OPENING OF THE NEW KING'S THEATRE, EDINBURGH.

A BRILLIANT SUCCESS.

The new King's Theatre, Edinburgh, built by the Edinburgh Construction Company (Limited) in Leven Street, had a most auspicious opening on Saturday night. A great deal of interest has been taken by all classes of the community in the erection of this handsome addition to the playhouse accommodation of the city. Since building operations were begun in August 1905 work has been carried on with unflagging energy. A year after the start, Mr Carnegie laid the memorial stone, which now occupies a conspicuous position in the marble staircase, and Saturday night saw the successful completion of what must have been for all concerned a strenuous period. The opening piece was the pantomime of Cinderella, produced by Mr Robert Courtneidge, a well-known name in the theatrical profession in connection with this class of work, and himself, as he said in a little speech at the close, a native of Edinburgh. All the booked seats had been taken weeks ago, and were at a premium, and for pit and gallery a waiting line formed early in the afternoon. The front of the theatre, brightly lighted up, and with the verandah adorned with hanging baskets of flowers, attracted a large crowd of spectators, who were marshalled on the south side of the street by the police. The theatre is certified to hold 2500 people, and when the curtain went up at seven o'clock every place was occupied. The first impression the house and its arrangements made upon the minds of the large assembly was of a wholly favourable character. The constructive lines are thoroughly satisfactory, giving as they do to the interior a feeling of spaciousness and freedom; the acoustics are good; while the eye is charmed with the artistic harmony of the decorations in rose and white and gold, which, alike under brilliant light and in partial shadow, present an elegant appearance.

The pantomime itself gave great pleasure. Written by Mr A. M. Thomson and Mr Courtneidge, it follows closely the old story of Cinderella, and the familiar incidents are developed in a series of scenes of much beauty and full of fun. It is, indeed, particularly strong from a spectacular point of view. An elaborate opening wintry forest scene, where the villagers come to gather sticks and to indulge in a lively sabot dance, gradually changes before the spectator, under the influence of the wand of the beneficent fairy god-mother, into a spring glade of surpassing beauty, with a cascade of real water, on the grassy slopes of which several tame grey rabbits disported themselves with quite professional freedom. Here the dashing Prince first meets Cinderella, and at his *al fresco* luncheon the audience have assurance of the excellent quality of the comedians. Perhaps the scene that most took the fancy of the house was that at the close of the first act, where "Cinders" is adorned for the ball. It might be described in popular painting phraseology as a harmony in white, in which the resources of the scenic artist, the ballet mistress, the costumier, and the stage mechanician have been combined to produce a spectacle of dazzling beauty. The scene unfolds itself in a succession of happy surprises, and culminates in the entrance of an elegant little coach, sparkling with electric lamps and drawn by four tiny live ponies, which comes to take the now handsomely adorned Cinderella to the ball. It was received with a hearty round of applause. In the fine ballroom scene, with the characters in 18th century costumes and white wigs, the colouring had piquancy and strength given to it by the scarlet coats and black ribbons of part of the company, while in the closing and more conventional "Fairy wedding," set in a Versailles-like landscape, where the chorus and "supers" have the customary procession, the dresses, flower properties, and stage illumination also made a gorgeous picture. It was a feather in the cap of the stage manager and the mechanicians that on a first night, in a new theatre, all the spectacular part of the entertainment went so smoothly—almost, indeed, without a hitch. The musical numbers, while of a pleasing character, did not on a first hearing strike one as being particularly "catchy," but they were "worked" well by the singers and their assistants, while the dancing was of a graceful and diverting type.

An exceedingly good company have been engaged, and as several of the principals have appeared before in the same pantomime in other towns, they played well together, and kept the fun going in a bright and spirited manner. Miss Phyllis Dare, of picture post-card fame, a young and popular recruit to the musical comedy stage, was Cinderella, and on her entrance received a very cordial reception. It said something for her ability that she was able to play up to the standard which this popular demonstration seemed to exact, and to retain undiminished to the close the appreciation of the audience. She is graceful in deportment, speaks nicely, sings sweetly, though not with a strong voice, and acts in a winsome way—a combination of qualities which made her Cinderella a charming figure. Her best musical number was a song "Au Revoir," which was finished off with an attractive dance, in which she was assisted by a contingent of the chorus, and by a dainty mite of a child in white satin, whose impersonation of Cupid was a pleasing little incident in the scene. Mr Dan Rolyat, as the impecunious Baron, installed himself at once as a popular favourite. He made of the Baron an admirable comedy study, enlivened with diverting "business" of a quiet but none the less effective nature, and as an acrobatic dancer and contortionist he also scored. He was the singer, to the tune of "Comin' through the Rye," of one of two topical songs, which were well received. Associated with him throughout the evening was Mr John Humphries, another good comedian, in the *rôle* of the Baroness. The two formed a strong combination, happily contrasted in style—Rolyat medium in height and with an appropriate aristocratic air as the Baron; Humphries tall and stout, and representing in costume and action a severely bourgeoise baroness. Together they were responsible for a great deal of the fun of the evening, which was all of a legitimate character, and never transgressed against the canons of good taste. Mr Humphries' catchword, "What will the Robinsons say?" was good. Miss Violet Englefield, who has been favourably seen before in Edinburgh pantomime, made a dashing and hard-working Prince, and sang pleasantly; and as the Princess, Roxana, Miss Gwennie Hasto made one of the prettiest singing and dancing entries of the evening—a song and dance, "Under the Shadow of the Pyramid," with the limelights playing freely, in which, among others, she was assisted by Mr Rolyat. It was received with much enthusiasm. The two daughters of the Baron, instead of being given as usual to male comedians, were entrusted to Miss Marie Rignold, who did well as a stage-struck "intense" maiden, while Miss Vera Vere was more frolicsome as the other sister. Mr Stephen Adeson, as Cloddles, the Baron's sole retainer, was another energetic worker, whose acting, singing, and dancing were acceptably received. His "Irish Rosie" song was a decided hit. Among the Immortals, Miss Dorothy Chard, the clever young lady who recently played in the "Lady of the Lake," was a pretty fairy godmother, and made the small part dramatically effective. The chorus, attractively attired and well drilled, lent efficient aid, and more than a word of praise is due to the orchestra, under Mr Dunworth, for the satisfactory accompaniments and other music. The pantomime went so smoothly that it was all over about ten minutes to eleven o'clock.

COMPLIMENTARY SPEECHES.

There was great enthusiasm on the fall of the curtain, and on its being raised again upon the pretty concluding tableau, Mr Courtneidge advanced to the front and was received with a round of applause. In a few words he thanked the audience for the hearty reception they had given to the pantomime. It had been his ambition for some time past to produce a pantomime in his native city; and he was glad that they had thought it so great a success. (Applause.)

Mr R. C. Buchanan, the managing director, who was also cordially greeted, said he had received telegrams of congratulation from Messrs F. R. Benson, George Alexander, Beerbohm Tree, Arthur Bourchier, Martin Harvey, Edward Terry, and George Edwardes, and from Miss Ellen Terry. Miss Terry said—"Best wishes for Mr Courtneidge's production and for the future success of the King's Theatre." (Applause.) Speaking on behalf of his fellow-directors and himself, Mr Buchanan said that this was the most memorable first night in their recollection. They had all worked very hard indeed to make this building right for a date which was fixed two years ago, and they had succeeded. (Applause.) He thought it only right to say that Mr Courtneidge had worked under great disadvantages. As they were well aware, the electric light was one of the things that could not yet be depended on, and the electric effects on the stage had not been so brilliant as they would be when everything was in working order. He could only ask them to take the pantomime of to-night as a specimen of what they proposed to do throughout the season. (Loud applause.)

MISSING EDINBURGH MAN.—Nothing concerning the whereabouts of the young Edinburgh man Robert Currie, who has been missing since Sunday the 2d, has yet been obtained. Currie, who resided with his mother—a widow—at 23 Brandon Terrace, Edinburgh, left his home for a walk in the evening, and was last seen in Granton Road. It had been the young man's custom to take an evening stroll along Granton pier, and late on the night of his disappearance his friends went to Granton and found a stick which belonged to him lying on the breakwater. The finding of the stick suggests he met his death by drowning—a surmise all the more likely on account of the fact that the night was a very stormy one.

HEALTH OF EDINBURGH.—The mortality last week was 92, or equal to an annual death-rate of 14.01 per 1000. The deaths from phthisis numbered 7, while 4 were due to other forms of tuberculosis. Diseases of the chest accounted for at least 22 deaths, and zymotic causes for 2, of which 2 were due to measles. The intimations for the week comprised—typhoid, 3; diphtheria, 21; scarlatina, 23; and erysipelas, 12. The patients in the City Hospital numbered 291, as against 280 in the previous week. Of the 139 births, 11 were illegitimate.