

# NEW SUPER CINEMA.

## EDINBURGH PLAYHOUSE.

### STAGE AND SCREEN FEATURES.

EDINBURGH'S largest cinema—the Playhouse, in Leith Walk—will be open to the public from Monday onwards. The Playhouse illustrates very effectively the remarkable developments that have taken place in the screen world during the last decade. The cinema-goer of to-day enjoys a much fuller existence than his pre-war predecessor, who was content to grope his way into dark and rather dismal halls to gaze at films which flashed and flickered in erratic spasms on the screen. The patron of the Playhouse will go to "the pictures" in the modern manner, which—as a visit to the Playhouse proves—is as far removed from the old-time manner as an aeroplane is from a horse-car.

The Playhouse patron, approaching the massive and impressive stone frontage, enters by a wide central hall, thickly carpeted, electric fires burn on either side, and in front there is a mysterious maze of doorways and staircases. These lead not only to the picture house proper, but to a number of appendages, which add to the novelty of the building. There are cloakrooms, lounges, cafes, and soda fountains, all of which increase the comfort of the cinema. But the actual cinema itself is the main attraction, and it is only when one passes into it that the growth of the industry is realised. It is planned on a lavish and luxurious scale. The total seating capacity is 3040, there being 1500 seats in the stalls, 680 in the circle, and 860 in the balcony. The breadth and height of the interior convey an impression of spaciousness and grandeur, the seats sweeping out from the wide stage and towering overhead in the two commodious tiers. The decorative effects are tasteful and artistic. Crimson stalls, purple circle seats, and old gold balcony seats, blend harmoniously with the general scheme of decoration. The lighting is strikingly original, and in the broad arch over the screen and the stage a special design is utilised to depict either morning sunrise, a golden sunset, or the deep blue of the sky on a summer evening—whichever is appropriate to the occasion.

The screen is, of course, of the latest type, and the stage is one of the largest in the country. The Playhouse management can produce at any time any form of entertainment—a silent film, a talking film, a play, a musical comedy, a pantomime, or an opera. In the immediate future their programme is to be a blend of silent films and talkies. For the latter, the management have installed the Western Electric sound film apparatus. There is an orchestra, and there is an organ, but both these familiar features have unfamiliar habits. The orchestra—when it is not required—disappears quietly by means of an electric lift, and the organ goes up and down by the same unusual means. The organ is a splendid instrument, with full orchestral effects.

The Playhouse has been modelled on the Roxy Cinema Theatre in New York, the architect being Mr John Fairweather, F.R.I.B.A., Glasgow. The principal directors of the Playhouse Co. (Ltd.), which has been registered with a capital of £100,000, are Mr F. A. Lumley and Mr J. P. Maguire, and Mr D. M. S. Lombie is to be the manager.

#### A BARRIE "TALKIE"

The opening programme is to consist of two all-talking pictures and a silent film. A private performance given in the Playhouse last night demonstrated the clarity of the Western Electric sound apparatus, which is singularly free from either harshness or blurring. The main sound picture is "The Doctor's Secret," based on J. M. Barrie's play, "Half-an-Hour." This intensely dramatic story lends itself admirably to the new screen art, and an excellent cast, headed by Ruth Chatterton and H. B. Warner, act brilliantly, and speak with a refreshing distinctness—free from any accent. Miss Chatterton, who is a well-known American stage star, gives a particularly fine interpretation of the rôle of the unhappy wife, and the film is one which shows an advance on any of the talking pictures hitherto seen in Edinburgh. "Miss Information" is an amusing talking comedy, and the silent film, "The Fleet's In," features Clara Bow in a typically American romance of sailors and the girls they leave on shore.