

GROSSI.

The Geelong newspapers speak in no uncertain voice as to the cleverness of Grossi, the "Marvel," a modern magician, who will open a season at the Athenaeum Hall on the 24th inst. According to reports, Grossi ranks among the Hertz and Dantes, and, in some respects, is superior to all the makers of illusions yet seen in Australia. Many of his tricks consist of sleight of hand and card manipulation, but he

Perth was pretty well supplied with shows when the mail left. Mr Williamson's English Comedy Company was at the Royal, Mr Watkin Mills at the Queen's Hall, and Mr Leonard Davis' Variety Company at the Palace Gardens, Cremorne.

Mr W. J. Wilson writes to the "Referee" with reference to the late Mr J. B. Steele, who died at Liverpool Asylum a few days ago:—"Mr Steele came to Australia with his wife (Adelaide Bowring, a good actress, with a most charming voice), under engagement to Mr George Coppin, during the year 1866, to support Mr G. V. Brooke on that great actor's second visit to the Antipodes. They came in a sailing ship, and knew nothing of the fate of that never-to-be-forgotten London, and those who left in her, until they reached Port Phillip. In September, 1868, they played with me at the Princess Theatre, Dunedin, when passing through that city—three nights. They had been there previously, and were great favourites. Mrs Steele went to England, where she died about four or more years ago. He went back to New Zealand, and, in partnership with J. F. Keogh and Miss Marian Willis, as leading lady, made a lot of money. He was a fine specimen of a man, magnificent figure and physique, and was called by many 'Handsome Jack.' He was a gentleman and a scholar, and was born in Dublin about the year 1834. Steele and Keogh had the Queen's Theatre in York-street, and were beginning to pull back some of the losses they had previously been suffering. Sheridan (not Johnny) was the star, playing 'King Lear,' when the authorities came down upon them, giving but a few hours' notice to close the theatre, as it had just dawned upon them the theatre was unsafe. Sheridan died shortly after at the York Hotel, King and York streets. The last appearance of Steele upon the stage that I can remember was when he played a small part to Charles Warner's Macbeth at the Theatre Royal. I saw the announcement of his death in the evening paper of Friday, but it did not mention when and where he was to be buried. I suppose he is at rest this time. I have a letter that he wrote me a few months ago commencing 'I am dead, so the papers say. This is the second time they have published my obsequies.' Perhaps that is the reason the Press has been rather diligent this time, as, anxious to know more, when looking through the paper on Saturday morning, there was no mention whatever or no allusion in any way. Let us hope that he is better off than many who are left behind to follow at God's will.

Mr R. A. Roberts produced for copyright purposes at the Empire Theatre, Edinburgh, a farce entitled "My Double," which is described as a story of quaint deception. Mr Roberts, who wrote and invented it, plays no less than nine characters. They include: William Wagstaffe, a solicitor, and his double; Judkins, his clerk; Miss Flossie Mildew, his only client; Major Wagstaffe, his father; Montague Montmorency, an actor; Pat Doolan, a carrier; Josef Valero, an Italian chef; and Mrs Cooper, a house-keeper.



GROSSI, the "Marvel," a clever prestidigitator, now appearing at Melbourne Athenaeum.

also introduces the box mystery, thought reading, and an application of the latter to material acts. This consists of people in the audience writing down, on a piece of paper, some act they desire the performer to do, and then placing the written papers in their pockets. This done, the writers accompany the professor to any part of the hall, which may have been written down with the other's request, and there the Professor goes through the whole performance as asked for on the paper, without suggestion of any kind, other than the thought reading of the writer by Grossi.—Melbourne "S. and D. News."

The Little Darts (Eddie and Decima McLean) have been booked by Mr Bain for a Tasmanian season.

"The Raven," a dramatisation of incidents in Edgar Allan Poe's life, has been produced in Pennsylvania. The play was well received. It was staged by Henrietta Crosman.

According to an exchange, the friends of Edna May, the actress, say that she is impatiently awaiting a divorce from her husband, Fred Titus, and that she intends to marry A. E. W. Mason, a British author and playwright, before the end of this year. Mason wrote "The Four Feathers" and other first-rate books.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" has just been produced at Thale, on the summit of a mountain. The theatre was surrounded on all sides by steep rocks; the seats for the audience were hewn out of the rock, and accommodated one thousand persons, while the stage, also cut out of the rock, was eighty feet long by fifty-four feet wide.

Mr Courtice Pounds, who was in the Firm's Comic Opera Company a few years ago, thinks that musical comedy is gradually dying. "It may not be in certain towns," he said to a representative of the Nottingham "Football Post," "but taking the country as a whole, it is doomed. Mr George Edwardes, I believe, started musical comedy, and for a time its novelty charmed. But you may be sure if he is making a change, and going in for a little more serious work, he has accurately diagnosed the public taste. The success of 'The Duchess of Fantsic' and 'Veronique' proves that. There you have pieces with the tales properly told and well carried out musically. Mr Edwardes said he should spend £10,000 on the production of the 'Duchess.' He spent £12,000 and came out trumps."



MR. JULIUS KNIGHT, as Napoleon, in "A Royal Divorce."

Mr Lionel Brough has just celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his debut on the stage, and is now appearing in the role of Trinculo in Beerbohm Tree's revival of "The Tempest," in London.

The opinion of the manager of professional pugilists, published by one of the New York daily papers, as to the influence exerted on the prize-fighter by the stage, is (says the "Referee") one of the most singular declarations yet made as to the sway of the theatre. In fact, it is unique. "Few persons realise," says this authority, "what a baneful influence the stage has upon the career of a fighter. The stage has been, and always will be, the undoing of boxers, champions, or otherwise." And then the oracle describes how the stage demoralises pugilists, the essence of his contention being that the fighter, permitted to pose to his heart's delight in the glare of the stage lights, and subjected to the "temptations" that beset so many other weak persons in the theatre, loses his form and vitality, and is easily thrust into the limbo of the effete thereafter if he re-enters the ring.

Speaking at a house dinner of the Playgoers' Club in London recently, Mr Israel Zangwill, the newly-elected president of the club, made some remarks on the subject of the drama. Referring to the musical play, the speaker said it reached its zenith in the admirable wit of W. S. Gilbert and the sparkling music of Arthur Sullivan. Since then we had degenerated in our theatres to a series of hotch-potch productions, which were nothing but a succession of music-hall turns. The theatre had abandoned the drama, and when the music-hall wanted to produce drama it was prosecuted by the theatre. In the music-hall there was drama with tobacco and without the censorship. In the theatre there was drama without tobacco and with the censorship. Therefore, drama must be expurgated or fumigated.

Mr Charles Frohman writes from New York to the London "Era": "I believe the movement for an International memorial to Shakespeare will meet with a hearty and ready response from the entire civilised world. The debt of gratitude owed by the cultured and educated everywhere to the great English dramatist is openly confessed. There is not only no desire to shirk it, but I am convinced that an opportunity of the sort your suggestion offers, which will permit an acknowledgment, even in the humblest degree, of the obligation due will be quickly and generously embraced, and a tribute secured that will surpass anything of like character the world has ever known. What form this tribute should finally assume—whether a statue, a magnificent tomb, or a splendid memorial edifice—can be determined by a committee representative of the different branches of recognised art. There will be no trouble about obtaining the money to make it worthy of the man and his achievements, and I have no doubt that a committee chosen as suggested would be careful to devise a monument that would be fully expressive of the breadth and depth of the multitude of subscribers' meaning. The only place for this tribute, of course, is Stratford-on-Avon, where the thrills that now come to human hearts at sight of the present personal and local reminders of the poet might be given a grander and deeper sweep by the adjacence of an imposing monument in which the reverence of all humanity would be splendidly and convincingly expressed."

For staging "The Belle of the Orient," a stage play, without a license from the Lord Chamberlain, the proprietors of the London Oxford were fined £120. Mr Kennedy said that the penalty in each case of the kind has depended on its own merits. In this instance the proceedings were against a wealthy corporation, and the fine would be fixed at £5 for each day concerned, amounting to an aggregate of £120. Notice of appeal was given.



MR. WONTNER, of the Knight-Jeffries Company.