

### Miscellaneous Items

Theatreland has provided us with a sensation of an unusual sort during the past week, says a May issue of the "Daily Mail." Miss Laurette Taylor, an old London favourite, returning from America to the scene of her former triumph with a new play, "One Night in Rome," written by her husband, Mr. J. Hartley Manners, had the unnerving experience of being practically "howled down" by an unruly gallery, which dropped small "stink bombs" into the stalls, threw coppers on to the stage, and scattered some sort of evil snuff among the audience. The demonstration was as mysterious as it was unmannerly. There is no indication that it was directed against either Miss Taylor or the play. It began with the objection of one or two galleryites that they could not see, and for this there was some justification, as the scenery, made originally for the low-pitched auditorium of an American theatre, did not quite adapt itself to the requirements of the Garrick. But there was something more than that behind the subsequent proceedings, which became so riotous that the management had to ring down the curtain on a performance of which the critics seemed quite unable to gather any impression. Since then, however, there has been a "second first night," at which the cordiality was quite as marked as was the discourtesy on the former occasion. Of course demonstrations of disapproval in London theatres are by no means a new thing. The old-time "gallery boy" was often most unpleasantly vocal on first nights, and there are numerous instances of plays which subsequently had a very long run being given most unfavourable receptions. Even such a popular artist as the famous Nelly Farren had the unenviable experience of being hissed and booed. Indeed, the late George Edwardes once committed himself to the statement that "booming" was a tradition of the Gaiety. "And," he added, "I think it has always been worse with the greatest successes." But of late years demonstrations of any sort, save of esteem, have been very rare in our theatres, from which the old type of "gallery boy" seemed largely to have disappeared. But for the classic riot in the history of the English stage we have to go back to the Covent Garden Theatre of more than a hundred years ago, adds the writer, when John Kemble attempted to increase the prices of admission, owing to the enormous cost of rebuilding the theatre, which had been destroyed by fire in the previous year. On the opening night of the new theatre hundreds of playgoers demonstrated so violently that no word of Kemble's could be heard. The players were greeted by hoots and hisses and cries of "Off! Off!" and "Old prices!", the latter, abbreviated to "O.P.," becoming the battle-cry of the rioters. These demonstrations continued for many nights, the actors going through their parts in dumb show.

"Old Mother Hubbard," who the nursery rhyme relates went on one auspicious occasion to the cupboard in connection with provender for her canine friend, will be seen here next month—in pantomime form. It is said to be the best laughing pantomime of the season in Melbourne, and in length of run outdistanced all others, both in Sydney and Melbourne. "Mother Hubbard" is said to be the best children's pantomime of the year, for the simple reason that the story faithfully follows tradition, and Barry Lupino as Mother Hubbard sets himself out especially to amuse the little ones. "The Raspberry Jam" scene, in which Mother Hubbard washes all her children before they go to bed, and then gives them a supper of bread and raspberry jam, until they get in a state of frightful "jamminess" that they cannot be recognised one from the other, is said to be a scream from end to end. Another shriek is the scene where Mother Hubbard takes her brood for a ride in her motor car.

During the hearing of argument in the Wellington Appeal Court as to whether "paper" roads, which appeared on the plans of the Kaikoura district, were public roads, His Honour the Chief Justice smilingly re-kept open hm thesh rtsh rashr hr marked that the road should be kept open as no one knew how long vessels would be running between Wellington and Lyttelton.

Musical enthusiasts throughout the Dominion will appreciate the entry of Messrs. Chappell and Company into the concert field of New Zealand. The name of Chappell is of such magnitude in musical circles that the success of their initial venture is a foregone conclusion. The firm have made extensive arrangements for tours of Australasia of several of the world's most famous vocalists and musicians, and have commenced their new undertaking with the introduction of two of the greatest stars in the land of song to-day—Miss Amy Evans and Mr. Fraser Gange.

The much heralded Selznick pictures starring Owen Moore, Olive Thomas, Elaine Hammerstein, Eugene O'Brien and Elsie Janis, (the soldiers' sweetheart), are to be released through Film House, all arrangements having been completed with Mr. Jones, the Australian representative, who is at present on a visit to the Dominion. This means another supply of really first grade films, every one of which is selected specially to suit New Zealand tastes. News has just come from America that Louise Huff has joined Selznick.

In connection with the anti-glare devices, there is much scope for the invention of improved motor lamps. One or two of the larger firms in England are unable to put on the market any suitable lamp with "dimmer" effect for the reason that they have not yet found or evolved a device good enough to suit them; hence research in this direction is yet in its early stages. The most powerful light on the motor car is objectionable only in so far as it interferes with the common safety and the common rights of other road users travelling in a legitimate manner. Hence the whole effort of inventors and legislation should be directed towards making the roads at night safe and comfortable for all, instead of reducing the power and range of lamps to a degree which might make night travel a danger to all.

"I like to read about motor cars, and to hear people waxing enthusiastic about the merits of those they possess or are about to purchase. But after I have listened to their glowing descriptions of engines, axles, gear boxes, brakes, and carburettors, I always interpose one query, 'Is it a good car to sleep in?' That is, for me at any rate, the one great point about a motor car. It may have all the virtues, but unless I can sleep comfortably in it, I have no use for it." Thus writes A. E. Manning Foster, in the "Daily Mail." "When all is said, you can have no better test of a car than that it is conducive to rest. The enterprising maker, having in view the vast army of sufferers from insomnia, should advertise his wares: 'This is the best car on the market to sleep in.' Consider what it implies. The engines must be flexible. There must be no violent transition in slowing down from fifty miles an hour to five. The change speed gear must be noiseless. The clutch must be delicate and devoid of fierceness, the brakes powerful and easy, with equalisers on the service brake to prevent skids. Of course, the chassis must be constructed for comfort, and be well sprung. The cushioned seats should offer a friendly welcome to the body. One should be able to nestle snugly, with plenty of room for the feet and no fear of jostling. Nor need the car necessarily be a Rolls-Royce or an expensive model de luxe to fulfil the requirements."

Here are some instances found out (says a Home paper) by a Parliamentary Committee that had to inquire into the misuse of motor cars paid for by the country to carry officials of the Air Ministry about: A touring car had been used to take one official for an entire week between the War Office, the Haymarket, and the Cecil Hotel, except one trip to a railway station. These places are all five minutes' walk apart, and the penny buses pass them all; but public officials must have costly motor cars paid for by the country to take them to their meals. The Air Ministry alone has had 48 cars to run its officials about, 33 being used by as many men—one man one car. The expenditure on motor cars for the servants of the country in this one office alone was at the rate of £400 a day.

In a letter to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. S. R. Kennedy, their son Lauri, the Sydney 'cellist, writes that he is now touring the big centres of the United States with John MacCormack. He adds: "We shall go over to California (San Francisco), Los Angeles, and so on, until June 23, when he leaves for Australia, and I shall sail for England. In England I shall rejoin him for a tour of Europe in February, and, in all probability, his return American tour after that. As regards the MacCormack tour, I will give you a few details. One night, for instance, in Cleveland, Ohio (not one of the largest cities), the takings were 5500 dollars (£1400) in one house. MacCormack gets 3500 dollars for that night! In the New York Hippodrome I've played to audiences of nearly 10,000 people! In San Francisco, which is an extremely large hall, the takings will be 16,000 dollars (£3200). MacCormack's income tax for the year was 120,000 (£24,000) at par. These are not romances, but realities. We are playing four concerts a week, and the average takings are between 4000 dollars and 5500 dollars per concert, never less."

At the annual meeting of the Hastings Amateur Operatic Society, the report showed that the recent production of "Our Miss Gibbs" resulted in a loss of £68 7s. 5d., but there was a credit balance in the bank of £22 6s. 4d., while the assets exceeded the liabilities, which were practically nil, by £138 6s. 4d. Mr. G. M. Spence, the honorary treasurer, said when the accounts in connection with "Our Miss Gibbs" were paid, it was represented that the society was unable to meet its engagements in full, and 15 per cent. was deducted from each account, which creditors were asked to accept in full satisfaction. In order to put the society au fait with the public and to show business people that it was prepared to meet its engagements, he thought the society should pay another five per cent., which would be practically a payment in full, as a discount of ten per cent. was usually allowed on the society's accounts. In the future a great deal more care must be exercised in the conduct of the society's affairs. Last year there was, in his opinion, a considerable amount of reckless expenditure. The production of "Our Miss Gibbs" had cost the society over £500. Dresses were expensive in these days, but he did think the play should have been produced for less than that. The report and balance-sheet were adopted. The election of officers resulted as follows:—Patron, Mr. H. M. Campbell, M.P.; president, the Mayor (Mr. G. Ebbett); vice-president, Mr. W. C. Whitlock; committee, Messrs. Ferbrache, Senr., H. C. Baird, W. White, L. Fail, F. L. Tucker; hon. secretary, Mr. G. Popplewell; hon. stage manager, Mr. L. Fail; hon. auditor, Mr. A. I. Rainbow.

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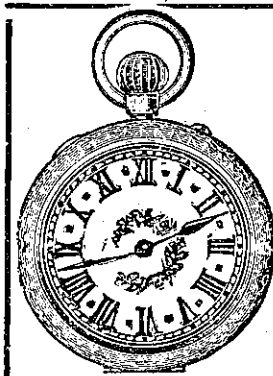
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