

Theatrical Notes.

THE LYTELL ENGAGEMENT.

With the special performance of *Hands Across the Sea*, on Wednesday of last week, the engagement of Mr. Lytell's company at the academy, after a run of three months, interrupted only by the St. John trip, came to an end. Of the benefit to Mr. Lytell, on Monday last, an account is given on another page.

During this engagement Mr. Lytell has placed before the Halifax theatre-goers a long list of plays, all of the melo-drama type. Of these plays some have been good, remarkably so, some poor, some indifferent. Some very old friends have been brought forward, and some of the latest successes in London and New York have been shown up. For this Halifax owes a debt of gratitude to the enterprise of Mr. Lytell, who, week after week, has provided a fresh attraction. This has entailed considerable expense upon the management, while hard work and countless rehearsals have been the lot of the actors forming the company.

The most prominent of the productions have been *Hoodman Blind*, *Paul Kaurar*, *Bells of Haslemere*, *Hands Across the Sea*, *Harbour Lights*, *World*, *Flying Scud*, *Lights o' London*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Shaugraun*, *Octoroon*, *Maan Cree*, *Streets of New York*, and some others. This list includes some of the best English plays in the particular line Mr. Lytell has chosen. Amongst these *Paul Kaurar* stands *facile princeps*, and is followed closely by *Bells of Haslemere* and *Harbour Lights*. The majority of the remaining dramas are plays of startling merit, whilst only one or two of the whole number put on the stage were unworthy of the attention Mr. Lytell gave to them. Mr. Lytell would have been better advised had he put forward *Paul Kaurar* on the occasion of his benefit in place of *The Shaugraun*, notwithstanding the fact that the former play provides no part in which he could serve so heavily as he does as *Conn*.

During the engagement the *personnel* of the company has changed somewhat. Miss Neilson and Mr. Tyrone Power severed their connection with the company a few weeks after its appearance. From an artistic point of view, this was to be regretted, for they are both capable actors, and were popular here. But the new arrivals have, by dint of good work, made themselves popular, especially Miss Laura Alberta.

At its first appearance here the company was evidently composed of members who had not worked together much before. Whilst they have been with us, however, they settled down into their places, and their angularities were worn down. And just as everything had commenced to run smoothly, the company is obliged to leave us. But it is gratifying to learn that after a short tour in the upper provinces they will again visit Halifax, when it is the intention of Mr. Lytell that *The Soudan* shall be played. Under the name of *Human Nature*, this melo-drama has attained a popularity in England that no other play of its kind ever has. Year after year, in the provinces at home, it has drawn, and still draws, audiences that crowd the theatres to suffocation. The words are not an extract from a too eulogistic poster, but express the experience of the writer. If he is not mistaken in Halifax play-goers, a tremendous success will result when Mr. Lytell produces *The Soudan* here.

We have criticised, too severely some may think, the plays as they have been produced weekly. The criticism of the daily papers have been, with few exceptions, no criticisms, but simply unmiti-

gated praise, which no one for whose good opinion Mr. Lytell would care one iota, would endorse. There have been mistakes and errors in the performances, some of which we have pointed out: some of which we have, only too willingly, let pass our notice. The good points, it has hardly been possible to refer to in detail, they have been so numerous. The critic has a difficult and frequently thankless task to perform. A conscientious man does justice to himself, to his views, and to his theatrical education. In this respect we have honestly tried to do our duty.

With pleasure we shall await the opportunity of again sitting in judgment upon Mr. Lytell and his company.

English Jottings.

It is not generally known that at the end of every year the Queen's household expenses are audited and checked, and that copies of them are printed with a view to future reference. The Royal tea, which is always bought at a quaint old-fashioned shop in Pall Mall, and has been during her five predecessor's reigns, costs 5s. 4d. per lb., and was for a long while known as Earl Grey's mixture, he having recommended the present blend to Her Majesty. When she gives a dinner, fish to the extent of £50 is ordered, but for an ordinary dinner three kinds of fish are put on the table, whiting being almost invariably one of them. A sirloin of beef is cooked every night, and is put on the sideboard cold for the next day's lunch—the Queen seems, in this instance, much like ourselves—and the cheese, of which there are always six or seven kinds, is invariably obtained from one particular firm. The Queen takes, after her dinner, one water biscuit and one piece of cheddar; the Prince of Wales eats a piece of gorgonzola with a crust of household bread. The tea, as well as the cheese and the Royal bed, are invariably taken with the Queen wherever she goes. Her Majesty's wine, which is well known to be incomparable, is always kept in the cellars of St. James' Palace, and is sent in basketfuls of three dozens to wherever she may be, though this is more for the guests and the household than herself, as Her Majesty, when alone, drinks very weak whiskey and water with her meals by the doctor's orders. At banquets, however, she takes two glasses of burgundy. The clerk of the kitchen, who always carves, receives £700 per annum. the *chef* the same, and the two confectioners, who attend to all the pastry, jellies, fruits, &c., get £300 and £250 respectively.

I often wonder why, with all the conveniences we have to protect ourselves from cold, so many ladies exposed their uncovered heads to the damp, neuralgic night air on leaving a hot room or theatre. Perhaps the cause is to be found in the fact that until lately there was no head-covering in vogue for the evening that found much favour with the fairer and younger daughters of Eve. Personally I cannot bear a shawl arrangement, unless it be a very beautiful lace one; but then it is too transparent to keep the cold out, and a shawl under any circumstances seems out of place on a young girl's head. Caps are very useful, inasmuch as you can squeeze them into a very small pocket; only every woman does not care to look like a jockey. No, we want something more feminine, more "lacy," more becoming, more suitable to all ages. This want has been supplied by the introduction of what our grandmothers were wont to call a *coqueludon*—a large cowl lined with silk, all frizzled with lace and ribbons, becoming and warm; it can be made to fall right down to the eyes, should the cold be such as would injure your face if too much exposed. It is equally well adapted to a woman of any age and stature, from the tiniest pickaninny to dear old granny her-

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