

OUR CAPTIOUS CRITIC.

"THE NEW ALADDIN," AT THE GAILETY THEATRE.

THE Gaiety is doing well with *The New Aladdin*; Mr. Marshall told me so much on the evening of our visit, and the appearance of the house confirmed him. Whether the entertainment most attracts old patrons, or fresh ones, I do not know. But one thing was clear, that the audience was more general than it used to be; "the dear boys" of Nellie Farren, "the Johnnies" of later times were no longer a speciality of the stalls; they had ceased to be a controlling influence, they were fewer than of old, less demon-

the talismans by purchase and by guile, though without success. It is not obvious that they lose much by their failure, for the love-story follows a commonplace course, and the only use of the magic powers seems to be that London is reassorted in such bewildering manner that no one is any longer able to find the way about. So far as the story goes the boulevèrsement, however, chiefly affects a Gilbertian policeman, who cannot localise his divisional headquarters and who has been six days on duty without relief. In his extremity he is willing to be himself arrested by anyone competent to put him right. The incident of the policeman is good; and comic—though not absolutely fresh—is a scene in which one by one the uncle,

we usually find him at the Gaiety, does his best, like the good actor that he is. Both he and Miss Ediss are responsible for a great deal in the success of the extra-



strative, more scattered. Possibly they do not understand the latest departure, and I must confess that I am not greatly inclined to blame them if they do not. *The New Aladdin* is apparently an attempt at the something better in which even the precocious intellect of the young man about town must be puzzled to find where the something better is. The joint production of Messrs. Tanner and Risque is an attempt at burlesque which, as a burlesque, is even weaker than musical comedy in its decadence.

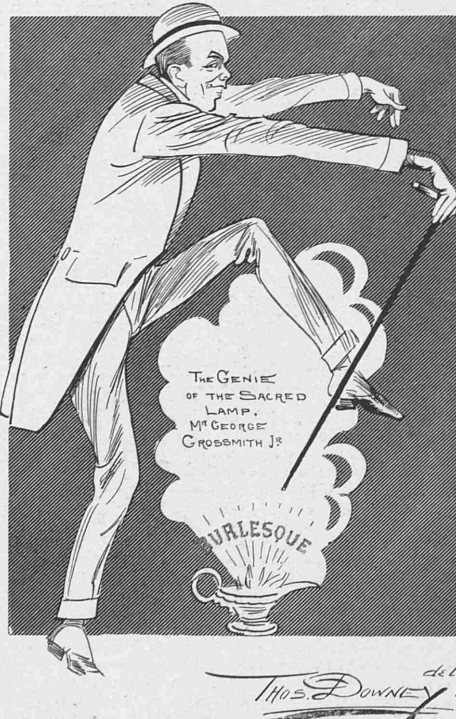
ganza. I have mentioned Mr. Lester as the lost policeman. He is more fortunate in his character than some of his colleagues, and this is entirely to the audience's advan-



the Cadi, and the General are defrauded and defraud one another into paying big prices for an imitation of the magic lamp. The Genie of the Lamp, whose duties are so light in his supernatural capacity, is allowed to become human at intervals, and sings topical songs and dances with ladies in fanciful costumes at gatherings in the metropolis and elsewhere. Mr. George Grossmith, jun., plays this part in his usual earnest manner, and is as amusing as in its lack of invention his character allows. By the way, has not that point of the actor talking verse and his audience shouting for prose been more than once anticipated? If I remember, it was paralleled at this



The opportunities for an Aladdin up-to-date with the lamp and ring of unlimited fulfilment at his disposition were practically inexhaustible—Klondike, Kimberley, The Rand, Park Lane, Chicago—it was only a question of what to leave out, what to avoid, in the humours of the time, the struggle for money and position as influenced by mines, railway corners, meat packing, and electricity. As it is in this piece at the Gaiety, we have no more, if as much, of good chaff or good satire of people and things



tage. Mr. Lester gives a very admirable performance, in every sense equal to its chances. The uncle, the Cadi, and the General have to depend very much upon their own efforts for the laughter they make, and their efforts are most creditable. Mr. Gratton, Mr. Brown, and notably Mr. Nainby, the General, make a valuable trio. Miss Elsie and Miss Adrienne Augarde, as the hero and heroine, are very charming and very capable, but the sentimental side of the play does not quite fill the stage. Miss Olive May as the Cadi's daughter, with nothing particular to do, is sprightly, and should have a stronger part. Miss Gaby Deslys, who comes on once or twice with a song in which English and French are more or less complicated, has chic and a breeziness which are felt the more because so much of the rest is mildly level and straggling. The dresses are very brilliant and fanciful, and the scenery is of high class, but Mr. Hawes Craven, who has painted the transformed London, is, I think, too literal—too graceful. I should have liked to see something more daring in the matter of grotesque topsy-turvydom.



than we get nine out of ten times in a humble country pantomime. Not to say that the bulk of the audience is anything but very much amused—I have seldom seen a Gaiety performance at which there were more frequent outbursts of laughter from the majority, which make the minority wonder why. This is always a good indication of a Gaiety hit, and perhaps explains why Gaiety writers do not exert themselves enough to give us more of that irresistible funniment in which all performers must join. We get something like this at two or three points with the help principally of Mr. Nainby, Mr. Lester, and Mr. Payne, but the really good things are occasional, the rest is

neither sparkling in merriment nor brisk in action. Lally, the new Aladdin, having by the help of the Spirit of the Ring become possessed of both ring and lamp, promptly woos a wandering princess, like himself more or less of the present period. His Uncle Ebenezer and a couple of other old gentlemen—the Cadi and the General—try to obtain

very theatre in the burlesque of *The Bohemian Girl*. Was not somebody hooted through the piece whenever he attempted to sing the first lines of "The Heart Bowed Down"? Mr. Payne, another favourite, suffers, like Mr. Grossmith, from the want of freshness of his character (Tippin, the old-young boy attendant of Lally). Tippin is pursued with considerable ardour by the Fairy of the Ring (Miss Ediss), who is ready to sacrifice her immortality if any human biped will make her his wife. Mr. Payne, who surely is capable of work less in a line than that in which

