

Illustrated Interviews.

No. LIII.—MR. AND MRS. BEERBOHM TREE.



LDROVE up one fine morning lately to Mr. and Mrs. Tree's house in Sloane Street in the hope of finding my victims at breakfast, for I had been told that they were the earliest of birds, and that I should have no hope of catching them unless I startled them in their nest before ten o'clock. Big Ben had just struck the hour, so I was a moment too late. A hansom stood at the door, and there emerged Mrs. Tree herself, dressed, as she always is, in the most fascinating attire—this time all black lace over white, with roses in her toque and carnations at her waist. A very tall girl of eleven tripped at her side. I peeped under her Panama hat, and there glanced up at me from its shady depths a pair of long brown eyes, very serious and childish in expression. As she glanced, she twisted a strand of her red-yellow hair round her finger, executing the while a *pas seul* very gravely upon the doorstep. Her frock, I noticed, was of some accordion-pleated stuff.

"Make haste, Viola," urged Mrs. Tree; "or you will be late for Mrs. Wordsworth."

The child vanished with her governess, still footing as she went the most Highland of Highland flings, with the same imperturbable gravity.

"She dances in her dreams," murmured Mrs.

Tree, as she watched her little daughter disappear. Then turning to me, vaguely: "Oh! I beg your pardon. You want to interview us? Do you? That is sad; for I am just starting for the country, and my

husband has gone to the theatre. Rehearsals, I believe, have begun. Come to me tomorrow—late—in the afternoon, and all will be well. I am so sorry I have to catch a train"; and before I could say another word this bright and reassuring lady had skipped into her hansom.

The following day, in the afternoon, I tried my luck again. "Mr. and Mrs. Tree are expected home almost immediately," declared the maid; and would I wait in the drawing-room, meanwhile? As she led me upstairs, like a conscientious journalist, I kept my eyes open.

A quaint little ante-room, at the head of the stairs, first attracted me. Here stood a nurse, with a baby in her arms, listening to the crowing of a cuckoo clock. Rather a singular-looking baby, I thought, but a very pretty one, with her black, uplifted eyes, and the row of bright-red curls across her forehead.

"Go away," she said, imperiously, waving a fat little hand in my face.

I confess to feeling a slight embarrassment.

"Good-bye," said the child, frowning, and pointing at the front door. Then, suddenly forgetting her resentment at my wretched, rash intrusion, she put her finger in her mouth, and raised her wistful eyes in the direction of the departed cuckoo.

"I will make friends with that nurse," I said to

myself. "Who knows but what I may glean some item of information from so responsible a looking person?"

"Your little charge——" I began, approaching her with a solicitous smile.



From a Photo. by]

MISS VIOLA TREE.

[Alice Hughes.

"Miss Felicity is just eighteen months," she remarked, with icy dignity, as if she anticipated the question. Then pride in her charge breaking down the barriers of restraint, she added, "And a very fine child for her age. As for her intelligence, I can assure you, sir——"

"I am convinced of it," I exclaimed, hastily.

"She knows all one is talking about, and if you could see her when she isn't shy, you would——"

"I am sure I should be delighted," I replied. "But her name, you say, is Felicity. Why Felicity?"

"Well, you see, sir," said the nurse, "she was born in December!"

"December!" I mused. And as I mused, there came into my mind certain lines of Keats:—

On a drear-nighted December, too happy, happy tree,
Thy branches ne'er remember their green felicity;
and I wondered if the verses had suggested the name.

At this point the baby, weary of waiting for the return of the cuckoo, became once more aware of my presence.

"Good-bye!" she repeated, with marked hauteur. This time I felt she would brook no gainsaying. So I escaped up the green stairs to a green drawing-room. What a pretty room it was, too, and leading from it another equally charming. A for-

get-me-not and its leaves had, I am told, suggested the colouring of the walls to Mrs. Tree. Anyhow, the front room is distempered blue, and the back room a dim, reposeful green. Both are panelled white, and hung with Hollyer's reproductions of Burne-Jones's works—the "Briar Rose," "Creation of the World," "Love Among the Ruins"—nor should I forget Watts's "Ganymede" and "Psyche," and many another beautiful study by the same great artist. For the rest, the

room remains upon the memory's eye as a vista of flowering chintz, of great armfuls of flowers and greenery a-growing and a-blowing in pots and vases, of quaint, countrified furniture and old china, of tables laden with old silver and new silver, and of shelves ranged with books. Indeed, I never saw so great a number of books in any drawing-room.

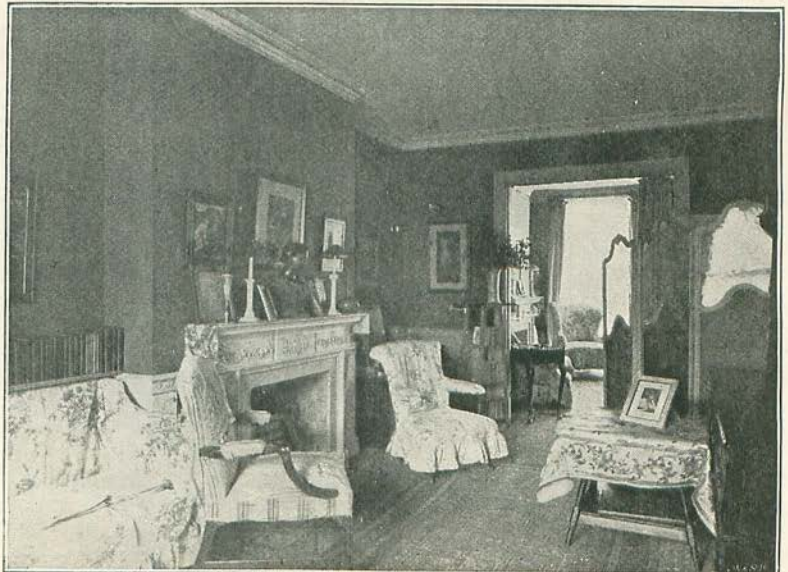
Just as I was about to take down a volume



From a Photo. by

MISS FELICITY TREE.

[Alice Hughes.



From a Photo. by

THE BACK DRAWING-ROOM,

[Alfred Ellis.

of Swinburne's verses, and while away the waiting hour, came a double rat-tat at the door, and in ran Mrs. Tree. A dazzling frock was hers, of silver and old lace and turquoise blue! I looked my admiration. Mrs. Tree explained: "This is a wedding garment. I have just been to a wedding."

Then, after a moment's pause, I commenced, "It was about yourself, Mrs. Tree, and your husband, that I came here, like Dickens's young man, wanting to know, you know."

"That's the dreadful part of it," laughed Mrs. Tree. "I cannot bear being interviewed. Nor can my husband. If you could promise that you will not say my smile is 'charming,' it would put us on a better footing at once."

I gave a faithful promise, and then, glancing round the room, begged to be told something at least about the household gods.

"What is the story, for instance, of this quaint picture of Hamlet in the corner?" I asked, pointing out a poster—a panel of brown paper, stretched from floor to ceiling, on which an heroic-sized Hamlet was daubed in tar, apparently.

"That! Oh! that was a Christmas card from Ellen Terry to Herbert—my husband. Ellen Terry is kindness itself, always remembering her old friends, always full of fun and graciousness. Once, when I had rheumatic fever at Hampstead, she drove up to see me and distract my thoughts during convalescence, bringing with her an air-ball and other toys. Then, when we were bound for America, she sent me a life-saving apparatus! A fur and woollen lined bag into which to roll oneself when lying on deck. There is no end to her thoughtfulness. Then," continued Mrs. Tree, "this little oil-colour of our daughter Viola is the work of Mr. De Castro—yes! it is wonderfully painted. That head of her, again, in red chalks, is by Winifred Brooke Alder, a rising young artist, of whom you may have heard."

"Tell me more," I said, after a pause, turning to the bookshelf.

Mrs. Tree handed me a volume of "Asiatic Studies," by Sir Alfred Lyell. On the first blank page is written by the author a graceful poem of dedication to Mrs. Tree, which appears to me absolutely characteristic of the personality of the lady to whom it is addressed. The lines run thus:—

Of voice and step that charmed the mind,
The subtle grace of fashion.
The song, the sportive wit refined,
And touch the springs of fashion.

"Ah! I forgot," said Mrs. Tree, "you must not read those lines. They are too flattering," and laughing, she took them from my hand. "See!" she continued, "Swinburne

and Shelley, Browning and Longfellow, Rossetti and Tennyson, has each his niche here. My favourite poet? Oh! Indeed I cannot say. I love each so dearly in his own way. My favourite authors? I am afraid I'm horribly indiscriminate—Balzac and Barrie, Dickens and George Meredith, Thackeray and Tourgenieff, Miss Austen and Ibsen—I read them all. I glide contentedly from the 'Mill on the Floss' to 'Marcella,' from 'Salammbô' to 'Sentimental Tommy,' from the 'Vicar of Wakefield' to the 'Child of the Jago.' These are the books I could read over and over again. My hundred books range from Gibbon to

Gyp. No! I am ashamed to say I have never read Sir Walter Scott; I suppose, because I did not begin as a child. But I am going to begin reading him to Viola now, and I expect I shall grow to love him through her mind.

"And that reminds me!" went on Mrs. Tree. "You must let me show you her museum." I was led to a curious, spindle-legged cabinet table under the glass of which reposed precious relics of childish joys—a quaint old painted fan, a few silver pouncet-boxes, the mummified remains of an audacious looking reptile—"Viola," explained Mrs. Tree, "has an extraordinary *penchant* for reptiles and everything that creeps."

"And your own particular treasures, Mrs. Tree?"



MRS. BEERBOHM TREE.
From a Photo. by Savory, New York.

"Here, for one, is a *châtelaine* in gold and mother of pearl, given me by dear Mrs. Stirling, after she had seen me play *Ophelia*. It was accompanied by a delightful letter telling me its history—'how it was worn on the stage by the incomparable Miss O'Neill.' I used to delight in wearing it every night in 'Hamlet,' to represent 'Remembrances of yours.' Here, again, is a ring—it is old Florentine—which Alfred Gilbert, the sculptor, gave my husband. This little red clock is mine—a gift from Sir Henry Irving—and that photograph of Burne-Jones's 'Psyche' came to me from Ellen Terry. Now look at some of my books! Lord Dufferin, you see, sent me 'Sheridan,' with his own brilliant preface, and that delightful book about his mother. And *à propos* of Lord Dufferin, I remember how he and the late Mr. Arthur Cecil Blunt met at our table one night and made friends over the fact that Arthur Cecil had been present at a performance of Lady Dufferin's play, 'The——' No! I cannot remember the name. But to return to my books. Henry James gave me his two comedies, 'Tenants'

and 'Disengaged'; Alfred Austin, his 'Love's Widowhood.' Hamilton Aïdé is represented by several novels as well as charming landscapes in water-colour. And here, you see, are the works of Matthew Arnold and Browning. I am proud to remember that I knew them both personally in their life-time. Then you see here a copy of Joseph Jefferson's 'Life and Letters.' Jefferson is a great favourite in the United States, and his name will be forever linked with the character of *Rip Van Winkle*. We made his incomparable acquaintance in Boston, and he at once added us to the crowd of those who know and

love him. Colonel John Hay gave me, too, this book of his own poems."

Once more, after a moment's respite, Mrs. Tree laughingly pointed out a fresh treasure. "Here is a curled-up ivory monkey from Mr. and Mrs. Henschel; and here a *cloisonné* enamel-box that came from Mr. Gilbert. The whole history of a dynasty is contained within its little inside! It was part of the spoil taken many years ago from a sacked place in Japan. The brooch in this case was given to me by the Queen, and that silver salver to my husband, after we had played at Balmoral."

"Did you find the Queen an appreciative audience?" I interrupted.

"Yes, indeed," was the reply.

"Critical?"

"Oh! no. Not exactly that; but very intent. The Queen has a beautiful manner," added Mrs. Tree, "and a voice of extraordinary sweetness."

Mrs. Tree's pictures are as great a delight to her as the knick-knacks which strew her tables, and she chatted in her light and charming way about them.

"Now, look at my pictures. Those of Burne-

Jones and Watts are my favourites. But those, you know—they require no word of explanation. Over here is a water-colour sketch of me by Mr. Percy Anderson as *Le Passant*. And this a beautifully done copy of Rossetti, by an amateur. And this an etching of Windsor presented by Mr. Kemble after we had played the 'Merry Wives of Windsor.' As you may see, he has written on it 'To Sweet Anne Page.' This—the last of our possessions of which I mean to talk, for, indeed, I must be boring you—is a portrait of me exhibited at the New Gallery, and painted by our friend, Mr. Phil Burne-Jones."



MRS. TREE AS KATE CLOUD IN "JOHN-A-DREAMS."
From a Photo. by Turner & Drinkwater, Hull.

"Have you always lived in Sloane Street?"

"Oh! dear, no! We have had a hundred different houses. Once we lived in Cheyne Walk, and there never was a sweeter place to see the spring from than from the windows of that house. The remembrance of the almond trees, and the river, and the green mist of the young trees in Battersea Park makes me cry regretfully, each year, 'Oh! to be in Chelsea, now that April's there!' Then once we had rather a mansion of a house in South Kensington. That had a pretty drawing-room, which I made from tulip-yellow walls and light green curtains, but on the whole the house was too Lin-crustan and anaglyptic for us. We never could enter into the spirit of its staircase. So we fled from its splendours."

"What was your next home?"

"We had a kind of rambling flat built over a place for hiring carriages. I used to call it 'The House of the Seven Stables.'"

"I thought you lived at Hampstead once?"

"Ah! yes; and I wish we were there still. We had a charming old house on the very top of Hampstead Heath, with a large garden, and a meadow, and a cow, and a lodge, and a view. One could just *not* see the Crystal Palace, but caught the actual glimmer of the Firth of Forth! Every season of the year was beautiful at Hampstead, even when 'full knee-deep lay the winter snow,' and eight horses were necessary to bring each doctor to our door when every inmate of the house was laid low with bronchitis!"

"Did you not find Hampstead rather a long way off?"

"Yes. So I hired a carriage for a little while. I called it my Victorian Era. But

as a matter of fact, hansoms were within an hour's call; and time doesn't seem to matter at Hampstead."

Mrs. Tree now sank into a chair, smiling, but evidently exhausted with the effort she had made as show-woman of her home.

"Have I not told you enough?" she asked, rather plaintively.

"Indeed, no!" I replied, hurriedly. "There are many questions which I should like to ply you with—that is, if you will allow it."

"Among other things, then," went on Mrs. Tree, "I know that before this interview is over you will at least have asked me my opinion of the New Woman."

"Well," I assented, "I should very much like to hear it."

"I have no opinion of her!" was the trenchant reply. "I look upon her as a sort of Mrs. Harris. I don't believe she even exists. She's a woman of no importance, created by novelists and dramatists, who would cut a very sad figure in real life. Anyhow, I never happen to have met one, though I'm told specimens, like rare stamps, may be found here and there."

"Did you not even meet a New Woman in the United States?" I inquired.

"No! Not even there. *Apropos* of the

United States, you know of my husband's engagement there. He has looked forward to the trip very much indeed, for we made many friends there on our first tour in 1895, and the public received us most kindly."

"I suppose you admired, with the rest, the women of New York?"

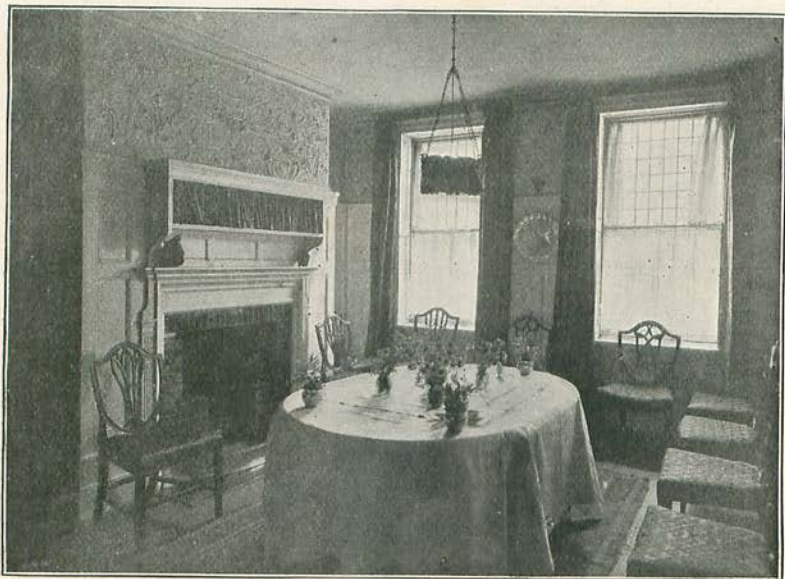
"Yes. Those we met were very interesting, pretty, and smart."

"And New York?"

"Ah! New York was my greatest surprise!



AS PRINCESS FEDORA ROMAZOFF IN "FEDORA."
From a Photo. by Turner & Drinkwater, Hull.



From a Photo. by]

THE DINING-ROOM.

[Alfred Ellis.

I never dreamed of the air of luxury and endless wealth and comfort one sees on every side. The carriages, the horses, the buildings in Fifth Avenue! But I think what struck me most was the Opera House. An enormous house, all glorious within—white, you know, quite white, no gilding. I should like our new theatre to be just like it. And then, what had a fascinating look were two little white wooden doors on each side of the stage, through one of which the artists come to bow on the fall of the curtain, retiring through the other. They used to have such doors in old English theatres, as one may see by prints of a bygone period.”

“I suppose you were worried a good deal by the interviewer out there?”

“There are interviewers here, too, sometimes,” said Mrs. Tree, with a significant smile; and then added: “No; we were not victimized very much.

I was described as ‘a dark, Hebraic-looking woman, with a slight lisp.’ Once we entertained at Chicago a very charming lady. We had no idea that she was a journalist. My young brother-in-law, Max Beerbohm, was there, too. We all talked together unconcernedly, and had great fun. The next morning everything we had said rose up again before our eyes in print at the breakfast table.”

“Max Beerbohm is your brother-in-law?”

“Yes, yes. You know—the one who



From a Photo. by]

THE STUDY.

[Alfred Ellis.

“Some of the newspaper criticisms of our acting were wonderfully clever and illuminating. Others again were, well, neither clever nor illuminating. We would laugh tremendously over the newspaper descriptions of our personalities in one or two of the smaller towns. My husband was spoken of ‘As no dramatic artist this, but a manly, honest, hard-working, unaffected fellow.’ And

does the essays and caricatures. In America he had quite a success on his own account. His writings in the Yellow Book were well known. He is an amusing boy. The other day, just when his collected 'Works' were going to be published, I asked him if he thought they would be a great success.

"Well," he said, gravely, "my only fear is that the nation will insist on burying me alive in Westminster Abbey."

"Now he is writing some fairy tales for 'The British Child.'"

"Will the British child understand them?" somebody inquired.

"Oh! I think so," he answered. "When it grows up!"

"At Boston, early one morning, an interviewer came to interview Max, but my husband, thinking he had come for him, rose in haste, and passing into the sitting-room, there saw Max ensconced in a yellow dressing-gown, answering every question. 'Go away, Herbert!' exclaimed Max. 'This is my interviewer!'

"I must tell you another *mot* of Max's! An American asked him if he could stand the artificially-heated rooms. 'Oh, yes! I don't mind them!' he replied. 'What I can't stand is that you keep your streets artificially cold!' But, here," exclaimed Mrs. Tree, "comes my husband! I hear his voice on the stairs. I shall leave him to tell you all about our new theatre."

"Stay! Mrs. Tree," I entreated—I really dreaded the departure of the genial lady—"One word, only one word, more! Are your little daughters going on the stage? If you will tell me that, I will ask nothing further."

"We never have wished our daughter to act. Cer-

tainly, never, never! Though I have often seen it said in several newspapers that she is to go on the stage, this is utterly untrue. But she takes a great interest in our plays, and criticises our performances—just a little harshly—sometimes, to our amusement. As a very little child, she was asked if she meant to be an actress when she grew up. 'Oh, no! I mean to marry!' was the answer she gave. I believe she still thinks marriage a profession. As for Felicity, she is a tiny baby: we have not considered her future yet! And now I must really say good-bye. Here is my husband, you see."

Mrs. Tree vanished, turning her head as she left the room, and though I say it, who shouldn't, her smile *was* charming. Now enter Mr. Tree, looking, I thought, the embodiment of health and strength. When he was starrng in America, the famous actor was variously described as the "beau ideal" of an English country squire, "a clergyman," "a barrister-like looking man"—never as an actor. But for my part, I think he looks what he is, a distinguished actor with brains,

a man who takes an interest in all sorts of subjects outside his own profession. A brilliant littérateur once gave a word-painting of him which I think is worth repeating here, and which has not seen the light "on this side":—

"In talking with Mr. Tree one recognises that he is a man of imagination and literary insight, with a temperament full of sympathy and humanity. He is not without the genial irony which marks the mental habit of so many artists nowadays, but against that is set a really marked simplicity, love of life, of character, and an active respect for the



MR. H. BEERBOHM TREE.

From a Photo. by the London Stereoscopic Company.



MR. TREE AS MACARI IN "CALLED BACK."
From a Photo. by the London Stereoscopic Company.

beautiful. He is a man of manners, yet his reserve is the frugality of a warm nature rather than the isolation of egotism. He is not sentimental, yet he has sentiment. Impulsive he certainly is, but yet he is also deliberate and constant in all that concerns his work. He is hard to satisfy; at rehearsals he is imperious and exacting; but he has the confidence of all who play with him, or write for him; for all know that he is a true and sympathetic craftsman, looking after the divine effect. He is a man of moods, but he would be no actor if he were not. His effects are not machine-made; they are the result of impressions of a spirit amenable to the power of the right thing, governed by the good discipline of art which says, 'This shalt thou do,' and 'This shalt thou not do.'

These lines, written, strange to say, by one who had but a slight acquaintance with the famous actor, are said to be extraordinarily to the point by those who have had a life-long intimacy with him.

Mr. Tree, when he entered the room, wore a half-absent, half-anxious air.

"Busy, terribly busy," he murmured,

as he shook hands. And, indeed, from his every pocket bulged huge packets of letters, which he would be obliged to read, mark, and answer before the day was out.

"My new theatre is taking up every moment of my time just now. You want to know all about it? Why, so you shall, as far as I am at present able to tell."

"When, then, do you expect the building to be complete?"

"Oh! I hope early in the beginning of the new year. Perhaps at the end of March; but certainly April."

"Can you tell me what the theatre is really to be like? I have heard so many contradictory reports."

"Well, if you want a few facts, here they are. The building is to occupy a length of 150ft. towards Charles Street, and will have a frontage in the Haymarket. There will be eleven exits and entrances at least. On three sides—the

Haymarket, Charles Street, and the Opera Arcade—the theatre will be practically isolated."

"Is it true that an hotel is to be built close by?"

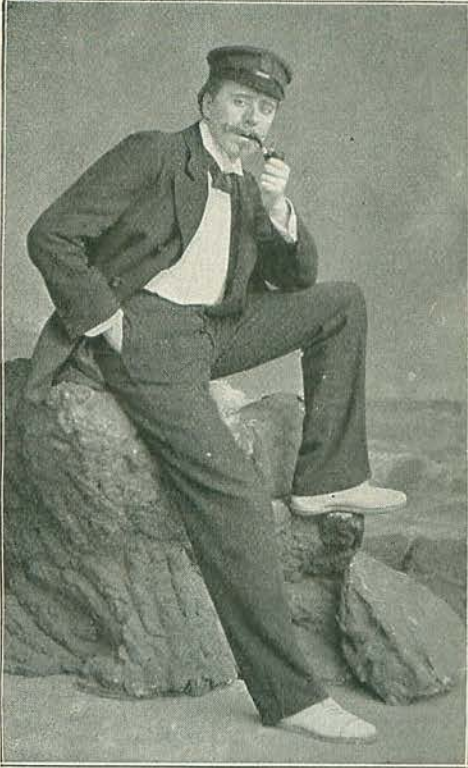
"Oh, yes. An hotel will be raised on the remaining portion of the site and be separated from the theatre by a thick wall, so that no disturbing sounds will be heard on either side. Portland stone is the material to be used for the building, and the façade, both of the hotel and theatre, will be in the French Renaissance style."

"Is it indiscreet to inquire the cost of the building?"

"Not at all. The cost will be



AS PAUL DEMETRIUS IN "THE RED LAMP."
From a Photo. by Barrauds.



AS THE DUKE OF GUISEBURY IN "THE DANCING GIRL."
From a Photo. by the London Stereoscopic Company.

something like £58,000. The architect is Mr. Phipps, and his coadjutor in the work that very accomplished gentleman, Mr. Romanes Walker."

"About the interior of the building," I began.

"Ah!" laughed Mr. Tree. "There are several new features which I will not reveal at present. But I can tell you of the change from a flat stage to an open one, and the entire separation of the stage from the auditorium. Then I think of having a number of 5s. or 6s. seats between the stalls and the pit. I believe those will be liked. I hope so. I have always wished to lower all the prices of the seats at my theatre, but I am afraid the scheme might prove impracticable."

"And the decoration of the theatre, inside and out?"

"Of the outside I have spoken—the French Renaissance, you know. At present we wish, my wife and I, to have the interior all painted white and the seats crimson, and with painted panels, after Boucher, in the style of the Louis Quatorze. We admired the whiteness and absence of gilding at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York so greatly."

"At Bayreuth I suppose you have gathered some hints?"

"Yes, oh! yes! At Bayreuth the theatre can be enlarged or made smaller at will by shifting the stage. I hope to introduce that arrangement. In America, you know, they have a capital plan of sending volumes of iced air into their theatres on hot nights. I hope we have conquered that secret too. People go to the play just for the sake of enjoying the refreshing coolness! And I have another good idea for the comfort of audiences in the summer months. Now, don't you think I have talked enough about 'Her Majesty's'?"

I made a gesture of dissent, but at that moment a maid put her head in at the door, saying that a lady was most anxious to have a few words with Mr. Tree. With a murmured excuse, the actor left me, only to reappear again very shortly with a smile upon his face.

"Would you believe it?" he exclaimed. "That is the sixth application I have had



From a Photo. by]

AS HAMLET.

[W. & D. Downey.



AS GRINGOIRE IN "THE BALLAD-MONGER."
From a Photo. by Sarony, New York.

to-day from a lady who wishes to go on the stage. The number of letters of entreaty I daily receive from histrionic aspirants would amaze you. Some of these letters are the strangest compositions possible. I have kept several of the more absurd," and Mr. Tree went to a bureau and returned with a note which he, laughing, bade me read. The letter ran as follows:—

"Venerated Sir,—I wish to go on the stage, and I would like to join your valuable theatre. I have been a bricklayer for five years, but having failed in this branch I have decided to take on acting, it being easier work. I am not young, but am six foot tall without any boots. I have studied Bell's system of elocution and am fond of late hours.—E. S."

"I have received dozens of letters quite as extraordinary as this one," declared Mr. Tree, after I had finished reading it.

"Now will you tell me," I asked, after we had discussed several indifferent subjects, "which is your favourite part?"

"Oh! I think *Gringoire* in 'The Ballad-monger' is the part I most enjoy acting. But of course there is *Hamlet* . . . ! In a different way I delight in playing a part like *Sir Woodbine Grafton* in 'Peril.'"

"Did you find the American audiences sympathetic?"

"Yes! On the whole, very sympathetic. It is remarkable how the Americans appreciate Ibsen. I shall never forget their reception of the 'Enemy of the People.' At Chicago especially, the audience positively inspired us all when we gave the play there."

"What struck you most in America?"

"The hospitality and kindness of the people. If you are an author, and invited out to dinner, you will find that the hostess and every one of the guests have taken the trouble to read all your books beforehand. Isn't that true hospitality? If you are an actor, they know everything about your career, and will discuss all the parts you



AS THE ABBÉ DUBOIS IN "A VILLAGE PRIEST."
From a Photo. by the London Stereoscopic Company.

have played. The women are usually pretty, and always charmingly dressed. But over here we hear too much about the American women, and too little about the men. We met such a

number of courteous and accomplished gentlemen, wherever we went. The culture of some of the younger men there is remarkable. They are thoroughly well versed in modern history and modern art. Where Americans seem to me especially to shine is in their after-dinner speeches. They quite surpass us in this respect, though as a general conversationalist the Englishman has the pull. General conversation, indeed, is rather rare at an American dinner-party. But almost every born American can manage to make a brilliant after-dinner speech."

"I suppose you were often asked for an 'anecdote' by your fellow-diners?"

"Oh! yes. The true American loves an anecdote. I acted *Falstaff* there, not my last *Falstaff* in 'Henry IV.,' but the older, more farcical man in the 'Merry Wives of Windsor.' Rather an absurd thing happened, *à propos*. I had planned that *Falstaff*, driven to desperation by the gibes and buffets of the elf in Windsor Forest, should make one mighty effort to climb the oak tree. The pegs that were to serve as supports for that tree—and this Tree—



AS SVENGALI IN "TRILBY."
From a Photo. by Alfred Ellis.



AS SIR JOHN FALSTAFF IN "KING HENRY IV."
From a Photo. by Alfred Ellis.

were conspicuous by their absence. On the morning before the performance, I was assured that they should be there. The morning came, but with it no pegs. With the calm of despair I asked:—

"'No Pegs?'"

"The ejaculation, spoken more in sorrow than in anger, would, I hoped, appeal to the conscience of my property-man. In the evening there was a dress rehearsal, but still no pegs could be seen. My form trembled, beneath its padding, with emotion—of not a pleasant sort—and in a voice shaken, as I thought, by righteous indignation, I asked again:—

"'Where are those pegs?'"

"'Pegs! Pegs!'" answered the property-man, with provoking amiability. 'Why! guv'nor, what were your words to me this morning? *No Pegs*. And there *ain't* none—'"

At this moment, the servant appeared again at the door. "I am afraid," began Mr. Tree, "that you must excuse me. My business manager wishes to have a word with me."

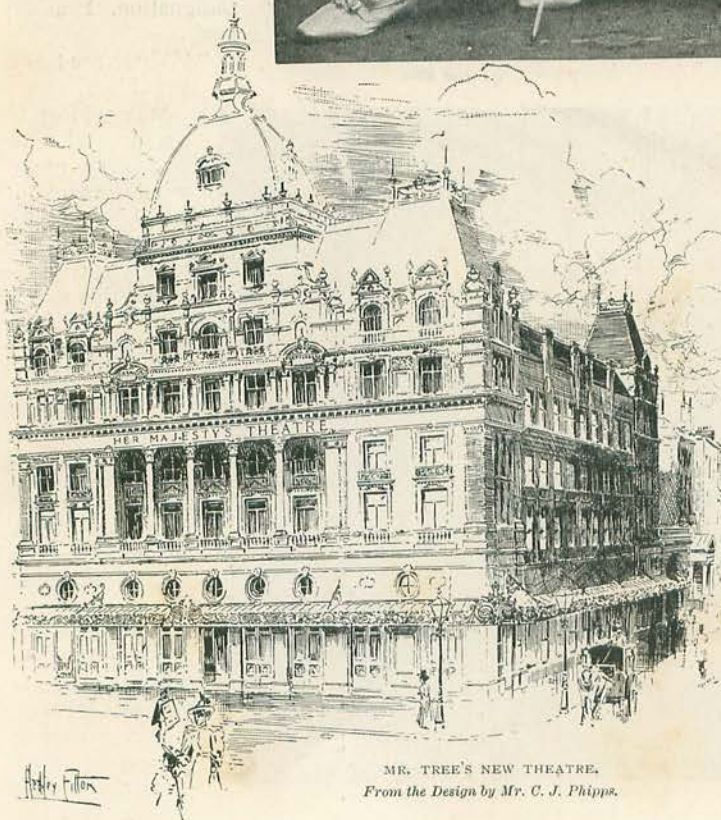
"I have already trespassed, I fear, long upon your patience. But cannot you say, before you go,

something about that much abused person, the actor-manager?"

"Well, the critics are right in abusing him in some ways, I suppose," replied Mr. Tree, rather absently. "But I think it must be admitted that the actor-manager is able to do more for the propagation of new dramatic ideas and the development of modern drama than the manager who is not an actor. They are more willing to make experiments with new plays which please their fancy. They can judge better of the probable value of cutting out these scenes or keeping in



AS DOLTAIRE IN "THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY."
From a Photo. by Aimé Dupont,
New York.



MR. TREE'S NEW THEATRE.
From the Design by Mr. C. J. Phipps.

those, for instance. Besides, I truly believe that most of the artistic results shown on the stage during our generation have been due to the actor-manager. A lay-manager, I suppose, if he loved his work and had the capacity for it, would be the ideal head of a theatre. The double burden of acting and management would not be his. But—" breaking off suddenly — "I really must ask you to excuse me. I have just remembered I have another appointment after this one with my secretary. *Au revoir!*" and Mr. Tree was already half-way down the stairs. W. D.