



THE STAGE

(By "Footlight.")

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

"UNDER TWO FLAGS."

The dramatisation of Ouida's famous novel, "Under Two Flags," is nothing more or less than melodrama. It is a play of startling effects and unnatural situations, unrelieved by a single touch of humour. American plays, like American novels, have come very much into favour of later years. Arizona, Barbara Freitche, Sunday, and other similar good things—"The Squaw Man" may be counted amongst the number—have made Yankee plays exceedingly popular. Therefore just why a genuine American company, able to present American plays with a richness of originality and colouring, born of long understanding, should descend to English melodrama, is hard to understand. The piece is splendidly mounted—as anything produced under the Williamsonian management invariably is. But while that materially assists, it does not suffice to carry the piece through. "Under Two Flags" is essentially a mixture of English and French. The Stars and Stripes never once entered Ouida's thoughts as she wove her romance round a scion of English peerdom and the French tricolour. Perhaps it is a revised version that the present company appears in. Anyway there is a decided American flavour about it all. Mr Waldron, as Bertie Cecil, the persecuted hero, was as much confined as a wild prairie bird in a cage. He appeared to be afraid to let himself go, and after his refreshing portrayal of Jim Carston in "The Squaw Man" was a disappointment as the typical melodramatic hero. It is a milk and water part to play, and Mr Waldron evidently felt it so. As Cigarette, the centre figure of the piece, Miss Ola Jane Humphrey had a better oppor-

the brutal commander, she found opportunities for a display of histrionic power and ability. The concluding scene, where the bullets intended for Cecil's heart pierce her body, was one full of pathos and tragedy, and as the culminating situation, lost nothing in Miss Humphrey's hands. In "The Squaw Man" Mr Rapley Holmes was delightfully original as Big Bill, and his presentation of the part was one of the most pleasing in the piece. But as Rake! Mr Holmes is an American, and the atmospheres in which the cowboy and the English valet exist are as totally different as the directions in which the sun rises and sets. The mixture doesn't go down at all. Mr Hardie Kirkland played a rather good part as Black Hawk, the blackguard military chief, but even in his instance the best scenes were marred with the nasal twang. The other characters were well sustained. "Under Two Flags" finishes to-morrow night. On Saturday night "The Virginian," which is said to be the strongest play in the company's repertoire, takes the boards, and will be succeeded in turn by "The Christian."

OPERA HOUSE.

FULLERS' ENTERTAINERS.

This week there has been no change in the Opera House programme of artists. Good business has nevertheless been experienced. Miss Lorraine Tansley, the pleasing contralto, and late of the Steele-Payne Co., has gained a place in the hearts of the Opera House patrons, and her singing of "The Dear Home Land" merits emphatic approval. Mr Sam Wilson has established something of a record. During a long season of something like four or five months, he has never been guilty of cracking a stale joke, or giving a repetition. His budget of original funnyisms is apparently inexhaustible. And just here a word of advice might be given to the would-be comedian. A stale joke is unpardonable, and though the audience may silently tolerate it, there is always a chance of the withering storm of



MISS PRISCILLA VERNE, who appears at the Opera House next week.