

OPENING OF THE KING'S THEATRE.

THE PANTOMIME OF CINDERELLA.

The management of the King's Theatre, Edinburgh, are to be congratulated upon a successful opening performance on Saturday night. The undertaking of a pantomime first night is no mean feat in itself. It is at least equalled by the task of opening a new theatre. A successful combination of these two events is the culminating triumph of the theatrical manager. Faced with the double task, Mr R. C. Buchanan, the managing director of the Company, and Mr Robert Courtneidge, the producer of the pantomime, combined their forces to provide entertainment for the Edinburgh public. Concerning the house itself few words are necessary, as a full description of both the exterior and interior has already appeared in these columns. Suffice it to say that in perhaps the two most important essentials the theatre was thoroughly satisfactory—an uninterrupted view of the stage could be obtained from every part of the house, and the seats were extremely comfortable, two features which will prove most attractive to the habitual theatre-goer. The seating accommodation is 2400.



MR DAN ROLYAT: THE BARON.

In regard to the pantomime itself, "Cinderella" has been taken for the subject. It would be difficult to say how ancient is this theme. In the story are combined one or two of the oldest ideas, notably those of the unfeeling stepmother and the reward of kindness to those who do not seem in a position to make an return. To these ideas the modern writers of pantomime have added the henpecked husband, an historic character which dates back at least as far as Socrates. In the case of the present production the old story has been followed in the closest possible way. The only notable innovation from the pantomime standpoint is the substitution of two good-looking young ladies for the comedians who usually take the parts of the elderly, ugly sisters. As usual the immortals open the pantomime in a scene entitled the Enchanted Glade. We are next introduced to the principal characters of the piece in a very fine scene entitled the Forest in Winter. Not only was the scene itself beautifully staged, but the dresses were particularly appropriate, while a number of live rabbits hopping about lent an additional air of reality to the picture. In this scene Cinderella makes the acquaintance of the prince, a meeting on which the whole plot turns. After a well-put-together scene representing the interior of the Hall we come to the kitchen, a scene in which the "gag" of the Baron and Baroness will require some pruning. The closing item in the first act, entitled "The Toilet," is a particularly elaborate and beautiful scene. The pearl setting is especially fine, and the lighting effects, though Mr Buchanan made an apology for imperfections in this department, were extremely creditable. The second act opens with the well-known bedroom scene, which is very well mounted and gorgeously dressed. Naturally this scene forms the principal portion of the act, and of the other scenes mention need only be made of the closing one representing Hymen's Bower. Here once again the dresses, especially in the grand procession, form an important feature of the production. Messrs Conrad Tritschler, W. R. Coleman, James Gordon, and R. McCleery are generally to be congratulated upon the scenery and painting which go far to

make the pantomime a pleasing spectacle. In regard to the music it cannot be said that there is much which is particularly novel, but it is mostly tuneful. Some of the best tunes are of the cakewalk or "two-step" variety, and bear the American imprint.



MR JOHN HUMPHRIES: THE BARONESS.

So far as the company is concerned, it may be said that on the whole it is stronger on the male than on the female side. Miss Phyllis Dare makes an attractive Cinderella. More particularly did she manage to look the part of the kitchen maid. She has a pleasant, though not very strong, voice. Vocally she scored her greatest success in a song entitled "My Silent Sweetheart," which she rendered in pleasing fashion in the garret scene in the second act. Miss Dare is a neat dancer, and might have a little more to do in this line. Miss Violet Englefield made a dashing prince, and received a hearty encore for her song "Cherry Blossoms." Miss Gwennie Hasto, who took the part of sister to the prince, proved herself an agile dancer, and scored a great success with her cakewalk in the ballroom scene. Miss Vera Vere and Miss Marie Rignold were capable exponents of the two step-sisters of the heroine. In manner, voice, and dress each made a clever foil to the other. The bulk of the comic work falls on the shoulders of Mr Dan Rolyat and Mr John Humphries. As a combination they are hard to beat. The difference in stature between the diminutive baron (Mr Rolyat), and the huge baroness (Mr Humphries) is in itself amusing, and the two play in capital fashion into each other's hands. Their duet in a topical song, with the refrain "We are looking forward to that," brought down the house. The clever references to Mr Haldane and the War Office staff were hailed with particular relish. Mr Rolyat amused the house greatly with his antics, some of his postures being truly remarkable, while his dancing was also clever. On the vocal side he scored a distinct hit with a comic song, several times encored, to the tune of "Comin' through the Rye." Mr Stephen Adeson and Mr Bay Russell filled the parts of Choddles, the baron's retainer, and Dandini, the prince's foster brother and valet, satisfactorily, though on the lighter side both were somewhat overshadowed by the principal comedians.

The pantomime was very well received by a crowded house, who had little need to make allowances for first night accidents, the whole performance being carried through remarkably smoothly. In response to loud calls for a speech, Mr Courtneidge said how much pleasure it gave him to produce a pantomime in his native town. Mr Buchanan read telegrams from Miss Ellen Terry, Mr Beerbohm Tree and other leading London theatrical managers, wishing the pantomime and the new theatre every success. The programme, which is tastefully got up, is designed and printed by Mr John A. McCulloch, Edinburgh, while Mr A. M. Thomson is associated with Mr Courtneidge in putting together the pantomime, and Mr Charles H. Taylor is responsible for the lyrics. The arrangements for the comfort of the audience were very complete. In regard to this last matter it may, however, be found necessary to make some other arrangement in regard to carriage traffic. With a double line of car lines in Leven Street, it is impossible to work the carriages as is done where a theatre is in a wide side street. A good plan would be to keep the main thoroughfare perfectly clear of all save one line of vehicles, and to utilise Valleyfield Street for carriages coming up at the end of the performance and, if necessary, Tarvit Street for their