapes the morbid, avoids philosophical discussion, and reduces its problems to a dramatic and personal basis in no unnecessary way. The unnecessary play, it matters not what its intent is, is a nuisance. The new theatre has made no mistake in adopting this play, which has been approved for its qualities by a long run in London." No one should miss seeing "Nobody's Daughter." Aucklanders will have a chance on October 14, when the Plimmer-Denniston season opens.

It has been discovered by an industrial devotee of Shakespeare that the plays in their entirety contain 1277 characters. Of these only 157 are females, a very small proportion of the total number—and it is some times wondered if Shakespeare would not have created more female characters for his drama if it had not been for the fact that these roles had always, of necessity, to be played by boys, since women were not allowed on the stage in the dramatist's time.

Fred Niblo, who displays the money-making talent of "Get-Rick-Quick-Wallingford" now at the Sydney Criterion, is said to be the best dressed man on the Australian stage at present. He puts a good deal of stress on the importance of a man's clothes, on the stage as well as off. "The clothes a man wears become a factor in his success," he says, "You cannot afford to look hard up. Every man must carry the brand of success, and clothes are the outward and visible sign of that. The man who wrote 'Get-Rich-Quick-Wallingford' realised that. See the bluff that Wallingford put up—valet, bulldog, and trunks

packed with clothes. That was to impress the "Boobs" who are always over-awed by the well-tailored. Every suit worn by me in the play was made by the best tailor in New York.

There's a lot of human nature in "Nobody's Daughter," and the story moves along with the naturalness of everyday existence. That is why the little drama has become so popular with playgoers. The underlying motive of the plot is much the same in "A Woman of No Importance," the concrete fact of an inconvenient child. But with what a difference the situation is dealt with in the new modern play of George Pastour, (remarks an Australian critic). Wilde makes his erring woman fret and grieve, and age herself for an indiscretion twenty years old, which was the old-fashioned acceptance of the situation. The new and sensible way is to make the best of a bad job, keep one's complexion and wear well-cut clothes, which is the way Mrs Frampton, (Mrs Brough) bore her burden. As no-

coming to New Zealand: "While Mr Carmichael was talking eloquently about the establishment of a musical, artistic, and dramatic college, to give the people those dramatic works which inartistic managers will not stage, 'You Never Can Tell' was being played at Her Majesty's, Sydney. Perfectly staged and splendidly played, the Shaw comedy, to those who appreciated it, was the best thing seen here for many a day. But it received the frigid mit. The house was almost empty every night. The laughter of the small audience echoed back weirdly, until people grew afraid to laugh, and tittered instead. That is the sort of reception the public give the best modern comedy. Same sort of reception as 'The Blue Bird' had in Melbourne. Is it any wonder that managers who do not happen to be mere philanthropists prefer to stage 'The Worst Woman in London' and 'The Girl with the Awful Past.' 'The Blue Bird' Company has finished. On Saturday most of its members returned to London

of the last ten years, and it is rapidly making a fortune for the clever Bert Bailey, who figures in the show as dad.

The enormous expense of sending about 70 people together with over 30 tons of scenery, costumes, properties, etc., so that the attractions might be staged in New Zealand exactly on the same scale as in Sydney and Melbourne, is an undertaking that would make the most courageous management flinch. But though J. C. Willamson, Ltd., recognise that the purely commercial results cannot—in view of the tremendous outlay involved—recompense them to such an extent as to make the venture much of a profitable one, they have in mind the good results that must follow from this huge undertaking, which, if it meet with their expectations, will be the forerunner of many similar enterprises, for it will mean that all the big "stars" will be sent across the water to the Dominion.

When the late Clement Scott, in his paper "The Freelance," took a plebiscite as to who was considered the best "Kathrina" in "The Taming of the Shrew" ever seen on the English stage, Lily Brayton was selected by over 35,000 votes. In the voting for the best "Juliet" Miss Brayton also received the popular verdict by an immense majority.

Referring to the Asche-Brayton production of "The Taming of the Shrew," a Melbourne paper recently touched upon a notable feature of the Asche-Brayton performances when it said:—"Looking down the long list of actors it is doubtful whether it would be possible to pick out a single member of the cast who could have been bettered. Not one but spoke his lines and acted his part as if he were a finished actor. The smallest character looks as if it had been studied as carefully as the most important." The evenness and excellence of the casts is one of the features of the Asche-Brayton productions.

There seems to be some psychological law that directs play producing (an American writer points out). One season will see several plays of a similar type produced independently, of course, and without apparent reason. Theatrical attractions seem unconsciously to follow moods of their own. For example, in London last season they had "Kismet," "Sumurun," and "Sheherezade," one an English play, another a German production, and the last a Russian idea. None of them had suggested another, yet they all appeared in one season. A few years ago we had an inexplicable wealth of plays on Biblical subjects.

Aucklanders will be interested to learn that Miss Florence Quinn is about to tour the provinces with Mr. George Edwardes's company, and will play Natalie in "The Merry Widow."



COUNTESS DE CISNEROS.

Who, with her talented associates, will give a farewell concert at the Town Hall on Thursday, September 26.

body's daughter, Miss Lizette Parkes does her best work. She is delightfully pretty and lovable in her part.

Our Melbourne correspondent vouches for the truth of this: One night last week a Chinaman put in an appearance at Her Majesty's Melbourne, where "The Quaker Girl" is still going strong, and planked down a humble shilling at the reserved stalls ticket window. Business Manager Ted Tait sent the almond-eyed one around to the gallery entrance, where he paid his shilling, and was handed a ticket. The Chinaman looked at it doubtfully, then passed inside, but presently came out again, and said to the check-taker: "Me wantee key." The official was puzzled. "Key, what key?" he asked. "Me wantee key," repeated the man from the Flowery Land." So he was sent around to Manager Tait, who questioned him. Suddenly a light broke over the Chinese. His face dissolved into the form of a smile. "Dis theatre?" he asked. "Oh welly solly, welly solly. Me thought this lodging house alle same Gordon House, and me wanted key fo' bedroom!"

This (culled from "Punch") settles all thought of the "Blue Bird"

by the mail steamer, satisfied that the Australian public is artistic—in patches, very scattered patches."

Miss Anita, of "Tiny Town," can claim to be the smallest woman in the world. She is twenty-six years old, and is thirty inches high. Her sister is a year younger, and one inch higher. In Austria, at their home, they have two smaller sisters; one is nine, and the other twenty years old, but, strange to say, their parents and brothers are all average-sized people.

George S. Titheradge, the distinguished member of the Plimmer-Denniston Dramatic Company, has scored his greatest triumphs as the gentle and loving old Abbi Dubois of "A Village Priest," and as the cynical and hard-hearted Lord Illingworth of "A Woman of No Importance," two totally opposite characters, both morally and physically.

Beaumont Smith's lucky star is certainly in the ascendant. Besides promoting and running one of the greatest theatrical successes (to wit, Tiny Town) in Australia, he is part author of "On Our Selection," shortly to come to New Zealand. "On Our Selection" is regarded in dramatic circles as the biggest money-maker

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