

## EDWARD LAURI.

A small man, looking livid after a first-night performance. He gave me half-an-hour of his time before rehearsal. His manner was very kindly; but in our interview there was nothing to suggest the merry-making comedian, who keeps the audience of the "Thirty Thieves" in a simmer of amusement. But it would be too much to expect him to be at work the whole time. It was an easy matter to interview him. He knew what was wanted, and gave me the required information in a nutshell, besides throwing in a good story of his part in helping to capture a man-eating crocodile of the Ganges.

Mr Lauri knows India well, and speaks with enthusiasm of his reception there, and with the delight of a sportsman of the big game hunts. He is a Britisher, and has been associated with the stage from his youth. His father was an actor, and his uncle (the father of George Lauri) was the greatest dancer of his day. They worked together, and young Edward, even while at school—Leeds Grammar School, by-the-way—had his share of acting. He went in for pantomime, and was hugely successful in animal impersonations. He reduced himself to eight stone odd when taking the part of Dick Whittington's Cat. "Then it seemed to me," said Mr Lauri, "that other fellows were doing so well at musical comedy that I determined to go in for it. I went, and have never regretted the step. I have had engagements at the Variety, at the Syndicate, and ever so many halls. I was at the Gaiety for three years. Then—let me see—yes; I was with Kate Santley at the Royalty, and with Brickwell at the Garrick. Then I thought that a turn in America would do me good. So I crossed the ocean, stayed three months in New York, and came back to the Palace and Alhambra Theatres. But I had a

splendid time in India. I went there with the Gaiety Company. We did the 'Runaway and Circus Girls,' 'San Toy,' 'Toreador.' I did not like leaving India. They were very good to me. Then the chance came to cross to Australia. Well, it is best to go everywhere, if one can, and I had a good offer from Mr Musgrove, which I accepted for twelve months, and—here I am. I have under consideration an offer from the Musgrove Company for five years running."

"Which do I like best? Oh, pantomime, I think. One has lots of opportunities there; comic opera next. Not so much work to be put in that as in these musical comedies. The latter are feeble as plays, and have to be made interesting."

"Yes; I am in good training. I get any amount of stage exercise, as you can guess. I'm really very fond of athletics of any kind, especially rowing and boxing."

"Gags! Yes; I suppose I do get in a good many. All kinds of things suggest them, and when one knows one has the audience they come more easily still."

"I do scribble a little—play-writing, of course. 'The Marriage,' 'The Houseboat,' and 'His Lordship's Birthday' have all been staged."

"My first success? Well, I suppose it was at the Royalty. I am said to have created the comic part in 'The Gay Parisienne.' Now again, in the 'Thirty Thieves,' the laughs have practically had to be made."

How well Mr Lauri has succeeded in making the laugh in the latter is most evident. Indeed, I hear that he often convulses the other actors on the stage by the funny, unexpected gags which he introduces. It is interesting to know that he thinks that Dan Leno is the funniest man on earth. If he is funnier on the stage than the subject of our interview, we should certainly like to see him, for Mr Lauri certainly "runs" the piece.