

THE STAGE

(By "Footlight.")

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

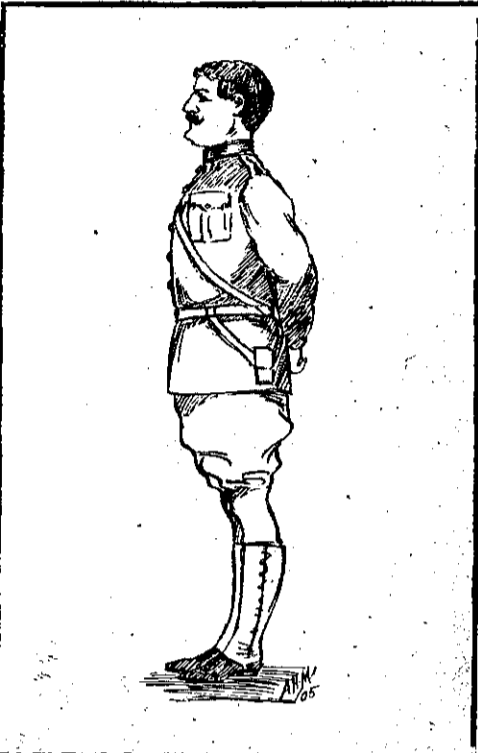
"BLIND MAN'S BUFF."

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Sam Coast.....Mr. Harcourt Beatty
 Lieutenant Richard Coleman.....
 Mr. Malcolm Dunn
 Steven Carley.....Mr. James Lindsay
 Moles.....Mr. Harry Hill
 A Footman.....Mr. Leopold Stach
 Mrs. Carley.....Miss Amy Singleton
 Mrs. Stephen Carley.....
 Mrs. Maesmore Morris
 Lizzie.....Miss Evelyn Davenport
 Miss Bella Shindle.....Miss Amy Willard
 Phillip.....Miss Rosie Fitzgerald
 Christopher.....Miss Ella Miller
 Toots.....Miss Doris Pounds
 Elaine.....Miss Sybille Miller
 Eleanor Carley.....Miss Nellie Stewart

On Saturday "Blind Man's Buff" replaced "Pretty Peggv" at His Majesty's, and to many it made a refreshing change. It is a four-act play by Clyde Fitch, the well-known American dramatist, and is one of those plays wherein melodrama, sentimentality, and farce are commingled and commixed so judiciously that a concoction suitable for all palates is produced. Briefly, it is the story of one Sam Coast, a man who has made his pile by more or less questionable methods of finance. Sam, shrewd business man as he is, finds time to fall desperately in love with Eleanor Carley, a distant connection of his by marriage. All the characters, by the way, save the hero, Lieutenant Richard Coleman, suffer from this fact that they are connected in some way and it would require an expert genealogist to define the several relationships. Eleanor has no time for Sam, but instead is head over heels in love with Lieutenant Coleman. To further his suit Coast decides to bring financial ruin on the whole family with whom Eleanor resides, the idea being, apparently, that when the girl is penniless she will jump at his millions. This scheme is a singularly easy one to carry out, because Stephen Carley, Eleanor's brother and the head of the household, is one of those born gamblers who are ready to speculate wildly on the most slender information. Coleman is ordered to the Philippines, and he goes fully convinced that Eleanor has promised to marry Coast, whose way is thus made easy. Just when Carley is irretrievably ruined, every penny the household possesses having been swallowed up in the maelstrom of Wall-street, Eleanor receives a love letter from Coleman, but her joy is sud-

denly turned into sorrow by the news from Manila that the regiment has been ambushed and annihilated by the Filipinos. Coast steadily presses his suit, only to meet with repeated rejections, and ultimately, after giving Carley a good position and partly restoring the fortunes of the family, he retires from the hopeless quest, and the play closes with the unexpected return of Coleman and the prospect of wedding bells. Miss Nellie Stewart was quite in her element as Eleanor Carley, the warm-hearted girl who stands by her family in financial ruin and refuses to give up her lover, even when begged to do so by her rela-



MR MALCOLM DUNN, as Lieutenant Richard Coleman.

disaster to the regiment being cleverly brought out. In Sam Coast Mr. Harcourt Beatty had a part entirely unlike any in which we have seen him before, and his conception of the shrewd speculator, who is prepared to sacrifice anybody to attain his own selfish ends, was true to the life, the one defect being the make-up, which was not in the least characteristic of the typical American. The villain of melodrama is always impossible, but such a man as Sam Coast doubtless has many a counterpart in every-day life to-day. Mr. Malcolm Dunn, as Lieutenant Coleman, made a very manly hero, although perhaps a little out of drawing in a British uniform. Mrs. Maesmore Morris gave a remarkably good rendering of the part of Mrs. Stephen Carley, an otherwise charming woman, whose one foible was advancement in society. Miss Amy Singleton's Mrs. Carley was an amusing sketch, although there was rather much broad farce in it; in fact the model might have been founded on Johnny Sheridan's "Widow O'Brien." Mr. James Lindsay had a somewhat thankless part to play as Steven Carley, the reckless speculator, whose motives were always for the best, but did good work in the part. Miss Amy Willard provoked laughter as the chattering, and to judge by results, incompetent lady hairdresser. The four children played very naturally in their scene in the first act, so well, in fact, that many were found regretting that the author had excluded them from the rest of the play. The piece went very smoothly from start to finish, and there can be no doubt that the production was a very complete success. It was withdrawn last evening in favour of "Camille."

THE OPERA HOUSE.

FULLER'S ENTERTAINERS.

Mr. John Fuller is a staunch believer in the principle that what the public want nowadays is variety, and that there is truth in the contention is proved by the number of people who attend the Opera House every evening to witness the efforts of the Empire Entertainers to amuse. The company is a good one throughout, and the applause all through is unstinted, nearly every item being regularly redemanded. The prismatic effects introduced by Madame Lottie Act are exceedingly pretty. Miss Lavinia Tyson is nightly encored for her song, "Sunshine and Rain," while in the second half of the programme her rendering of "While the Moon Shines Bright" and "Follow the Crowd on Sundays" (illustrated) never fails to please. Miss Nellie Power is already a warm favourite, her voice being heard to good effect in "Phoebe," with a popular coon song for the inevitable encore. Mr. James Opie does full justice to the stir-

ring nautical ballad, "The Admiral's Broom." The terpsichorean art is most efficiently represented by Miss Florrie Leigh, Miss Flo. Calcutt, and Miss Alma Lyndon, whose dances are decidedly clever. The cycling feats of Messrs. Roy Murphy and Bert Delavale are so well done as to make it appear that such feats are easy—until one comes to try them. The entertainment concludes with a biographic pantomime entitled, "Little Red Riding Hood," this being taken direct from Drury Lane Theatre. There will be a complete change of bill next Saturday, when more new artistes are booked to appear.

"A Moorish Maid," the new comic opera by Alfred Hill and J. Youlin Birch, comes up for the public's verdict on Monday week (June 26) at His Majesty's. Most people are hoping it is going to be a success, and several are confident it will be nothing less. The opening performance promises to draw a house that will give the traffic inspector a headache, and after that those who have heard the opera or portions of it aver that it will absolutely compel popularity for the rest of the week. The chief characteristics of the opera are said to be brightness and variety. "Tapu" Hill's music has been described to me as brilliantly descriptive, and nothing if not melodious, right through. He is said to have got magnificent effects in his orchestration (always a strong point with Alf. Hill), whilst in some of the numbers he has attained to grand opera level. For the rest, well, it will be a wonder if artistes like Fred. H. Graham, Madame Lilian Tree, Archdale Tayler, Hamilton Hodges, Misses Marion Mitchell, Sissie Sandford, and Lucie Ehrenfried, cannot get good results in dealing with both music and "book." It is claimed for the libretto that it is at least never dull whilst all who have heard the lyrics speak in emphatic terms of praise of them. Let us hope the Hill-Birch venture may turn out as well as it expected to. It would be very gratify-

ing to find we had in our midst two men capable of turning out a really good opera from time to time. The box plan for "A Moorish Maid" opens on Saturday next at Wildman's.

The subject of our frontispiece this week is Miss Nannie Bennett, of the new English Dramatic Company, who plays the role of Lady Castlemaine in "Sweet Nell" and Eva Sorrell in "Pretty Peggv."

Mr. Dudley Clinton, one of the most popular members of the new English Dramatic Company, now appearing at His Majesty's, is a cousin of the Rev. W. E. Gillam, of St. Matthew's Church, Auckland.

Mr. M. B. Curtis has cabled from America cancelling the dates for Howard Thurston, illusionist and magician, who was to have opened at His Majesty's on July 8.

My Christchurch correspondent writes me that the Fullers continue to do splendid business, and the constant succession of fresh talent they keep the Opera House supplied with is doubtless responsible for the very liberal patronage accorded to them.

Miss Jessie MacLachlan, the famous ballad singer, was to have appeared here on July 4, 5, and 6. Owing to the phenomenal business done in Australia the dates have been cancelled, and it is probable she will not arrive till October.

Mr. Courtice Pounds, in Australia a few years ago, will, by the courtesy of Mr. George Edwardes, who curtailed his engagement in America out of consideration for Mr. Beerbohm Tree, repeat his interesting performance of Sir Hugh Evans, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," and of the Clown, in "Twelfth Night," at His Majesty's Theatre, during the Shakespeare week.



MISS NELLIE STEWART, as Eleanor Carley.

denly turned into sorrow by the news from Manila that the regiment has been ambushed and annihilated by the Filipinos. Coast steadily presses his suit, only to meet with repeated rejections, and ultimately, after giving Carley a good position and partly restoring the fortunes of the family, he retires from the hopeless quest, and the play closes with the unexpected return of Coleman and the prospect of wedding bells. Miss Nellie Stewart was quite in her element as Eleanor Carley, the warm-hearted girl who stands by her family in financial ruin and refuses to give up her lover, even when begged to do so by her rela-



MISS AMY WILLARD, of Musgrove's New English Dramatic Co.