

The Stage.

By S. E. GREVILLE-SMITH.

CONVENTION has long since ceased to rule the stage. In no other profession is there a more welcome admission, or wider scope for the development of individual talent. It is not a democracy, however, in the socialistic sense, but a community modelled on that fine type of benevolent despotism afforded by Haroun al Raschid and Louis Quatorze.



Mr. Gregan McMahon as "Cavendish Cowley," the Actor, in "A Highland Legacy."

Genius rises to the top, untrammelled in its growth, yet it does not flourish by the warrant of its own intrinsic merits, but by the favour of the monarch. And the monarch who bestows the accolade on the

actor is the Great Public. The critical Grand Vizier or Grand Chamberlain may pat him on the back and tell him he is a fellow of excellent parts, but the smile of the King is the only passport to fame. Every actor of consequence nowadays is original. We applaud him, not because he reminds us of some other actor of the past, but because he is obviously giving us the best of himself. There is no market for imitators, and happily for themselves, and for us, people of that class do not trouble us overmuch. The fresh originality of Mr. Thornton, and of Mr. Cuyler Hastings, is repeated in the case of Mr. W. F. Hawtreay. His "Sir John Bendwill" does not recall any other stage barrister, nor was there ever another stage Frenchman fitted to blur our recollection of his Baron de Longueville. And the reason for this is that both Sir John and the Baron are naturally what they would be had Mr. Hawtreay been a lawyer or a Frenchman with a "rattling past." The actor who so takes our imagination captive must be well-equipped for his work. Mr. Hawtreay is an actor because he loves the business, but he is also a man of the world, a close student of character and manners, and a freeman of the kingdom of letters. He was born at Eton, where his father, the Rev. C. W. Hawtreay, was third master in the famous school, got his first big slice of wisdom there, and in 1880, after a course at Oxford, made the grand tour (which in modern days embraces the world almost), in charge of a distinguished pupil. Mr. Hawtreay was then in his twenty-fourth year and kept his eyes open. New Zealand was in his itinerary and his three subsequent