

MISS GLADYS DORÉE.

From Photographs by Messrs. Russell and Sons, Baker Street, W.

Little Miss Gladys Dorée, now playing Hans, the lame boy, in "The Pied Piper," at the Comedy Theatre, has certainly good reason to conclude that she has been born under a lucky star. Surely never before has a child of eight years old at her first appearance on a stage had the good fortune to be called on to give utterance to the prose and poetry of a playwright and bard as celebrated as Robert Buchanan, to warble the music of a composer so tuneful as F. W. Allwood, and to claim as her first manager a gentleman so kindly disposed and highly cultivated as Mr. Comyns Carr, who, by-the-way, has shown no little acumen in selecting little Gladys Dorée to take the important part of Hans in this beautiful dramatic poem. That this mite of a child is a born actress there can be no question. No amount of training—and I am glad to hear there has been next to none—could instil the knowledge of histrionic art that Gladys Dorée exhibits in her every action. One feels prompted to speak of her as one would of an adult, so visibly influenced is she by every emotion of the part she plays. The crippled leg is a verisimilitude of physical distortion; her round eyes depict her feeling of wonderment at the appearance of the Piper to the life, and thoroughly artistic is the dreamy look in her blue eyes in their far-off gaze after the Piper has enthralled her with his mysterious powers.

Gladys really seems inspired and carried away by the emotion of the moment, while her practicality is prominent in her assiduous attention to the "business" of her part throughout, for I never once took my eyes off her while she was before the footlights. However, such talent can scarcely be spoken of as astonishing, since it has been transmitted by her father, Eric Thorne, and her mother, Miss Ada Dorée (no relation, by-the-way, of Miss Nadage Dorée), whose well-known vocal and dramatic achievements need no explanatory description. That Gladys is appropriately "dressed" is a matter of course, seeing that Mr. and Mrs. Comyns Carr are always accurate, and so her costume as Hans has been copied from the picture of the Pied Piper and the crippled boy by that fantastic artist, Pinwell.

The critic of a rare gold coin naturally turns from the obverse to the reverse, so I took advantage of an introduction to Gladys to study her off the stage in her own home circle. I forgot the brevity of her eight summers' span of life as she conversed with me like a grown-up young lady; I learnt her imitative powers in her "take-off" of Eugene Stratton and of Miss Letty Lind, whose light and fantastic steps she admirably reproduced; and I became aware that she could pipe many more songs than the three she gives in "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." No wonder it has been said that the play is chiefly written in the minor key, for the poetically pathetic tone of the piece and Gladys' infantine age doubly earn that remark.

