

when he instigates his chamberlain, Arthur's designated keeper, to get rid of the unhappy little Prince, Mr. Beerbohm Tree was perhaps, somewhat too light in touch, and lingered too much over his business, not displaying the deep subtlety imparted by the late eminent actor, Mr. S. Phelps, to the character; but in this matter, Mr. Tree will no doubt improve, by reason of his admirable receptive faculty. As Queen Elinor, Miss Bateman (Mrs. Crowe) has given one more example of what a perfect mistress she is of histrionic resource. Every look, every tone, every gesture, was in keeping with her part; and her face, whilst she was watching the effects of her royal son's converse with Hubert, when he was urging him to make away with Arthur, was almost a miracle of expression. In the portrayal of the Lady Constance, Miss Julia Neilson (Mrs. Fred Terry) has transcended all her previous efforts, and has risen at a bound into the rank of a powerful tragic actress. Her audiences have listened to her as if they were under a spell, varied only by ungovernable outbursts of enthusiasm as the actress rose to the occasion—especially when she delivered her author's magnificent reproaches to the recreant Lymoges, made by him for dramatic purposes, the Archduke of Austria. Mr. Lewis Waller is nearly all that could be desired as Faulconbridge, and as Sir Richard, strong, without being coarse, and gallant without being arrogant or bombastic.

As Hubert de Burgh, Mr. Franklyn McLeay gave a most graphic embodiment of a very difficult and frequently self-restraining *role*, and in his celebrated scene with Arthur, when he is about to execute King John's cruel commission, and to put out the eyes of the ill-starred boy, he most commendably suffered his very interesting and clever pupil—for such I take him to be, since, from my long experience at Westminster, I well know, that no boy, without excellent instruction, could play as Master Sefton does—to fully share his honours and to have the amplest opportunity of exhibiting his ability. Space will not now allow me to speak of many of the other performers as I should like to do, but I hope to do them justice in another and more permanent Review of the production. Suffice it, therefore, to say, that Mr. Louis Calvert—to whose guidance Mr. Beerbohm Tree informed the audience, on the first night, that the presentment owed much of its value—fully sustained his reputation as Pandolph, the Cardinal Legate, improving his make-up much on the fifth night, by abandoning his huge rotund hat, and replacing it by a skull-cap; that Mr. Mollison gave a life-like impersonation of the French King—the famous Philip Augustus; that Mr. Gerald Lawrence obtained deserved applause for his spirited interpretation of the Dauphin; that Miss Lettice Fairfax was a charming exponent of Blanche; that Miss Helen Ferrers was an excellent Lady Faulconbridge—albeit, that she ought not to have been made to kneel before her outspoken son when admitting to him his parentage; that Mr. S. A. Cookson's declamation as the Earl of Salisbury was particularly good, and that Mr. James Fisher and Mr. F. M. Paget as respectively the Earls of Pembroke and Norfolk, played well up to him; and that Mr. Norman McKinnel as Lymoges made the most of a discouraging part. "King John," as now given at Her Majesty's Theatre, ought to command the widest support both as a splendid spectacle and as a delightful performance.

E. GILBERT HIGHTON.

A Book of the Week.

TO LONDON TOWN.*

MR. ARTHUR MORRISON has for ever vindicated himself in the eyes of such of his critics as accused him of a hopeless pessimism, in his present charming little comedy of east end life.

"To London Town" is one of the most finished, delicate, complete little studies that have appeared for some years.

The scene opens in Epping Forest; and we are introduced to an old ex-postman, who, by means of his pension, eked out by what he can get by his favourite hobby of entomology, manages to live in his tiny freehold cottage in the forest, and to support his widowed daughter-in-law, and her two children, Johnnie and Bessie.

The character of the gentle old man, absorbed in his search for butterflies, knowing every corner of the forest, and exactly where to seek for his choicest treasures, grieving over the yearly forward march of bricks and mortar that brings the shadow and smoke of London nearer and nearer to the Forest, and makes rarities rarer each succeeding season, this is a portrait touched in by a master hand.

The forest is haunted by poachers, and against them war is waged by Bob Smallpiece, a stalwart keeper, secretly in love with Nan May, the still charming mother of John and Bessie. To most of the midnight marauders, the figure of the old man, stooping with his lantern over bush and weed, is a familiar one, and they know better than to think that he is looking for snares; but one dark night, the snares catch the feeble old feet, and grandfather falls into Wormleyton Pits and leaves his grandchildren destitute.

There is nothing for it but to go to London, thinks Nan. Johnnie must learn a trade, and she and Bessie must make a home for him. Poor Bob can make no protest, for he has an old mother to keep; and so cottage and forest are left behind, and the family sets up a small bacon, cheese, and candle shop, in the neighbourhood of the docks.

The journey to London, the gradual leaving behind of all that is fair and sweet, and the swallowing up of the country by the dreariness of the East, is wonderfully told.

The description of the street in which they settle, is also admirable. The dock and sea-going men who inhabit it are for ever bringing in pots of paint, of every hue, wherewith to decorate their residences; and the way of introducing yourself to a new comer, and offering the amenities of society, is to peep over the wall, and ask, "Got any use for a bit o' paint, ma'am?"

These people are all independent, they are by no means submerged, they are human like ourselves, and O! how interesting does Mr. Morrison make their joys and sorrows!

When the doorway from the docks is knocked open in the blind wall facing the little shop, and when Nan May, almost at starvation point, makes her great *coup* with the dock labourers by means of a well boiled "ock o' bacon," one could clap one's hands for pleasure; and Johnnie's courting of Nora Sansom is

* By Arthur Morrison. Methuen.

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