

THE STAGE

(By "FOOTLIGHT.")

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

"THE WALLS OF JERICHO."

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Hankey Bannister.....Mr. Brough
 Jack Frobisher.....Mr. Herbert Flemming
 Marquis of Steventon.....Mr. E. B. Payne
 Lord Drayton (his son).....Mr. D. Walker
 Harry Dallas.....Mr. Carter Pickford
 Bertram Hannaford.....Mr. Philip Leslie
 Hon. Jasper Tvevetrees.....Mr. J. Paulton
 Lord Marchmont.....Mr. John F. Forde
 Hon. Wilfred Drayton.....Mr. N. McKeown
 Peters.....Mr. Horace Higson
 Simpson.....Mr. Arthur Coutts
 James.....Mr. John Wilson
 William.....Mr. W. Potts
 Lady Luck Derenham.....Miss W. Fraser
 Lady Westbury.....Miss Emma Temple
 Lady Parchester.....Miss Kate Gair
 Duchess of Skye.....Miss Bessie Major
 Miss Mornington.....Miss Gordon Lee
 Miss Wyatt.....Miss Mary Milward
 Mary.....Miss Olive Dudley
 Lady Alethea Frobisher.....Miss B. Day

On Monday "Beauty and the Barge," which had enjoyed a successful run of five nights, was replaced by Alfred Sutro's play, "The Walls of Jericho," and as much had been heard of the piece a very large audience assembled to see it. Although comparisons are somewhat unfair in the present case there probably would not be one dissenting voice from the opinion that it is a far finer play than the opening production. The latter was amusing enough, but being of the very light and frothy variety hardly seemed to satisfy, whereas with "The Walls of Jericho" the reverse is the case, and a strong play is given, full of sparkling dialogue, and one withal which leaves food for thought. Briefly, it tells the story of one Jack Frobisher, who, having made his pile in Australia, goes to London, where he falls in love with and marries Lady Alethea Derenham, eldest daughter of the Marquis of Steventon, an impoverished nobleman of the "guinea-pig" variety. Frobisher finds that his wife cannot escape from the meshes of the smart set in society, while he himself, a very strong man in the colonies, bids fair to become a nonentity. The climax is reached when he discovers Harry Dallas, an unprincipled man-about-town, making violent love to Lady Alethea, when the strong man asserts himself. In a powerful speech (in which he fairly carried the house with him) Jack Frobisher exposes the shams of society, ending it by ordering a return to Queensland. Lady Alethea refuses to go, but ultimately her love for her husband prevails, and the curtain falls on the reconciliation of the two.

In "The Walls of Jericho" Mr. Alfred Sutro has ostensibly attacked merely a minute section of society, that very limited portion of the English aristocracy who live purely for pleasure and selfish gratification and by their actions proclaim that they have altogether forgotten that there can be no excuse or justification for an exalted social station unless those holding it put duty before self-indulgence and are an aristocracy in reality as well as in name. Mr. Sutro's comedy may, however, be regarded not merely as an exposure of a happily small fraction of highly-placed English society, but also as an object-lesson for all those who to the best of their opportunity set themselves to follow its example. In "The Walls of Jericho" Australia is depicted as a country where a true conception of manhood and womanhood is in the ascendant, and where the life led by the "smart set" of Mayfair would not be tolerated. While generally speaking that conception is justified (says an Australian writer), not even the most ardent eulogist of Australia and the Australians would affirm that the vices against which the playwright has directed his artillery are altogether unknown. The mercenary woman who regards marriage purely as a business transaction in which she endeavors to gain as much as she can and to give as little as possible in return is the monopoly neither of a single country nor of a single class. She is to be found in every land and in every walk of life.

Mr. Herbert Flemming takes the part of Jack Frobisher, giving a manly rendering of the character which found great favour with the audience, whose sympathies were with him from start to finish.

Especially did he rise to the occasion when in a very strong scene he remorselessly attacks the hollow shams and vapid frivolity, the unblushing selfishness and self-indulgence of the smart set, this fairly rousing the house, while all through his acting was consistently good. Miss Beatrice Day essayed the role of Lady Alethea, playing the part to the life. Very cleverly did she bring out the main features of a character which, although somewhat marred by superficial faults, yet which at bottom is true gold. Taken all through it was a very accurate conception of the part. Mr. Brough as

Laughing," which caused much amusement and applause. He was followed by the two Colliers, who appeared in a most attractive double song and dance, "Hallelujah Sisters," which gained them hearty applause. Mr. Victor Kelly, who keeps the audience in a summer of amusement from the rise of the curtain up to the time he takes the boards, gave a comic song and eccentric dance that fairly brought down the house. Kelly's extraordinary tumbling fairly astounded the audience, who burst into a storm of applause at the conclusion of his turn. Miss Nita Leete, who next appeared, sang a

ballad most attractively, and was warmly applauded. She was followed by the three Gibson girls, whose triple song and dance item, "Mandy," proved a fine feature of the evening. The three danced most daintily, and received hearty applause and a peremptory recall. The first half of the programme concluded with a farce by Kelly, Bentley, and Wallace Ascot.

The second half was opened with a dainty song and dance item by the Collier Sisters, who appeared in Chinese costumes. They were followed by Miss Nita Leete, who scored a complete success in her illustrated songs, "The Man with the Ladder and the Hose" being especially good. The next item, that given by Le Roy, Talma, and Bosco, scored another triumph for these mysterious magicians, who succeeded in mystifying the audience completely. Bosco kept the fun going from start to finish, his disappearing dog causing great amusement. His trick with the rooster and the duck was also highly astounding and diverting. Le Roy, Talma, and Bosco next placed a large box on a table on the stage, the interior of the box being filled with a great variety of costumes. The audience were then called upon to name any country they pleased, and upon Japan being demanded a lady in full Japanese costume sprang from the box. Equally bewildering was the act entitled "The Garden of Sleep," in which Madame Talma was made to vanish into thin air. Finally the three appeared amid the audience, producing endless packets of cards, handfuls of half-crowns, and all manner of articles from the pockets of the unsuspecting and astounded onlookers. The three undoubtedly give a very fine exhibition of their powers, and should on no account be missed during their short season in Auckland. Miss Fanny Powers gave some very good imitations of different variety artistes, and was well received. She was followed by Kelly and Agnes, who gave a most amusing sketch. Kelly, who gives a small taste of his capabilities



MR. HERBERT FLEMMING, of the Brough-Flemming Company.

Hankey Bannister, a life-long friend of Jack's, played quietly, his love scene with Lady Alethea's younger sister, causing much amusement. Miss Winifred Fraser was very bright as Lady Lucy, the light-hearted but mercenary sister of Lady Alethea. Miss Emma Temple gave an entirely natural rendering of the part of the good-natured Lady Westbury; Miss Gordon Lee made a vivacious Miss Mornington; Mr. Edgar Payne hardly made the most of the part of the Marquis of Steventon, the avaricious old aristocrat who is prepared to sacrifice his daughters for the sake of gold, the conception being rather weak throughout. Mr. Carter Pickford was too stiff and formal as Harry Dallas, although the part does not give much chance to the actor. The minor parts were well filled, and the mounting of the piece was decidedly good, while a special word of praise must be given to the dresses, some of which were really beautiful. "The Walls of Jericho" has been running to excellent business during the week, and is well worth seeing.

OPERA HOUSE.

THE RICKARDS VAUDEVILLE COMPANY.

Everyone visiting the Opera House during the present season must admit that Mr. Fuller has played a trump card in introducing the Rickards Company to Auckland audiences. Packed and enthusiastic houses have been the rule every night, which is in itself sufficient guarantee of the excellence of the programme submitted. On Tuesday evening the Opera House was filled to overflowing, standing room being at a premium long before eight o'clock. A full orchestra, under the able conductorship of Mr. Frank Crowther, played the curtain up with a stirring overture, when the company gave a good opening chorus that went with a swing. Mr. Wallace Ascot then sang "Doreen," being heartily applauded. He was followed by Miss Mabel Lynne, who gave an exceptionally bright serio and dance item, "Down by the Old Bull and Bush." She was loudly recalled for this, giving a semi-patriotic song as an encore that was well received. Mr. George Bentley gave a very good comic song, entitled "I Burst Out



MISS FINNIFRED FRASER, in "Quality Street," the next production of the Brough-Flemming Company.