

THEATRICAL GOSSIP.

ALL things considered, the first night at Her Majesty's was wonderfully free from mishap. The ventilating apparatus, on which so much care and money have been expended, showed a tendency to be recalcitrant, the fan malevolently extinguishing such lights as came within its sphere of influence. It had accordingly to be stopped, and a rather inconvenient heat was experienced. But prompt measures have been taken to make the ventilation as perfect in practice as in theory it is.

THE architectural arrangements of the new Her Majesty's Theatre led to an odd result on the first night of *The Seats of the Mighty* on Wednesday. Owing to the great projection of the dress-circle, those in that part of the house cannot see the people in the stalls, and vice versâ. Between the acts of Mr Gilbert Parker's play little parties of excursionists came from one part of the house to the other, in order to see who was present, and, at one time, quite a number of visitors from above were below, looking round.

THE land on which Mr Beerbohm Tree's Her Majesty's Theatre stands is Crown property, and the site of the old theatre extended from Charles-street down to Pall-mall. With the exception of a single shop the whole of the land, when the old Her Majesty's was pulled down early in the nineties, became available for building purposes, and the negotiations which had been conducted with the Crown resulted in the lessees of the old theatre obtaining an agreement for the grant of a new lease for eighty years, from 1890, at £4,200 per annum for the entirety. The sum of £30,000 had been deposited by the lessees as security for the erection of certain specified buildings before March, 1896. The contemplated building, however, was never erected, and the site, or rather its lease from the Crown, on the terms mentioned, was offered by auction, in pursuance of an Order of the Court of Chancery, in July, 1894. The auction proved abortive, and the property was bought in for £140,000. In December, 1895, the Crown Lease Proprietary Company was launched with a proposed capital of £250,000, to build an Imperial Opera House. The attempt to obtain the required capital from the public was an utter failure, only £4,000 being subscribed, and in the following year arrangements were made to dispose of about a third of the site at the Charles-street end to Mr Tree.