

GREENROOM GOSSIP

STAGE REFORM.

AN OUTSPOKEN BISHOP.

The Bishop of London presided at a conference at St. Martin's Vestry, London, of representatives of theatrical managers, actors, authors, and critics. The conference was called through the London Council for the Promotion of Public Morality to consider the question of licensing all employers of stage labour.

The Bishop said the Public Morality Council was not in the slightest degree opposed to theatres and music-halls. "But what we will not have is filth," said the Bishop. "We are not going to have people going to the theatres to hear things which degrade them. The people of London intend to be masters of their own household, and they intend to proceed until they stop this sort of thing. We fully believe the great majority of managers, authors, and actor-managers are also anxious to stop it, and it is not the wish of the great acting profession to have such things performed in London."

Mr. Sydney Valentine, president of the Actors' Association moved a resolution that it should be made compulsory for all lessees and managers of theatres, music halls, and all other places of public entertainment, and all employers of actors, actresses, and other artists to be licensed by a duly constituted authority, and that such licenses should be reviewed annually. He said that the tendency of the theatres lately had been downward. Since the war they had had many cases of revue companies run by men of a very low class, who engaged any type of girl, and took them to the small provincial towns. When business was good they paid the girls a mere pittance, and when it was bad they paid them nothing at all, and the girls were constantly left stranded in all parts of the country. The Actors' Association had now no weapon with which to fight such men, and the license would undoubtedly be the first direct weapon they could have. It was obviously bad for the profession and for the public if they had disreputable people giving disreputable shows.

The resolution was carried.

Mlle. Gaby Deslys left her dancing partner, Harry Pilcher, an annuity of 18,000 francs.

The "Cinderella" pantomime at the Grand Opera House, Sydney is notable for at least one sensational speciality, that of the Three Fishers of the Human Crocodiles. This act was specially engaged in America by Ben J. Fuller, who saw in them a correct possibility for introduction into the spectacular show. The Fishers wear real alligator skins of tremendous weight; the tails of each are so massive that they have to be electrically controlled. Two of the Fishers are of amazing physique, and the third is a lady of no less amazing figure.

The Reynolds-Denniston Players were appearing with great success at the Lyceum Theatre, Shanghai, when the mail left on January 10. The company includes, amongst others, Valentine Sydney, Shirley Huxley, David Belbridge, Pressy Preston, and Reginald Wykeham, all known to Australians. Mr. Denniston himself appears in some of the plays. The repertoire embraces such New York successes as "Up in Mabel's Room," "Friendly Enemies," "Civilian Clothes," "Our Wives," "Nightie Night," and "The Woman in Room 13." After China the company proceeded to Japan, Eastern Russia, Singapore, the Malay States, and India.

The largest indoor motion-picture stage in the United States is practically completed at the Goldwyn Studios at Culver City, California. This huge building contains thirty-three thousand square feet in clearance from floor to cross-beams. This will accommodate the tallest setting that could possibly be desired. Overhead trolley lighting systems are being installed, so that lights can be elevated and rolled directly over the setting using them, and in addition, they can be adjusted as to angle and height. This is one of the finest systems in the industry, and is installed at a cost of over twenty thousand dollars, in addition to the original cost of the mammoth stage, which is over twenty-five thousand dollars.

Over a week of the new year has elapsed and no picture of the Caruso baby has appeared in the New York dailies. Is the American journalistic system breaking down?—New York "Musical Courier" of January 8.

Count Filippini, the Italian baritone, who visited New Zealand with the Gonzalez Opera Co., and is now resident in Sydney, states that a limited liability company with a capital of £10,000, has been formed for the purpose of establishing an opera company, to be known as the Australian National Opera. He says that his agents in Italy have been instructed to engage eight principals, consisting of a light and a dramatic soprano, two contraltos, two mezzo-sopranos, one tenor, and a bass. Two conductors are also to be engaged. He is expecting a cable at an early date announcing the names of the artists. Signor Balboni, the dramatic tenor, and Signor Cacialli, the bass, have, Count Filippini states, signed contracts with the company. The chorus of Australian singers has already been formed, and is now actively rehearsing "Aida," with which the season will open in Sydney in July. All the operas will be sung in Italian. Among operas new to Australia, which are included in a repertoire of 25 works, are "Mephistophele" (Boita), "Vally" and "Lorlie" (Catalina), and "Isobel" and "Tris" (Mascagni). Count Filippini adds that theatres have already been engaged in each city in Australia, except Sydney, and that the company will also tour the East.

WELLINGTON NOTES.

(By "Lorgnette.")

WELLINGTON, March 8.

The Allan Wilkie Dramatic and Comedy Company, which is now permanently established in New Zealand, commenced a second tour of the



Mr. Arnold de Biere, the illusionist, who recently advertised for the "ugliest woman in London," made his selection from a large number of applicants at St. George's Hall. The photograph shows the successful applicant, Miss Layton (on right), receiving congratulations from one of the losers.

Dominion at the Grand Opera House last Saturday evening with the great naval drama entitled "The Luck of the Navy." This piece has enjoyed a two years' run in London, and has also had a great vogue in the English provinces. At the present time it is being played to capacity business at the Manhattan Opera House, New York. The plot has to do with the adventures of Lieutenant Clive Stanton, V.C., of His Majesty's submarine 5A. He is surrounded by German spies, the chief of which is the mother of an English naval officer, and another is a German who poses as a wounded Belgian officer. The drama is brimful with exciting episodes, and interest is never permitted to flag for a moment. The drama is




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MUSIC NOTES.

(By "G" String.)

By the last English mail there came to hand a parcel of the latest publications of the well-known music firm Messrs. Enoch and Sons, of 58 Great Marlborough Street, London, W. Amongst the songs that can be confidently recommended are "The Glory that I Know," words by Robert C. Thorp, music by Leslie Grenville. In three keys—C, E flat, and F. "At Shadwell," words by Thomas Burke, music by Isidore de Lara. "Langley Fair" (from "Four Songs of the Fair"), words by Helen Taylor, music by Easthope Martin. This is a duet for high and low voices. "Nesting Time," words by Helen Taylor, music by Alma Groatley. In three keys—E flat, F, and G. "Haven of Tenderness," words by Harold Simpson, music by Westell Gordon. In three keys—C, E flat, and F. "The Wondrous Hour," words by Kitty Wiltshire-Harris, music by Nellie Simpson. In three keys—E flat, F and G. "Heart's Haven," words by Monica Chapman, music by A. Herbert Brewer. In two keys—B flat and D flat. "Dusk on the Hill," words by Oliver Hurst, music by Lily Cover. In two keys—D flat and F. "What Shall I Bring You," words by Fred. E. Weatherly, music by Henry Scott Baker. In two keys—E flat and G. "Good Night, Dear Heart," words by Bessie Chapman, music by Ashworth Brook. In two keys—B flat and D flat. Under separate covers there are two song albums. They are entitled "From Far and Near," the words being by Alban Gordon and the music by May H. Brahe, and contains four songs, viz., "The Dawn Comes Lightly," "Love's Blindness," "The Exile's Song," and "If only Thoughts were Flying Birds." It is published in three keys—low, medium, and high. The title of the other album is "Four Silhouettes," the words being by Arthur Symons, and the music by Landon Ronald. The four songs which it contains are "After Love," "Love in Dreams," "Second Thoughts," and "You are Mine," and can be had in three keys—low, medium, and high.

The editor of the "Musical Courier" on reading of Musongysky, "He was born in 1829, and his musical education began very early, his little fingers being guided by his mother," appended the unexpected enquiry, "But who guided the other fingers?"

The first public performance on a piano was given in London over 150 years ago.

staged in the very best style, the dresses, scenery and effects being up to the best J. C. Williamson standard. Mr. Wilkie's motto seems to be, "If anything is worth doing, do it well."

It is quite on the cards that Miss Kate Howarde and her dramatic company will make a descent on New Zealand at Easter with her Sydney and Melbourne success "Possum Padlock"—a tale of the bush that is real live wire from start to finish.

Mr. Bert Tate, late treasurer of the Allan Wilkie Dramatic Company, has now taken on the duties of touring manager. He was for some years under the banner of the J. C. Williamson firm, and the grounding he got seems to have borne good fruit. He's a young Auckland.