

## THE ACTOR'S PREDICAMENT.

A TRUE STORY.

We were talking about the old days when he was one of the Stock Company at the Alhambra, the retired actor suddenly said. I tell you what it is sir, I have had some queer experiences in my day, but none more embarrassing than the incident I will relate. We had been playing Mazeppa for some time with Miss M. as Star, George in one of the leading parts, and your humble servant, as a Polish Peasant. As a matter of fact, business was not good; the manager was not a success, and the manager's wife, although willing, even if fat and pigeon toed, to play any part from Juliet to Joan of Arc, could not keep harmony among the actors. Geo. H. was in love with Miss M., and as salaries were over-due to both of the leading artists, there was bad blood between George and the manager. Mazeppa was no longer a drawing card, and Black eyed Susan was substituted. Never shall I forget the night of the first and as it happened, the last performance. Miss M. played William and George, Susan; a reversal of parts that was thought likely to prove attractive to the general public. At one portion of the play, William, condemned to death, is expected to walk a plank to a yard arm, at the end of which a rope with noose is dangling. It is a critical moment, and just as William is supposed to be hanged, Black eyed Susan, having received a reprieve, rushes forward with a loud scream. The scream is an important cue, and in this case was to be done by one of the ballet girls, as George's voice was hardly suited to the part. Everything went on well, and apparently at the right moment, just as William (Miss

M.) was walking the plank, the scream was heard. I was standing in an imposing attitude, holding the rope to put over the victim's head. Suddenly Miss M. paused in her walk, made a wild rush past me, shoving me off the plank and running rapidly to the wings. In the excitement of the moment, the noose slipped around my neck, and I was left dangling at the end of the yard arm, and so remained for several minutes, while a riot took place in the wings. The audience thought this was the best part of the performance, and applauded roundly, but I can assure you that when I was cut down I was nearly gone, and felt as if my neck was at least a foot longer than it had been previously. The scene had been caused by a personal encounter between George and the manager, about unpaid salaries. The scream was uttered by the manager's wife, and had been taken as a cue by Miss M., who rushed to her lover's assistance, who soon perceived the state of affairs. In the melee that followed, the prompter's box was upset, and the poor old prompter badly injured; but the manager and George wore a battered and bruised appearance. I joined the stiff-necked party, and poor Miss M. fled to Paris, where she died in less than a week after the incident referred to occurred.

FIRST ROBIN.—The very first real and authentic red-breast was seen at Rockwood on the 5th March.