

With the Plays, Players and the L

ONE of the most widely discussed plays of the time is "Rutherford and Son," now being presented by Winthrop Ames at the Little theater in New York. It is the work of a young writer, Miss Githa Sowerby, and made a powerful impression in London. It is a North of England play like "Hindle Wakes," but without the latter's passion and humor. The picture in this case is drab in color, hard in outline, grim and cruel. It represents the sacrifice of human life to the Moloch of intense individualism, devoted to the purely material ideal of upholding the tradition of a family business. John Rutherford has been absolute master to his glass works, winning and holding the crude devotion of his work-people by such prowess as used to carry a man through the several stages of gang, ward and district leader to the position of undisputed boss. In his own home he has played the bully, crushing the natural instincts of his children, until the sons of whom he has tried to make gentlemen are become impotent and his daughter is a mere drudge.

Not less amazing than the searching analysis of life which the play presents, is the unflinching attitude of this young writer toward the subject of her story. She has cut down to the bone and laid bare each pulsing artery and quivering nerve and submitted them to cold, dispassionate scrutiny. The play is pitilessly gloomy, but bitten into it is the acid of convincing truth. Here lies its significance as a phase in the modern dramatic movement in England. Miss Sowerby has ranged herself alongside of John Galsworthy and a few other English playwrights, who have broken away from the theatrical presentation of life, identified with Henry Arthur Jones, Oscar Wilde and Arthur Pinero, and have allied themselves with the uncompromising naturalism of the later Scandinavian dramatists. Their work is but a step to something finer. They have liberated themselves from the trivialities and falsities of conventional play-writing; but their art, as yet, is untempered by the flame of imagination. They know life as naturalists, but have not attained the realist's fuller, more rounded understanding of life, which discovers the relation of the actual to a possible ideal. We are still waiting for the real play of modern life.

"Rutherford and Son" is decidedly in contrast to the self-styled American plays of "Life," with their cowardly evasions and silly distortions of real facts in our life. Wise ones say that this English play will not get outside of Manhattan island. It won't win favor so long as American audiences insist upon being amused, instead of instructed, for this play will not elicit a single snicker.

NEW PLAYS IN GOTHAM.

New York, Jan. 15.—"Years of Imagination," the new piece at the Belasco



LITTLE BILLY
The Diminutive Comedian at the Orpheum next week.

theater, hails from Chicago, where Frederic Hatton, joint author with Panny Locke Hatton, practices the gentle art of dramatic criticism. The plot is spun around a Boston widow who makes no secret of her forty-eight years or of her dissatisfaction at the little they have yielded of excitement. In a burst of revolt she comes to New York and engages a French maid, who makes her over completely. Thus, to outward appearance, rejuvenated and equipped with the latest creations of the modiste, Mrs. Howard, or, to be more specific, Miss Effie Shannon, is immediately the spotlight of three admirers. She makes her selection and the wedding is celebrated in her house at Brookline. But, parted from the cocktails and other intoxicants of New York, she realizes once more her weight of years and reassumes her New England conscience. She confesses to the bridegroom that she is not the young thing she has appeared, and retires to peel off her blonde wig, long corsets and other impediments to freedom of soul and body. The gentleman, being one of your true heroes of parlor romance, tainted also, possibly, with a touch of equal rights for women, admits that he, too, is a bit passe and on the whole finds prefers a corresponding has-beenness in his wife. The curtain descends on a

sober, middle-aged embrace in the gloaming of one of Mr. Belasco's rose and violet Neapolitan ice cream sunsets.

Was it not "Alias Jimmy Valentine" that employed a professional safecracker to help in the staging of that piece; and was it not "In the Deep Purple" and "They Greyhound" that had the expert directorial assistance of sundry "crooks" to help in obtaining the proper atmosphere? We all remember that the newspapers told us of trips to Sing Sing—sight-seeing tours solely—on the part of the playwright Paul Armstrong to interview certain gentlemen who were making a protracted stay there, and get from them first-hand accounts of how crime is committed artistically and effectively.

Well, then, it is no wonder that Harri Ford and Harry J. O'Higgins, when they wrote "The Argyle Case," determined to show the reverse side of the matter and lay bare the process of detecting crime and following the bad men of the stage. To this end, the authors called in the assistance of that prince of detectives, William J. Burns, who coauthored to the extent of injecting into the proceedings the representation of certain happenings he had actually experienced, and so important a part of the

writing triumvirate was he that he made the curtain-speech when his collaborators refused to come forth in answer to the applause.

Besides the sight of Mr. Burns, "The Argyle Case" affords many other thrills and showed itself to be a detective drama of much skill in construction and absolutely modern in treatment, even to the use of such up-to-the-minute police devices as "thumb-prints" and the dictagraph.

The Orpheum management promises a corking good bill for the coming week commencing Sunday afternoon. Something unique in the form of a top-liner is heralded in Little Billy. He is a tiny chap of 19; he is fully developed mentally and well educated. As a comedian, he is far above par, while his singing and dancing are excellent. Barnes and Crawford present "The Fakir and the Lady," an amusing specialty built solely upon personality and magnetism. Barnes as "The Fakir" has established worldwide reputation as a "quick-stuff" comedian. Miss Crawford is an excellent foil for Barnes' comedy. Miss Mignonette Kikin, the original English Turkey Trot Girl is always a welcome feature of Orpheum programs, for the charm and vivacity of her personality are well established. Vaudeville is indebted to Jerry Grady and Frankie Carpenter for a number of ingenious comedy playlets, the latest of which is "The Butterfly." In this piece Mr. Grady is seen as Michael Murphy. Miss Carpenter is a pleasing and handsome actress. Galetti's Simians are the finest example of this sort of entertainment on the stage and Mon. Galetti always has the knack of evolving some new feature for his remarkable monkeys. Warren and Blanchard, who appear on the program as "The Comedian and the Singer," furnish one of those joy-promoting acts that invariably receive well-merited applause. Juggling with either a thrill or a laugh in it, is furnished by Eldora and company. Eldora manipulates big cannon balls, wagon wheels, and other heavy weights. The Animated Weekly shows in its moving pictures a number of interesting current events.

"The Girl From Tokio," an English adaptation from the German by Robert Pohl, by Frank Tannehill, Jr., and George W. Barnum, will be the attraction at the Salt Lake theater for two nights and matinee, starting Friday, January 24. In the original German, the farce enjoyed a successful run at the Court Theater, Berlin, for a period of 215 performances, and has been produced with equal favor on this continent. The farce has lost nothing in its translation and adaptation to the English stage, and offers in its present shape, one of the most humorous, pleasing and interesting entertainments imaginable. The play is clean, witty, bright, and is entirely free from the questionable situations