

will now tour Queensland as far north as Charters Towers, after which there will be a return season in Victoria, and Tasmania will be visited on the way to New Zealand, en route for America.

Fitzgerald's circus is playing to capital business in Batavia at latest advices. Patrons of Fitzgerald's circus throughout Australasia will regret to hear of the death of Commodore. The pony was 27 years old, and had been connected with the circus since its inception. The brothers, in fact, considered him their Mascotte, and his death therefore comes as a heavy blow. Everywhere the pony was an immense favourite—probably there was not a more widely-known or more popular horse in the Commonwealth. The skin is being preserved, while the hoofs are being made into mementoes, which will serve as heirlooms in the families of the enterprising brothers.

"The Gondoliers" was originally produced at the London Savoy on December 7, 1889, and was destined to prove one of the most successful of the Gilbert and Sullivan series, the librettist and musician being at their best. Someone has said the opera is as "spontaneous as the light-hearted laughter of the sunny south, and as luminous as an Italian sky." Sullivan's musical wit delights, the orchestration displays rare musicianly skill, and the score teems with exuberant melody. As compared to "The Yeoman of the Guard," "The Gondoliers" is rollicking comedy as against melodrama. In regard to the personnel of the first performance, it may be noticed that the part of Casilda introduced Miss Decima Moore to the stage, she being then only 18 years of age. Mr. George Grossmith having seceded from the company. Mr. F. Wyatt, as the Duke, and Mr. W. H. Denny, as the Grand Inquisitor, were the two comedians. Mr. Wallace Brownlow was Luiz, and Messrs. Courtice Pounds and Rutland Barrington the gondoliers, with Misses Geraldine Ulmar and Jessie Bond as the young wives. Miss Rosina Brandram was the Duchess. In Australia the original production took place in 1891, and of that cast there have gone to join the great majority—Violet Varley (Tessa), Charles Ryley (Giuseppe), and William Elton (the Duke). It was on this occasion that Miss Florence Young made her debut as Casilda. Misses Elsie Cameron (the Duchess), Flora Graupner (Gianetta), Messrs. Henry Bracy (Marco), Howard Vernon (the Grand Inquisitor), and Sydney Deane (Luiz) were the other principals.

"The Little Michas," produced in May at Daly's Theatre, London, by Mr. George Edvardes, and which Mr. J. C. Williamson has promised will be staged in Australasia, either at the end of this year or the beginning of next, is spoken of by the "Era" as likely to prove, when judiciously pruned, to be "one of the most perfectly pleasant, most completely agreeable entertainments in town." The piece is a comic opera in three acts, by A. Vanloo and G. Duval, music by Andre Massager, and adapted for the English stage by Henry Hamilton. The

music is described as being of a sort which "one can always listen to with a sense of soothed satisfaction," even if there are not particular numbers which evoke enthusiastic encores, or special scenes to be for ever remembered. As to the little Michus, they are schoolgirls who were "changed at"—or soon after—their births. Monsieur and Madame Michu keep a glorified ham and beef shop in Paris. Years ago an old noble, named des Ifs, flying from the Revolutionary persecution, left in their charge a young baby girl to be brought up with the Michu's child. The husband, in giving them a bath, managed to "mix the babies up." This is where the play begins. The noble, now a Napoleonic general, returns and demands his daughter. Which of the two is his child? One the General is determined to have to marry to his aide-de-camp, Gaston Rigaud; he leaves it to the Michus to decide "Which is which." The head of Marie Blanche—who is really Mademoiselle Michu, and who loves her parents' shopman, Aristide Vert—is turned by a visit to the General's chateau, and she announces that she is the aristocrat. Gaston is enamoured of the other damsel, Blanche Marie; but he obeys orders, and prepares to marry Marie Blanche. In the last act she finds she cannot sacrifice her love to her ambition, and dresses up Blanche Marie so as to reproduce exactly the portrait of the General's late wife, the Marquise. He is convinced, and accepts Blanche Marie as his child, and the couples pair off properly.

By his composition of a waltz, the Khedive has (remarks the London "Daily Chronicle") shown that he possesses that musical ability which is prized by many Royal families in Europe. Queen Alexandra is an excellent pianist, and the King's love of music is too well known to need mention. Princess Henry of Battenburg has distinguished herself as a pianist and as a composer of songs, and her daughter, Princess Ena, inherits this talent. The late Duke of Edinburgh was a splendid violinist, and frequently played with the Royal Amateur Orchestral Society, which, by the way, was founded by him. The Crown Prince of Germany is also a violinist, and Prince Ferdinand of Bavaria played this instrument in the orchestra in a recent Wagner cycle at Munich. "M. de Hesse" is a name familiar to organists, though few are aware that it is the nom de concert of the Landgraf of Hesse. The princes of Saxony have been notable musicians for several generations, and their compositions are published by Breitkopf and Hartel. The majority of the military marches popular in Germany were composed by Frederick the Great, who also wrote three sonatas for flute and piano-forte.

In a recent number of the "Saturday Review," Mr. Bernard Shaw wrote of "Much Ado About Nothing":—"Like all Shakespeare's comedies, it contains nothing beyond the capacity of a child, except the tendencies which constitute the staple of its badinage."

You Get Nothing But
Lasting Good
From Its Use.



Wolfe's Schnapps
A Tonic as well as a Beverage.

A "football" drama is now running in New York. The hero of "Strongheart," as the play is called, is one Billy Saunders, a "large, vociferous, impulsive youth, with a picturesque vocabulary." As played by Mr. Herbert Corthell, he walks the stage in full American footballing dress.

The critic of the "Australasian" is somewhat sarcastic in his remarks on "The Fires of St. John." A most extraordinary performance in every way was that on the first night of Sndermann's "Fires of St. John," at Her Majesty's, on Saturday evening (he writes). A magnificent house greeted Miss Nance O'Neil and her company in this, the latest, contribution to true dramaturgy, in our city. Everybody was pleased at the beginning, but as the play went on, it was amusing to watch the change in expression; puzzled interest succeeded the pleasure; then the puzzled look grew deeper, and was turned to bewilderment, brightened with a few titters and sniggers, and when the curtain fell, it fell on an audience in a state of mental fog, compared to which the darkness of Egypt was the brightest electric light. The play itself was partly responsible for this but chiefly the players, for it was plain that the majority of them had not the faintest glimmer of a comprehension as to what the whole meant, and, therefore, were quite unable to lighten the darkness of the amazed audience. Everybody should see "The Fires of St. John" ere it is too late. It is a delightful experience, a remembrance that comes over one with silent laughter in a railway carriage or tram, and causes one's fellow-passengers to look askance at one as a lunatic. The work, to begin with, is the work of a symbolist; all the dialogue has a hidden and second meaning, and must not, therefore, be taken at its face value. Such apparently simple remarks as "the beer is on the ice" (a frequent observation during the play), or "how is the old cow?" have a

cryptic significance, which ought to thrill the listening ear. The conversation is all jerky, disjointed phrases, varied with gasps and gurgles, and by an occasional sermon by the pastor. Of course, there is a pastor, and a sewing machine also—they are Sudermann's trade mark. The plot—who would be bold enough to unravel it? The one thing not needful to a symbolist is—plain statement or a story. A play by a symbolist, acted by symbolists to symbolists, would be adequate, no doubt, and the airy elusiveness and suggestiveness of it all would catch the refined fancy of a specially picked house; but when a not too comprehensible symbolism is attacked by just ordinary mimes, who have not specially prepared themselves for the intellectual feat of prayer and fasting, but just stolidly go through it like big game crashing through a jungle, the effect is as one sees in the present imbroglio. The late Dan Leno in one of his most inimitably humorous sketches used to take a letter from his pocket, and proceed to read aloud to his hearers the words which his sweetheart had written him. He began, "Dear George," and then relapsed into murmurs; then began again, "Dear George," and for about five minutes he kept everybody laughing at nothing but "Dear George." That is about all the plot of "The Fires of St. John." It might be called "Dear George; or the Beer is on the Ice."

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