

play. The scene of the drama is the Transvaal, which has furnished a dismal background for both novelists and playwrights. The strongest stuff that has come out of South Africa is "The Story of an African Farm" and in plot and atmosphere "The Shulamite" appears to be a dramatic companion for Olive Schreiner's sombre book. The Boer farmer who beats his wife must be unpleasant dramatic material. The murderer has more or less of dignity, through the very magnitude of his crime; but the wife-beater suggests the sordidness of the police court and the hysterics of a domestic "scene."

Miss Ashwell, it is said, will take three American plays to England. Two of them are manuscript plays that have not been produced, and the third is the drama "Clothes," by Channing Pollock and Avery Hapwood.

The coming competition at Ottawa for the trophy offered by His Excellency for dramatic and musical productions is exciting general interest throughout the Dominion, although the East is naturally more affected than the provinces beyond Manitoba. It is to be hoped that the Lieutenant-Governor, who is to act as arbiter when two or more societies wish to represent any particular capital, will not be called upon to exercise the judicial function in such a critical connection. It might create much more "feeling" than a political deadlock.

"The Cingalee" and "A Country Girl" are two of the holiday productions which have shed a seasonable brightness. The latter, especially, shows what a musical play can be and atones for such impossible affairs as "The Isle of Spice" and "Coming Thro' the Rye." "A Country Girl" and "The Yankee Consul" are the best musical comedies that Canada has seen and heard. With gratitude for a grace so seldom granted, we recognise a production that has witty lyrics, real tunes, bright dialogue, and a genuine plot, which is an assertion not to be made about one musical comedy in a thousand. "A Country Girl" has made several visits to Canada but can hardly come too often.

Among the new works to be produced at the coming concerts of the Mendelssohn Choir is one of national interest. The words are by the Hon. Judge Routhier, and the music by the late Calixta Lavallee, a French-Canadian composer. Dr. T. B. Richardson has set to the English version an artistic choral arrangement in eight parts which is said to be most impressive. The music has been a feature of the massed bands' performances at our militia encampments. This hymn, "Canada," is one of our noblest native productions.

#### A Harrowing Experience

Mrs. Langtry said of the unpleasant and impertinent questions that, under the new customs rules, had been put to her on her landing in America: "They reminded me of that lawyer's bill which is sometimes quoted to show what a lawyer, at his worst, can be. I don't remember all the bill's items, but two of them were:

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