

OUR CAPTIOUS CRITIC.

"THE BLUE BELLS OF SCOTLAND."

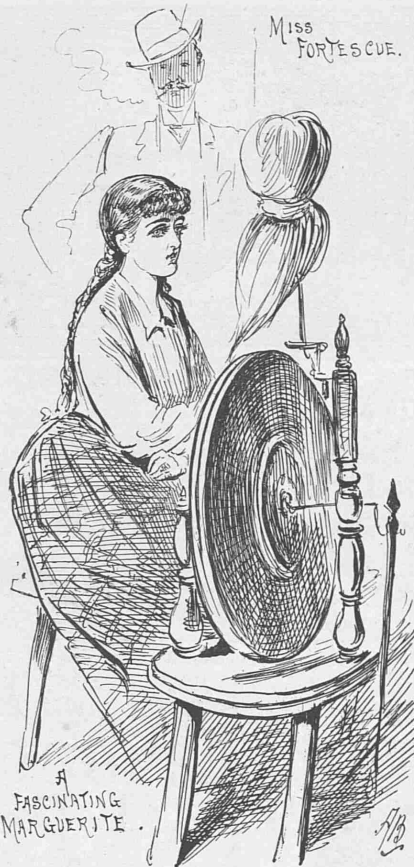
A GREAT deal has been written, and no doubt a great deal remains to be written, on the relative positions of dramatist and critic. The theory that they must be either personal friends or open enemies, and that the outcome of this is shown in print, is one which has been put forward from time to time, and which continues to hold a place among popular errors. For my own part, I can safely say that despite the tolerably lengthy period that I have been writing dramatic criticism, I only enjoy the personal acquaintance of one manager and two actors at present performing in the metropolis, and that my views concerning the whole of the

remainder of the profession are those of profound indifference. Under these circumstances I think that my work may be regarded as the outcome of unprejudiced

believe to be very good authority, that Mr. Robert Buchanan is in the habit of regarding adverse criticism as the outcome of personal spite, and that I wish once for all to put myself right on this point before dealing with the New and Original



ON GUARD.



MISS HARQUET SKY.



THE VILLAIN AN EXCELLENT PATTERER

opinion. The reason why I have here chosen to enunciate this species of declaration of independence may be inquired. It is that I am given to understand, on what I

Comedy Drama, in Five Acts, entitled *The Blue Bells of Scotland*, written by him and produced under his direction and that of Mr. Henry Neville at the Novelty Theatre.

As regards Mr. Robert Buchanan himself, all I have to say



MR. HENRY NEVILLE.



MR. CALHAEM THE BALLAD-MONGER.



THE COMIC ELEMENT.

is that I never set eyes on him in my life till I saw him bowing his thanks to the audience on the night of the production of the piece under notice. As regards the said piece, I must be a little more discursive, I may remark at the outset

that whilst *The Blue Bells of Scotland* is one of those fine, bold, full-sounding, unmeaning titles so suitable to popular drama, there is nothing at all to do with blue bells in the play. On the other hand, there is a great deal to do with Scotland, rather more so than I should say an average London audience cared for. The local colour in some of the scenes is put on, not with a brush, but with a trowel, though its effect is sadly depreciated by the very fluctuating character of the local dialect that should accompany it. Even second sight and the sword dance lose something of their realism under these conditions. As to the language, it borders very closely on the high-falutin. Mr. Buchanan claims for the educated Highlander a partiality for heroics. But there are heroics and heroics. The man who talks of taking on half-a-dozen others simultaneously, and of putting a horse at an eight foot wall, may be talking nonsense, but at any