THE FIRST THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE

Was an event looked forward to with hopes and misgivings, and the following "bill" was a novelty in its way:

THEATRE ROYAL, MELBOURNE.

By Special Permission from the Colonial Secretary.

The Public is most respectfully informed that the Amateur Performance, in aid of the MELBOURNE HOSPITAL FUND, will take place on MONDAY EVENING, 21st FEBRUARY, 1842, At the Theatre in Bourke Street.

Previous to the commencement of the Performance, the Band will play the National Anthem of GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

To be followed by an appropriate Address, to be delivered by MR. ARDEN.

The Performance will commence with the Laughable Petite Comedy, entitled THE WIDOW'S VICTIM.

After which, A Sailor's Hornpipe (in character)—Master Conlan.
Song—Master Eyles.
Highland Fling (in character)—by a Gentleman Amateur.
"The Steam Arm"—Mr. Buckingham.

The whole will conclude with the Laughable Farce, in one Act, called THE LOTTERY TICKET; OR THE LAWYER'S CLERK.

Tickets for the Pit or Boxes, 7s. each, to be procured from either of the Stewards.
Gallery Tickets to be obtained at Holme's Stationery Warehouse, Collins Street, and at the Bar of the Albion Hotel, Bourke Street.

No money will be taken at the Doors.

Doors open at Six o'clock, and the Performance will commence at Seven o'clock precisely.

J. E. Murray, George Arden, George Cavenagh, William Kerr, J. Stewards.
H. N. Carrington, John Stephen.

The Stage Management under the Direction of MR. BUCKINGHAM.

Financial and other difficulties in a short time led to the retirement of Arden and Carrington, to be replaced by Messrs. C. H. Ebden, and B. Baxter. As events worked they were heavily mulcted by being, with Cavenagh, as the most solvent partners, obliged to contribute the major part of certain pecuniary obligations, the theatrical treasury being empty. Out of this original amateur brigade, there only survive (in 1883), Baxter, the phlebotomised steward, and Cashmore, the universal genius.

At length the all-important evening arrived, when there was a bumper house, and owing, as was thought, to Buckingham's judicious management, everything passed off well, and without even the "smallest hitch," in the newspaper phraseology of the day.

The overture to the "Bronze Horse" was executed with talent and effect; but Arden, the Editor of the Gazette, who was to have delivered the opening address, being in gaol under commitment by Judge Willis, was not a Sir Boyle Roche bird, and could not be in two places at one time; so Kerr of the Patriot officiated as his brother Editor's proxy by merely announcing the "postponement" of the recitation.

Cheers were given for the imprisoned absentee, intermingled with hisses for the Judge. The scenery painted by a Mr. Southall was described as highly creditable to that artist. In "The Widow's Victim" the lady performers were Mrs. Ains and Miss Sinclair (professionals) as Jane, and Mrs. Rattleton, Miss Taylor as Mrs. Twitters. Messrs. Davies and Boursiquot (reporters of the Patriot and Herald) took Jerry Clip, and Mr. Twitters, whilst the part of Pelham Podge fell to Buckingham. Master Conlan danced a
Sailor's Hornpipe (in character), acquitting himself so well that he was punished by an encore; whilst an amateur (Joseph Harper, a dancing-master), footed it in a Highland Fling. A Mr. Mossman next "did" the overture to Fra Diavolo in such a way as "to electrify the audience;" and a Master Eyles sang sweetly, "I've journeyed over many lands." The entertainment wound up with "The Lottery Ticket," Mr. Winter playing the Lawyer's Clerk, Mr. Miller as Captain, and Mrs. Arvin as Susan. The beginning so made was highly encouraging, the proceeds amounting to £98. Two other performances were subsequently given and paid well, the experiment resulting in a handsome contribution to the Charity interested.

An extension of the license was obtained, and the Pavilion was designated "The Theatre Royal." The performances were continued at short intervals—Buckingham remaining stage manager, and a few professionals being paid. Mr. Southall as scene painter is said to have "done wonders," and the pieces produced included "Rob Roy," "The Queen Subject," "Our Mary Ann," "The Carnival Ball," "The Two Gregories," "The Denouncer," "The Three Mrs. Weggins," "The Heist-at-Law," etc., etc. On one of the nights some of the gentlemen scamps of the period amused themselves by letting off fireworks in the house, causing much alarm and risking conflagration. Legal proceedings were threatened next day, but a compromise was effected by an ample apology and a liberal consideration, the Press magnanimously not disclosing the offending names. The place soon after was known as "The Amateur Theatre." As the novelty began to cool, the charges for admission were reduced, cash was taken at the doors, and for the exclusion of disreputable characters, ex-Constable Aggoner, who knew every man, woman and child, good, bad and indifferent in the town, did duty at the box entrance. On the 15th May, Buckingham was given a benefit as stage manager, and his cast included "The Grand Eastern Spectacle of Married and Buried;" or, the Shipwrecked Cockney. The scenery is declared to have been "beautiful," the dresses appropriate, and the stage grand; yet the badness of the times acted very prejudicially upon the attendance. Buckingham appeared as Benjamin Bowbell, Davies as Dr. Alibujau, Messrs. Smith, Wise, Arvin, Jones, and McMillan assumed various characters, whilst the lady parts were apportioned amongst Mrs. Arvin, and the Misses Southall and Sinclair. The after-piece was "Hercules; or, Tim of Clubs." One night in June "Jack" Davies, the journalistic amateur, secured a benefit in return for his past gratuitous services, when something approaching a great uproar occurred in consequence of some of the audience hissing Buckingham just as he was about to stab Therese in the "Orphan of Geneva." Buckingham turned round, and brandishing his dagger in the face of the enemy threatened to make mincemeat of any number of them. A burly loon in the front of the pit declared he would punch Buckingham's head, and the enraged actor solemnly vowed "he would leap dagger and all down the other fellow's throat."

The pit-man was seconded by a companion, who sang out—"I have heard of conjurers swallowing knives afore, but I never ha' seen a cove yet as could put another fellow outside him; it would take two to do that, my balmy bloke." After much recrimination over the footlights, order was restored, but only for a short time.

There was a very inefficient town band, which cost the theatre ten guineas per week; and when the season closed it was found that the stewards were £200 out of pocket, though it was alleged they had given £75 for charitable purposes. The deficit was supposed to have been caused by the cost of fittings up and providing a wardrobe. Under the circumstances, it would be surprising if the theatre speculation had any other result.

However, in July the license renewal for twelve months arrived from Sydney, and an effort was made to re-open the theatre upon a paying basis. Buckingham was to continue stage manager, and Mr. Richard Capper was appointed mechanist. He had recently arrived in Melbourne, and was destined to outlive his contemporaries by a Victorian stage connection, during many years. At the period of my writing this sketch (1883) Mr. Capper has retired to settle down, and enjoys a placid old age in the vicinity of Melbourne. He is a member of the Old Colonists' Society, the "Father" of the Melbourne stage, and is...
And forthwith a brisk hand-to-hand encounter commenced. The theatrical people were in full force, and there was an attempted abduction. Miss Sinclair, a lady attached to the theatre, was possessed of some personal attractions, of which a Mr. Montague Charles Greaves was terribly smitten. The fair one gave the cold shoulder to his addresses, and he determined to have her, if necessary, or perish in the attempt. Taking counsel with a Mr. William Raymond, a Justice of the Peace, they got together a small but "select party of roughs," and proceeded to besiege the theatre at a time when they were assured the lady was there. Getting round to the rear of the building they burst in a door, invaded the sanctity of the green room, and peremptorily demanded that Miss Sinclair should be surrendered to them.

Buckingham indignantly refused to be guilty of such unmanliness, and mustering his forces, called upon each other to follow him.

"To set the teeth, and stretch the nostrils wide, 
Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit 
To his full height;"

And forthwith a brisk hand-to-hand encounter commenced. The theatrical people were in full force, and fought well. Davies showing himself a prodigy of valour; and after some smart pummelling the attacking party was ejected, and the lady so far preserved. The Greavesites then retreated to the Prince Albert Hotel, close by in Swanston Street, where an extensive "lighting up" ensued, and several recruits were obtained; so the stormers, re-animated by "nobblers," and increased numbers, returned to the field of battle, re-entered, and the hammering recommenced. The garrison had also secured reinforcements, stood bravely to its guns, and bouquet in the shape of black eyes and sanguinary noses were pretty equally distributed. Again the fortune of war favoured the theatricals, and the others were again repulsed, but so roughly that Greaves and Raymond, who were the last to turn tail, had to run for it; but in their exit, both coming together upon an old trap door, the fastenings gave way, and the two heroes disappeared into an infernal region, where they were trapped like a pair of rats, when the police appeared and marched them off to the lock-up.

Next morning they were charged before the Police Court, but, through some unaccountable leniency, Raymond, the brother magistrate, got off with half-a-crown fine, and a penalty of 3s. for theGreavesites. The prisoner was so roughly that Greaves and Raymond, who were the last to turn tail, had to run for it; but in their exit, both coming together upon an old trap door, the fastenings gave way, and the two heroes disappeared into an infernal region, where they were trapped like a pair of rats, when the police appeared and marched them off to the lock-up.

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stage, and took to selling fancy snuffs and scented cigars, in a small nest of a shop in Collins Street, and it was afterwards said that she had made a conquest of a rather conceited and superficial swell, connected with one of the Melbourne newspapers.

Towards the end of the year a Miss Vincent joined the theatre company, and was advertised as a great acquisition; but the critics did not take kindly to her, and one of them (an Irishman himself) coolly recommended her not only to study, but to accomplish the impossibility of “getting rid of her brogue,” which sounded strangely to English ears.

This Miss Vincent was for some time connected with Melbourne theatricals, and, though a mediocrity, was a very passable and useful one.

“Entr’Acte” Amusements.

During almost the whole time that this wooden so-called theatre was open certain minor performances not in the bills were enacted before the curtain, which provided much more spicy entertainment than the regular programme; and the majority of the playgoers enjoyed such interludes with more relish than the legitimate pieces put upon the stage. The boxes, or, as they were occasionally designated, the “reserved seats” or “dress circle,” were placed so low and contiguous to the pit that their occupants by leaning over and depressing their hands, could “bonnet” those below them, and both male and female pittites would be “bonneted” frequently. The most consummate blackguards present were generally the three-quarter or wholly-drunken swells, who reeled in nightly from club or tavern, and so misbehaved by smoking, exploding crackers, or otherwise, that scenes of confusion ensued, often terminating in fists or the summoning of the police, and the removal of some of the offenders. Though smoking was nominally prohibited, the rule, when not connived at, was openly defied; and, after all, the old times must not be too severely censured by modern taste in this respect, for such a disgusting practice as the use of tobacco was once (presumably) so prevalent even in the British House of Commons, that a “standing order” (still unrepealed) was made not simply against smoking, but “that no member do take tobacco,” from which it may be inferred that the narcotic weed was not only smoked, but otherwise “taken” there, whatever the term may mean. In England there was a period when the pupils attending public schools were compelled to smoke as a specific against epidemics, and even at the present day the abominable habit of smoking cigars and cigarettes is getting into vogue at public dinners. However, the Pavilion would be at times turned into a smoking saloon, and even when some of the more mannerly persons in the pit would take off their hats and place them on the floor, the bell-topper, cabbage-tree, or pull-over, whichever it was, would be utilized as a spittoon for shots expectorated with sure aim from the dress circle. If any of the unhatted individuals happened to present a bald pate, the spot was regarded as a justifiable target for hitting at short range, and terrible would be the indignation with which an unoffending spectator, somewhat sparse in hair, would find himself patted on the bald crown-piece with something analogous to a molluscous substance “shelled” at him from one of the side boxes. In hot weather or cold the moist application was an unpleasant sensation, and naturally resented. The person so “potted” would pull out his handkerchief, wipe his head, jump up, and “rush the batter,” whereas he would be probably repelled with a black eye or enlarged nose. The onslaught would on occasions be successful, and backed from others from below, the fortress would be escaladed, and no quarter given or taken. Unless on particular occasions, few or no ladies would be in attendance, and seldom an evening passed without a row of some kind. The interruptions and insults to which the performing company were subjected, were saturated with unmitigated ruffianism. They would be not only hissed and howled at, but pelleted with oranges, apples, penny pieces, and even worse missiles; but with one exception, no injuries were inflicted. During the progress of a part, or the singing of a song, exclamations would break forth of a nature unfit for publication, and the undisguised indiscretion of some of the expressions employed was such as to deprive them of even the slightest pretension to be accepted as equivocal. As a rule the upper boxes and pit exhibited much more regard for the ordinary decencies of society than the “dress” tier, though the reverse might be expected. Contused faces and eclipsed optics were of weekly, if not nightly, occurrence. Still few complaints were carried to the police office, for the authorities of the house exerted all their influence to “square” the consequences of the skirmishes out of
Court, in which they were materially helped by the aggressive rowdies, who were rarely at a loss in finding bush money, or a bank-note sticking plaster, as a salve for a battered phiz or cut head.

To avoid a future digression, it may be convenient to introduce here one of the most grotesquely comical outrages imaginable, attempted on a dark night during the winter of 1843. It was nothing less than a wild Quixotic attempt to capsize the theatre.

If a band of high or low-bred larrikins at the present day not only proposed, but attempted to impede a railway train freighted with a pleasure party, it would raise a thrill of horror through the community, and no punishment would be deemed sufficiently condign for such an outrage. Yet in intent, at all events, the meditated overturning of a performing theatre is no less heinous. In the attempt now recorded the project was not only preposterous, but impossible, and the whole thing eventuated in a most hair-brained fiasco.

At the time I am writing of there was a remarkable tenement rearward of the new Australian Club House, in William Street, known as "The Crib," and hither invariably wended their way certain habitues of the Melbourne Club, when they attained to the stage of inebriety, pugnacity, or mischief-making, which unfitted them for quarters where even the line of licentiousness was never too tightly drawn. On the evening in question there was the unusual theatrical attraction of a black boy, or servant, brought from Sydney by Mr. C. H. Eden, and this darkey was at singing a nigger song, or dancing a Yankee breakdown. It was thought he would draw a full house, though he did not, in consequence of the wetness of the weather.

About 10 p.m. there sallied forth from "The Crib" some dozen young swells, in the heyday of hot blood, and skin full of more pungent spiritual influences than are to be found patronizing table-rapping seances. They were out on the "ran-tan," determined to signalize the occasion in some remarkable manner. Night-watchmen and "bobbies" they had already bobbed about to their hearts' content; door knockers had been abstracted, church bells had chimed, window shutters were removed, and such commonplace exploits found no further favour in their sight. Alexander sighed for a new world to conquer, and these night birds hiccuped out a desire for some unprecedented freak to offer, in which they might find some complete change of amusement. They held a council of war by the fence of St. James's Church Reserve, and in a flash of lucky inspiration one of them suggested that to upset the old Pavilion would be "capital fun." The proposition was received with a hilarious shout of approbation, and instantly nominating a leader they started off on their mad-cap expedition. Approaching the scene of action, they slackened pace, and at the now Beehive Corner, settled the plan of campaign. They then separated, and approached stealthily to the theatre, when they got without difficulty through the foundation piles, and were placed at their several points of duty by the leader, who was to chant the heaving signal, in the manner of sailors working aboard ship. The "generalissimo" was either a stupid strategist, or, when the wine, or something stronger was in him, the wit was out, for instead of posting his men all on one side, he distributed them promiscuously between the earth and the theatre flooring, so that when the tug of war came, it was a bootless trial of general strength, for each of the fellows practically counteracted what the others did, by virtually working on opposite sides. Of course, it was ridiculous to suppose that even were they a dozen full-haired Samsons, they could produce any effect; yet they succeeded in causing the superstructure to creak. They tugged, and shouldered, and hove away for some time, in obedience to the lead "yeo-ing" of their skipper, until some of the theatrical people, astonished by the loud intermittent uproar underneath, obtained the services of two or three constables, who secured the leader only. As he was, in appearance at all events, a gentleman, and doubtless well-known to them, he was spared the indignity of the handcuffs. At the intersection of Collins Street, then known as Cashmore's corner, there was a large pool of stagnant water, not sufficiently deep to drown a man, but quite sufficient to half do it. Just as they approached within a short distance of the water, the prisoner suddenly and firmly gripped a custodian at the back of the neck with each hand, and shot them both into it and took to his heels. Nothing further was heard of the matter, and there was no report of the affair in the Police books of the following day. Probably it was "settled out of Court" by the "squaring" process so much in fashion.
It did not even creep into any of the newspapers; and this almost incredible attempt to overthrow the first theatre in Melbourne, is now detailed to the world for the first time. I may add that my informant, no less a personage than the “Captain of the Guard” himself, is still alive and jolly, and laughs heartily when he recalls the particulars of his idiotic escapade of over forty years ago.

To resume my narrative at the point where I broke off, I would mention that the Stewards sometimes pretended to suppress smoking. Occasionally they succeeded, but often failed, and got not only roundly abused, but pummelled into the bargain. A notable instance of this kind occurred one night, when Mr. George Gordon Wyse, the second clerk at the Police Court—a self-sufficient, under sized specimen of humanity, refused point blank to conform to an anti-smoking regulation conspicuously posted up, but more honoured in the breach than the observance.

In a dress circle seat, with his short legs dangling over the heads below, and a huge cigar between his teeth, his jaws worked like a furnace. Mr. George Arden, one of the stewards, insisted he should knock off, when the little cloud-propelling Jove, replied by bunging up one of Arden’s eyes. The constables were called in and Wyse was removed, braying and kicking like a mad jackass. He was also so unwise as to be very tipsy at the time, and for his gross misconduct Major St. John (the Police Magistrate) sacked him next day. He soon afterwards turned up as a Sergeant of Mounted Police, and his change from town to country life turned him into a wiser and better man.

In November, Mrs. Arabin, a well-known colonial stager in Hobart Town and Launceston, joined the motley crew, which was also strengthened by Messrs. Boyd, Winter, and Miller as professionals.

The establishment shortly after appeared as “The Royal Victoria Theatre,” with more professionals in Messrs. Deering and Mereton, and the latter’s wife. This triplet hailed from the Launceston theatre, and there was a short run of good “houses.” Though Mereton aspirated his H’s so shockingly, the wife was gifted with a “good figure, handsome face, and fine clear voice.” To these she added considerable histrionic talent, and played well in tragedy and comedy, especially the former. Deering was a respectable performer, and though his William, in “Black Eyed Susan” did not come up to expectation, it was not quite a failure, whilst his Teddy O’Rourke was done to the life. The next supposed acquisition to the staff was a Mrs. Murray, but her performances were below the expected standard, and she disappeared in consequence of a tiff with the manager. Hodges’ reverses were pressing on him so heavily all this time that by March, 1843, he was only too glad to find refuge in the Insolvent Court, and it was alleged that there was £300 due as arrears of rent.

The performances suffered much from the conduct of the amateurs, and on St. Patrick’s Eve the company amused themselves by a free fight behind the scenes, for which some of them were bound over to keep the peace at the Police Court. Buckingham at length retired from the stage management, to make way for Mr. John Stephen and R. Winter as stage managers, a change of front which could only terminate in disaster. Winter was about a week in office when he vacated, to be succeeded by Capper. Before the end of March the Amateur Dramatic Association collapsed, and an Amateur Club was organized with the once well-known Isaac Hind as Secretary, marvellous results being anticipated from the sweep of the new broom.

Mr. Nesbitt, a tragedian of some repute, arrived from Sydney, in April, and negotiations were attempted with him, but as his tariff was £20 per night, the management could not afford to have anything to do with so dear an article, and he went over to Launceston.

Before the month ended, Buckingham, as “Richard is himself again,” had resumed the stage management, and the Amateur Club was reported as being in great form. The 12th April was to witness wonderful things. The house had undergone such internal improvement. Every seat and box from the pit to the slips had been washed and brushed. The orchestra board was covered with drapery, and the stage overlaid with a green carpet. A grand new chandelier was swung from the centre of the roof and more brackets for lights nailed on to the side boardings.

The first piece was “The Rich Man of Frankfurt,” and the novices so acquitted themselves as to astonish a crowded audience. There were some awkward hitches though, but the after-piece, “Why Don’t She Marry,” made up for any shortcomings. The Mayor, Alderman, and Councillors were there in official rig-out, and there was the largest attendance yet at any theatre in the colony. The Amateur Club continued
to give occasional theatrical representations with varying success, and under circumstances which must have rendered their amateuring the reverse of comfortable.

Knowles et Uxor.

In August, Mr. and Mrs. Knowles made a flying visit from Sydney, and an application to the Police Magistrate to give one night's performance was acceded to. Hereupon the few professionals at the Pavilion got jealous, and wrote to the Bench threatening a prosecution on the score of illegality. The favour thus accorded to Knowles was not only illegal but unjust; yet, as Major St. John was not the man easily to undo anything done by himself, be it right or wrong, the special performance took place on the evening of the 24th, and as this was the first occasion of the issue of a professional play-bill in the colony, a copy of it is appended:

ROYAL VICTORIA THEATRE, MELBOURNE.

MR. AND MRS. KNOWLES

Be most respectfully to inform the inhabitants of Melbourne and its vicinity, that they will have the honour to appear before them, for the first time, on

THURSDAY EVENING, 24TH AUGUST, 1843,

Being by special permission of

MAJOR ST. JOHN, and the Worshipful the Bench of Magistrates, sanctioned by

HIS HONOR THE SUPERINTENDENT.

The performance will commence with a drama of great interest, never before acted here, called

MONSIEUR JACQUES; OR, FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

Monsieur Jacques - - MR. KNOWLES.

Nina - - - MRS. KNOWLES.

With the popular song

"OFT IN THE STILLY NIGHT."

And a song incidental to the piece, "A NOBLE'S DAUGHTER LOVED TO MADNESS," accompanied on the Pianoforte by MR. KNOWLES.

In the course of the evening, the popular song, "Tell Me my Heart," by

MRS. KNOWLES.

To conclude with a comedy in two acts, entitled

NAVAL ENGAGEMENTS.

Admiral Kingston - - - MR. KNOWLES.

Miss Mortimer ... - - - MRS. KNOWLES.

With the song of

"The Banks of the Blue Moselle."

Doors open at Seven o'clock, and the curtain will rise at Half-past Seven precisely.

Mr. Knowles has made every arrangement for the preservation of order, and the stage management will be under his direction.

Families are respectfully informed that the performances will be over at Eleven o'clock, and to secure places early application and attendance will be necessary.

Boxes, 5s.; Upper Boxes, 3s.; Pit, 2s.

There was a thronged gathering, and the performance was much superior to anything previously attempted. Mr. and Mrs. Knowles appeared to much advantage and with much effect, whilst the songs were very efficiently rendered, Knowles himself playing the piano accompaniment.

Their second appearance was in "Othello," on the 4th September, supported by Capper, Winter, Boyd and Mrs. Arabin. Knowles performed the part of the Moor, and Desdemona found a suitable representative in Mrs. Knowles; with Boyd as Iago and Mrs. Arabin Emilia. Knowles' impersonation was a masterly one; but Desdemona did not seem a part in which it was Mrs. Knowles' specialty to excel, as her
forte appeared to be in lighter and more lively character. Boyd is said to have "looked" but did not "play" the villain well. Capper and Perrin as Brabantio and Gratiano were "below mediocrity," and it is printed of Hoyvard as Roderigo that "as usual he made an ass of himself, and ought to be smothered if he ever attempted to appear on the stage again." At the conclusion of the tragedy, Mr. Phil Burgin, a Collins Street confectioner, gave a comic song; and in the after-piece of "Why Don't she Marry," Mrs. Knowles, as Lizette, "enchanted the audience," and Winter by his abundant drollery as Natz Teils, astonished the Melbournians. Skylock and a few other favourites were presented at brief intervals, and the Knowles' regime held out hopes of a better time to come.

Meanwhile Buckingham, disgusted with the turn of the theatrical wheel, started on a playing venture to Geelong, where, by the aid of a Miss Horton, he had arranged for a grand commencement. But on the evening of the entertainment, when everybody else was in readiness, there was no Miss Horton. It was decided to go on without her, and in the middle of one of the scenes there was a general smash amongst the audience, by the giving way of the seats of the building or barn. Such was the confusion ensuing, that the performance could not be resumed, and Buckingham cut away at "cock-crow" next morning.

Several new arrivals were reported from Sydney, but their terms were too high to admit of Knowles securing their services. One of them was a Mr. Lee, with a wonderful self-educated animal, known as "the dog of Montargis," and, though he was offered £10 for himself and his dog for one night, he refused to work under £20. Then there was a Mr. with a Mrs. O'Flaherty, the lady being the acquisition; but her hire was either £10 for one or £20 for three nights; and, as Knowles could not afford such a figure, the O'Flahertys took to abusing him in the newspapers, and then took themselves away.

Now began a short and sharp struggle between Knowles and Buckingham for the mastery of the Pavilion. Public opinion inclined towards Knowles, in consequence of the improvements he had introduced, and on Buckingham applying to the Police Court to recommend the issue of a license to him, he was refused. Knowles had better fortune, for he obtained a two months' license in his own name, and the wooden shed was now "The Victoria Theatre." It was opened on the 18th December with a loud trumpeting, and the sensational piece, entitled "The Bandit Host, or The Lone Hut of the Swamp," followed by two farces, viz., "The Rival Pages" and "The Happy Man." The re-commencement was but tolerably successful. The performances were now given three nights in the week, and by all accounts Knowles must have dropped upon anything but "Merrie Christmas" times of it.

On the last Tuesday in December there was an excellent attendance, and the piece on was the petite comedy of "The Two Queens, or Policy and Stratagem." It was founded on an incident of Danish History, and had not much to commend it; yet even this little was damned by the inefficiency of the performers, owing probably to the residuum of the Christmas festivities being acted upon by the hot weather. One fellow made at his neighbour, and, butting him like a ram in the "bread-basket," sent him spinning backwards amongst the musicians; and, to add to the confusion, the prompter had either lost his head or taken something that was not good for him, for he joined in the mélange. A musical mélange followed, which in some degree restored good humour. Mr. Knowles sang the "Death of Nelson," and Mrs. Murray followed with "Oh! What a Joyous Day."

**Batters, the Tinker.**

On the evening of the 25th May, a tragedy in real life was very near being enacted on the stage. The piece was "Guilderoy," and a huge turbulent tinker, named Batters, who kept a small tin shop in Collins Street, was cast for the character of Hardheart, the gaoler, Boyd playing Guilderoy. When the gaoler detects Guilderoy rescuing Logan, the prisoner, Guilderoy is supposed to discharge a pistol at him, and this he did; but there was a miss-fire. Irritated by the baulk, Boyd drew his dagger and stabbed Batters in the right breast, when the gaoler advanced staggering a few steps as if in his rôle, and then dropped wailing in his blood upon the stage; thus acting not only to the life, but almost to the death. The utmost excitement ensued, the curtain was hastily let down and the orchestra struck up quite a lively tune. Dr. Cussen was quickly in attendance, and an examination of the wounded man found that the weapon had penetrated about three inches. He was removed to his home in great agony, and his part
THE CHRONICLES OF EARLY MELBOURNE.

Capper's First Benefit.

Capper, about the most useful and indefatigable actor on the early Melbourne boards, having given his services gratuitously for three months, was thought to be entitled to a benefit, which was fixed for the 16th June, and Capper resolved to make as big a thing as he could out of such small room. A real tragedy was to be for the first time attempted in the again dubbed "Theatre Royal," and the occasion was to be under the extensive patronage of "the District electors and the citizens of Melbourne." The piece selected was "The Revenge," in five acts, to be followed by the celebrated song and chorus from the drama of "Jack Sheppard," "Nix my Dolly Pals Fake Away," and "Buy a Broom" (in character), by Mrs. Arabin and Mr. Winter. The whole to conclude with "the well known and truly laughable farce, "The Mayor of Garrat." The public endorsed the compliment by a crowded attendance, and, pecuniarily, Capper had no reason to complain. The orchestra boasted "a full and complete band of musicians," and one of the allurements was the first appearance of Mr. Beverly Suttor, "the Australian poet, from the Theatre Royal, Parramatta." The tragedy proceeded in a barely passable manner, but on its conclusion, the police rushed in, ordered the people to turn out, and the house to be shut up, a mandate which had to be obeyed, as that was the day of the first Legislative Election for Melbourne, and there was rioting in several quarters of the town in consequence of the defeat of the popular candidate.

Storming the Dress Circle.

On the 29th January, 1844, there was a heap of mishaps, which must have tried the Knowles' temperament over much. Firstly, Batters, the bellowing tinker, was cast for an important part in the opening piece, but was not up to time, so they had to get on without him. Next, there were several visitors in the boxes whose desire for fun became so uncontrollable that they indulged it by "bonneting" those below them in the pit. This bye-play was suddenly interrupted by the sharp-ringing twang of a Caledonian voice giving a comment upon the performance. The offending tongue belonged to Mr. Peter Young, a stalwart Scotch publican from the country, who had been holiday-making in town. He and Mr. William Kerr were together in one of the boxes, and adjourned for refreshment. Young returned without his companion, and from glorious soon became uproarious. Mr. Knowles stepped forward and remonstrated with the noisy commentator, but to no effect, when Mrs. Knowles gave him a talking to; but he only laughed and jeered at such a curtain lecture. The police were sent for, and it was resolved to rush the dress circle—a "forlorn hope," in which Mrs. Knowles gallantly volunteered to serve. The assault was accordingly made, but the rampart was so manfully defended, that it was found impossible to eject the disturbers, and a treaty of peace was ratified, the only condition being that Young and his youngsters should behave themselves. This stipulation was faithfully observed; but the evening's harmony was not of long continuance for soon after an amateur and a professional disgusted the company with two songs, "replete with indelicate allusions of the most broad description." This contretemps led to another storm of uproar, and, taken as a whole, the occasion is described as "a series of the most unedifying scenes."

Knowles still held on—no sooner out of one difficulty than into another—keeping together a very nondescript company until April, when there was a general strike through non-payment of salaries—for, in theatrical parlance, "The Ghost did not walk," occasionally on the Melbourne boards, then, as well as since. Bills were posted through the town denouncing the manager, and the company furthermore presented a memorial to the Police Court praying that Knowles might be compelled to allow benefits all round as a mode of mutual recoupment. Mr. Williams Hull, J.P., declined to interfere in what appeared to him purely a question of private dispute, declaring there was no precedent for magisterial interposition in the manner asked for. Such a thing, he said, was unknown at Home as a Macready or a Kemble, in the event of a

was read during the remainder of the performance. The life was tough in Batters, who soon recovered, and was able to follow his joint avocation of tin battering and stage ranting, until shoved aside by his betters.
difference with a theatrical manager, flying to Bow Street for redress. The strikers averred that they would never strike under until they heard the footsteps of the "Ghost," and threatened to start semi-weekly theatricals in the long room of the Adelphi Hotel in Little Flinders Street. With reference to the dual ability of the pair of Knowleses, one of the newspapers expressed the opinion "that the Knowleses could go on quite as well without the other performers as they did with them."

**Death of Knowles.**

The worry and trouble, financial and otherwise, proved too much for the unfortunate Knowles, who was stricken down by a sickness from which he did not recover, and his death on the 19th June, 1844, was signified in the following obituary notice in the public journals:—"Died on Sunday evening last, after a short but severe illness, Conrad Knowles, Esq., son of the Rev. John Knowles, Wesleyan Minister." As the deceased was the first actor of established reputation who cast in his lot with the fortunes of the first theatre opened in Melbourne, and may be said to have sacrificed himself for the Pavilion, a few particulars about him will not, it is hoped, be deemed uninteresting:—In 1831 Knowles arrived as one of the first batch of immigrants at Swan River, where he endeavoured to find some literary employment, but failed. Unfriended, and with a very light purse, he made his way to Van Diemen's Land, and, as he was almost reduced to his last penny, he obtained the appointment of assistant teacher in one of the leading schools of the island. For this he was eminently qualified, as he was competent to give lessons in Greek, Latin, French, and Drawing. Some young lady pupils attended one of the scholastic establishments, and a somewhat romantic attachment sprang up between one of them and the young usher, intelligence of which soon reaching the ears of the girl's parents, they withdrew their daughter, and her lover was sent about his business. Proceeding to Sydney, he arrived there just as a Mr. Barnett Levy, a theatrical entrepreneur, was beating up recruits, and Knowles having procured an introduction to him, his engagement followed. Having some Wesleyan connexions in New South Wales, Knowles' intended adoption of the stage as a profession was heard by them with much repugnance, and it was likely he would forfeit their friendship in consequence. For some time he was in a state of indecision, attending rehearsals by day, and joining prayer meetings in the evening. But at length the spirit moved him to cut the Methodistical painter, and he "crossed the Rubicon" by a first appearance. To the stage he thenceforward devoted himself, and contributed much in advancing the interests of his new calling in Sydney. He became a favourite with the play-going public, was an actor of considerable merit, and had a deal of the gentleman in him. Universal sympathy was felt for his widow in her desolate bereavement, and she received the solatium of a bumper benefit. Knowles was hardly cold in his grave when his death was the signal-note for an influx of play people from Launceston, and amongst them were Mrs. and Mrs. Cameron, Mrs. Grove, with Messrs. Searle and Watson. Mrs. Cameron had been for years in "leading business" on the Sydney stage, and Mrs. Grove and Mrs. Cameron were possessed of a moderate share of ability. Rival applications for a half-year's license were made by Cameron and Mrs. Knowles, and by a private arrangement the privilege was granted to Cameron. The new management gave its first performance on 9th July, with "The Stranger." Mrs. Cameron's Mrs. Haller was a creditable rendering of the character; but Searle was said to have made Peter too much of a buffoon. Mrs. Grove's Charlotte lacked animation, and Mrs. Murray's Countess was not what it should have been. Cameron's Stranger was at times strangely at fault. During the last act some of the spectators began to hiss and call for Mrs. Knowles. The disorder continuing, Cameron vehemently protested against such unseemly interruptions, and the drunken rowdies were finally compelled to succumb. The second performance was "Jane Shore," when the Camerons did not do so well as on the preceding occasion, but the lady was suffering from a severe cold. The farce was "The Valet de Sham," and though the condition of the streets made a visit to the theatre a comfortless and perilous excursion, there were a good many persons present. Cameron next issued a notice announcing the temporary closing of the Theatre Royal for repair, and large promises were made for the future. Rules were to be adopted for the maintenance of peace, order, and regularity. Smoking, hitherto an abomination, was to be boldly grappled with and killed. "It
was not to be tolerated for an instant, on any account, in any part of the house." The new season commenced on 1st August, with tri-weekly performances, and there were perceptible evidences of improvements. For a month matters went smoothly and payingly, until the evening of the 2nd September, when there was a "burst up," compared with which anything that had previously happened was a mere bagatelle.

**Breaking up a Performance.**

For a week beforehand every dead fence and hoarding in town was plastered with large typically-displayed placards announcing as in preparation "The Grand Dramatic Drama, 'The Jevvess, or The Council of Constance;" and the synopsis indicated as one of the stage incidents "A splendid procession of the Cardinals to celebrate High Mass." This gave much offence to a number of Roman Catholics, who looked upon it as a caricature of one of the most imposingly solemn ceremonies of their religious faith, and it was surmised that the manager had got it up to pander to the malignant fanaticism of an Orange Lodge then in full blast. It was therefore determined to attend the theatre and suppress the performance. The Irish brigade made due preparations for the occasion. Shillelaghs were eschewed as unfit for fighting against actors on the stage; but a "firing party" was told off, and supplied with a very original sort of ammunition, which had accumulated in the tills of some of the Irish publicans. This was a heavy old-fashioned penny-piece of the reign of one of the Georges—a coin then in currency, but now obsolete—a nasty projectile when well thrown; and such was the powder and ball relied upon to punish what was regarded as little less than a "Cameronian sacrilege." Sharpshooters, with pockets filled with the coppers, mingled with the main body, and proceeded to the theatre, which, by the bye, was crammed. The first act passed without interruption; but when, in the second, the curtain was drawn up and revealed the stage decorated and lighted for the celebration of the Jewish Passover, a burst of disapprobation broke forth, and threatening demonstrations were made. The whole place was a chaos of shouting, yelling, and execrating, in the midst of which Cameron appeared, and with much difficulty obtained a hearing. He declared "that, having had warning of what was to happen, he had taken the precaution of procuring from the Mayor the protection of some Police Constables, who were in attendance, and ready to apprehend any disturbers. As for the piece, it should and would go on." Such defiance only added fuel to the fire. A large proportion of the spectators laboured under intense excitement, and were in a state of extreme tumult. The new game of "pitch-and-toss" commenced from the gallery, and the performers were almost dumbfounded by the metallic fusillade poured in upon them. The penny-pieces were hurled from all points, and one fellow had the top of his nose battered. Others forgot their role, to duck and dodge the flying mintage; whilst a couple of supers, more cool and cunning than their fellows—revering the proverb—made hay in the reverse of sunshine by picking up and pocketing the spent pennies. One of the flat bullets hit Cameron on the cheek, leaving a crescent imprint. All this time the performance was going on, but it was only a pantomime of a very incomplete kind, for not a syllable could be heard. Cameron a second time managed to get a hearing, and in a stentorian voice inquired "what was wanted," when thundering yells howled forth, "Change the piece." Cameron replied "that it was now impossible for him to do so, and that he had not the remotest notion of insulting any religious denomination." He declared that the piece had been performed without the least objection or obstruction in England, Ireland, Scotland, and in the colonial theatres. The performance was then resumed, and so was the roaring and groaning accompaniment, diversified at intervals with penny episodes. In the banquet scene occurred the most discreetable "scene" of a most discreetable evening. Mrs. Knowles came forward to sing, when some scoundrel flung a blackfellow's waddy at her, striking her (lightly) on the leg, and she was so terrified that she had to retire. Cameron was by this time infuriated. He rushed out and yellingly offered £5 reward to any person who could point out the waddy slinger, but was responded to by peals of derisive laughter. The Mayor (Condell), who was sitting in one of the boxes, was called upon by Cameron several times to read the Riot Act, but he as often declined to do so. As for the handful of constables in the house, they were utterly powerless. The performance was at length brought to a premature close, and, though the assemblage dispersed without any outside breach of the peace, much ill-feeling was generated by an event which...
Cameron should not have initiated, nor the audience resented in the manner described. A further mistake was made by Cameron next day, who, instead of allowing the angry passions of the preceding night to be cooled by time, rekindled them by taking out summonses against some of the ringleaders, identifiable by the police, and the next performance came off in the Police Court on the 5th, where Michael McNamara, Michael M'Colla, Michael Brown, Timothy Lane, David Barry, John Hackett, John and Thomas Connelly appeared to answer a charge of riotously and tumultuously creating a disturbance in the theatre, and damaging the fittings thereof. Mr. Sidney Stephen, a barrister, conducted the defence. There was much discrepancy of evidence as to whether there was an altar, a crucifix, or a chalice on the stage. The waddy thrown at Mrs. Knowles could not be identified. After a lengthy investigation the Bench were of opinion that the disturbance had been caused by the production of an objectionable piece in reference to a particular faith, and dismissed the case, advising Cameron at the same time to change it. Cameron disclaimed any intention to give offence, and assured the Magistrates that the piece had been licensed by the Lord Chamberlain. It was stated in Court that when it was brought out in Dublin a riot took place, the Lord Lieutenant's carriage was nearly destroyed, and an attempt was made to burn the theatre.

Cameron made a great mistake in rendering himself unpopular with an influential section of the community. The theatre was continued, but prosperity did not shine upon it. Cameron seemed to have lost heart, and the concern drifted into mis-management. Some of the performers appeared in a state of intoxication, and one evening the entertainment could not go on because the leader of the band refused to enter the orchestra as he had not been paid his salary. Soon after, on the occasion of a benefit to Mrs. Cameron, an actress is declared to have been "so confoundedly drunk as to tumble head over heels from the stage into the double bass in the orchestra." Extraordinary acrobatic feats have often been described, but it is questionable if any such improbability as the peculiar somersault indicated was ever executed by lady or gentleman, drunk or sober.

Towards the close of the year 1844 the Pavilion found itself in Chancery. Hodges had previously come to grief through pecuniary difficulties. He had sequestrated his estate, such as it was, for the benefit of his creditors, and his trustees filed a bill against Jamieson, asking for accounts for some £1500. An injunction was also applied for to restrain Jamieson or his servants from receiving rents or profits, or continuing in possession of the premises. The cause was duly heard in the Supreme Court, and Mr. Robert W. Shadforth (Judge's Associate) was appointed Receiver. On demanding possession, this officer was treated so unceremoniously by Jamieson, that the Judge had some notion of issuing an attachment, but Jamieson very discreetly "threw up the sponge."

How much Cameron paid or the other received, whether nothing, little or much, is one of the lost secrets of local history never likely to be found.

Cameron still kept on in a precarious state of professional existence until the commencement of 1845, when he applied for a renewal of the license. Winter made a similar application, but the Police Court decided in favour of Cameron, though it was publicly stated that his management had been characterized by the grossest irregularities, misconduct and intoxication behind the scenes. After being shut up for some time the place was re-opened, and Nesbitt arriving from Sydney, made his appearance on the 24th February.

Others besides the Camerons, Hodges, and Jamiesons had reason to regret their connection with the ill-fated speculation, and amongst them was an unfortunate stage manager named Charles Lee. The worries of the establishment upon this poor sinner knocked him up; his wife was completely driven out of her senses, and died a lunatic in the gaol. Still the Pavilion struggled on for existence, a miserable, discreditable hang-dog life, and Cameron played away in a reckless desultory manner, the performances becoming so low as to be beneath criticism. Nesbitt, however, got up a flicker now and then, when his appearance in "Othello," "Richard III," and "Sir Edward Mortimer," gave some enjoyment to the play-goers, but the end was not far off. On St. Patrick's night, 1845, there were tolerable representations of the "Mountaineers," and "The Unfinished Gentleman," when the clever amateur Davies made a great hit as "Tom Miller."

One evening shortly after there was great fun, and something near a murder amongst the "gods" in the gallery. A Mr. Charles Henry Seymour Wentworth, a broken-down swell, known about town as "The Doctor," treated a woman, said to be his wife, to an outing, and he took her up to "Olympus." Both were in a very forward state of beer, and in the midst of the play a commingled shouting and
THE CHRONICLES OF EARLY MELBOURNE.

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screaming completely drowned the mimicry on the stage. “The Doctor” and his lady got up a very pretty quarrel on their own account, and the surrounding “gods” took good care not to over-exert themselves as peacemakers. Wentworth set to thrashing the fair one, and she nailed him, like a wild cat, about the throat. He was half choked, and to ward off death by asphyxia had her up on the parapet in the act of pitching her over into the pit, when he was pounced upon by Chief Constable Sugden, and the pair were cooled by a night’s sojourn in the watch-house. They were charged with vagrancy before the Court next morning, when Wentworth by his eloquence convinced the Magistrates that he was possessed of “lawful and visible means of support as a commission agent,” and the prisoners were discharged with a caution.

The 24th of April, 1845, beheld the last of the Pavilion as a theatre, and “the Ghost” walked there never more. Several subsequent attempts were made to obtain a license, but to no purpose. The name undergone a further change, for the place was styled the “Canterbury Hall,” where low class concerts, and an occasional pulpit meeting were held; but its doom was sealed, and in a short time it was pulled down, and Bourke Street knew it not again.

THE QUEEN STREET THEATRE.

But though, to all intents and purposes, the existence of “The Pavilion” was an unmitigated evil, it established a belief that a theatre conducted with some claim to respectability, and sustained by even moderate ability, would obtain a remunerating ratio of encouragement. Indeed as early as the 11th May, 1843, I find Mr. John Thomas Smith, then the landlord of the Adelphi Hotel, in Little Flinders Street, turning his attention to theatrical speculations. On the 20th May he made formal application to the Melbourne Court of Petty Sessions for a certificate recommending the issue of a theatrical license to him, guaranteeing to have a building erected within four months, the materials to be of stone and brick, 40 feet by 75 feet, and capable of holding 800 persons. The application was granted; but the question was hung up for some time, and it was not until the autumn of 1844 that Mr. Smith really set to work. The site selected for the edifice was a block of land at the south-west corner of Queen and Little Bourke streets.

Plans and specifications were prepared, and as the projector was in no want of cash, he decided upon annexing an hotel to the playhouse, a double speculation which he counted upon reimbursing him amply for what was then a considerable outlay. On the corner house being completed, it was called the St. John’s Tavern—an intended compliment to Freemasonry—was licensed and opened without delay. In the beginning of 1845 the new theatre was drawing to a finish, and would be ready to open on the coming 25th March, the first day of the races. Smith (having experienced no difficulty in procuring a renewal of the necessary authorization) had already opened negotiations with Mrs. Griffiths, an actress of some character in Sydney, and with the Coppins (Mr. and Mrs.) then said to be “starring” at Launceston. The theatre was a plain, substantial, brick, shingle-roofed building, with no attempt at exterior architectural ornamentation, and would hold about twelve hundred persons.

The Race Day, however, came and the races were run, yet the theatre did not unlock its doors to the public until the evening of the 21st April; and then by way of a “benefit” to Mr. John Davies, the hybrid newspaper writer and amateur actor, who had a ready wit and sharp hand for any chance in the money-making line. This individual prevailed on Smith to allow him the use of the theatre on this very special occasion, and as Davies was what might be truthfully termed a champion “blower,” the coming demonstration was heralded with the loudest typographical flourishes, from the glaring poster in the streets to the prodigiously-displayed advertisement, and the most inflated puffing in the Melbourne journals. As this was the first regular theatre in the town, and as by its subsequent management, travelling over a series of years, it succeeded, to a certain extent, in dramatically educating the public, the republication at this distance of time of its first play-bill may not be devoid of historical interest. Here then is the highly flavoured pronunciamento issued by Davies, which shows how well and gushingly he knew how to angle for public favour:—
THE CHRONICLES OF EARLY MELBOURNE.

QUEEN'S THEATRE ROYAL.

The Gentry of Melbourne, its vicinity, and the Public generally, are respectfully informed, that

THE OPENING NIGHT of this SPLENDID EDIFICE,

THE QUEEN'S THEATRE ROYAL,

Is Fixed for

MONDAY NEXT, APRIL 21, 1845,

(As performed by him at the Theatre Royal, Liverpool, and Glasgow and Sydney Theatres)

By Desire,

And Under the Patronage of His Worship the Mayor, the Aldermen, and Town Councillors of Melbourne,

MR. DAVIES

Has the honour to announce that, through the liberality of Mr. Councillor Smith, who has generously granted him the use of

His Magnificent Theatre

TO TAKE A BENEFIT,

Arrangements have been made to Open the Theatre on a Scale of Splendour not to be Surpassed in the Colonies.

In soliciting the patronage of the gentry and public of Melbourne, Mr. Davies begs to assure them that the entertainments

selected are of so chaste and moral a nature, that he is led to believe

THE BOXES

On this occasion will be graced by the presence of all the ladies of Melbourne, and in order to ensure the evening's performance

going off with eclat, he has assured the services of the following efficient corps dramatique —

Mrs. Knowles, Mrs. Groves, Mrs. Boyd, Mrs. Avins, and Miss Vincent; Mr. Nesbitt, Mr. Davies, Mr. Rutters, Mr. Lee,

Mr. Boyd, Mr. Miller, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Jacobs, Mr. Seale, Mr. Capper, Mr. C. Boyd, Mr. Cochman, etc., etc., etc.

The whole under the direction of Mr. Nesbitt.

Several regulations for the good management of the theatre have been established, and six special constables will be in

attendance to enforce the same, the particulars of which will appear in the bills of the day.

Previous to the commencement of the drama will be sung the National Anthem of

"GOD SAVE THE QUEEN."

ON MONDAY EVENING, 21st APRIL,

Will be presented, with new music, scenery, dresses and decorations, a Drama of intense interest, entitled the

BEAR HUNTERS, OR THE FATAL KAVINE.

(As performed by him at the Theatre Royal, Liverpool, and Glasgow and Sydney Theatres)

Billy Birlow ... Mr. Lee

Song — "Tell me, my Heart" ... Mrs. Knowles

Irish Comic Song ... Mr. Boyd

Dance — "I and my Double" ... Mr. Jacobs

The evening's performance will conclude with the admired Nautical Drama called

"BLACK-EYED SUSAN."

William ... Mr. Nesbitt

(As performed by him at the Theatre Royal, Liverpool).

ACT II — Song — "Black-eyed Susan," by Mrs Knowles.

Doors open at half-past six, and the performance will commence at seven o'clock precisely.

Dress Circle, 5s.; half-price, 3s. Upper Boxes, 4s.; half-price, 2s. Pit, 3s.; half-price, 1s. 6d.

Half-price at Nine o'clock.

Boxes may be secured, and tickets obtained at the theatre, from ten to four daily.

Tickets to be had at the following places — Pullar's Stationary Warehouse, Collins Street; The Royal Hotel; The Commercial Inn; Yarra Steam Packet Hotel; Mr. M'Namara, Queen Street; and from Mr. Davies.

MR. NESBITT, Manager.

VIVAT REGINA.

No preparations were spared to produce a "stunning" effect at this débüt of the so-much-talked-of new theatre. The interior arrangements were of the rough-and-ready style, but not uncomfortable. The decorating was altogether overdone, and all sense of anything approaching to correct taste was marred by a profusion of loud, vulgar finery, entre in design and crude in execution. The proscenium was an elliptical arch, supported on pilasters, and surmounted by the Royal Arms, whilst there was a grotesque attempt at
construct niches, out of which leered figures said to represent Aeschylus, Euripides, and a couple of unrecognizable magnates of reputed mythological antecedents.

"Jack Davies," though never popular, was a bustling, pushing individual, and when embarked in any worldly undertaking where ability failed, indomitable "cheek" struck in and pushed him through. In "running" a benefit for himself, it would not be easy to find his equal. Very little could be said in praise of the performance, but the patronizing public were, or affected to be, well pleased with what they got for their money, and as the *kind Patron* was sure to pocket the lion's share of it, there could be little doubt of his being pleased too.

The first performance under the direct auspices of the proprietor was on the 1st May, 1845, and Smith in the advertisement notifies "that, having completed arrangements for the opening of

**The New Theatre Royal,**

He has the honour of announcing to the patrons of the drama, the public generally of Melbourne and vicinity, that he has secured all the available talent in the Province, and is in communication with the neighbouring colonies for the purpose of adding to the strength of his company." The prices were—Dress circle, 5s., half-price, 2s.; upper circle, 4s., half-price, 2s.; pit, 2s. 6d., half-price, 1s. 6d.; and gallery, 1s. 6d., with no half-price. The bills were subscribed "Mr. Smith, proprietor; Mr. Nesbitt, stage manager; Mr. Capper, mechanist." There was a capital attendance on the opening evening, and Nesbitt delivered an introductory address befitting the momentous occasion. He was well received, and this "preliminary canter" of his elocutionary powers brought down the house. The principal joint in the bill of fare was the "Honeymoon," Nesbitt playing the *Duke of Arrewa.* The interlude consisted of two songs, viz., "An Admired One," by Mrs. Knowles, and a comic song by Mr. Miller, with, as an afterpiece, the laughable farce of "The Unfinished Gentleman." I have not been able to meet with any critique upon those early performances, but as the people who attended were the reverse of exacting, the novelty of the thing itself went a great way towards satisfying them, so that a limited quantum of ability, served up with some degree of propriety, did the rest. Smith's first regular company consisted of Mesdames Knowles, Cameron, Boyd, and Adams, with Messrs. Nesbitt, Capper, Boyd, Cameron, Lee, Cochrane, Miller, Jacobs, C. Boyd, Jones, and Smith. Mr. John Thomas Smith had now his new venture floated, but "fair winds and blowing fresh" Apollo did not send. On the contrary, some of the *Old Major* seemed adverse. As with other and greater men, the elements were unpropitious, and "Jupiter Pluvius" turned on one of his mains, so as to deter only the most ardent playgoers from an after-dark visit to Queen Street, in those times not the most inviting of promenades, sloppy and unlighted, except by a here-and-there grogery lamp, little better than a guttering dip, showing a blear-eyed speck of what could hardly, by the extremest stretch of politeness, be termed a light. The theatre was opened, but poorly attended, two nights in the week (Mondays and Thursdays), with "Richard III.," "The Honeymoon," and "Catching a Tartar," and all the attractive accessories possible, whilst Nesbitt, an actor of sterling merit, made almost superhuman efforts against formidable obstacles—very inefficient professional support not amongst the least. When matters are at the worst they generally mend, and so it was with the new theatre. The rainy season for the time passed by, fine weather supervised, the house began to fill, the performances to improve, and a general brightening up followed.
CHAPTER XXXV.

THEATRICAL AND KINDRED ENTERTAINMENTS (CONTINUED).

SYNOPSIS:—George Coppin.—His Arrival in Melbourne.—His Early Career.—Fortunes and Misfortunes.—Mr. and Mrs. Coppin’s Debut.—The Melbourne Company.—The Launceston Company.—Coppin as Ship Owner.—Coppin “Cock of the Walk.”—Queen’s Theatre Royal.—Coppin as Ship Owner.—Coppin’s “Last Appearance on any Stage.”—White Swans and Gold Fish.—White Swans and Gold Fish.—Wizards and Bell Ringers.—Coppin and King as Members of Parliament.—Coppin and King as Members of Parliament.—Concluding Panegyric.

GEORGE COPPIN.

In June, 1845, an event occurred which was destined to exercise a powerful influence on the future of the Victorian stage, for it was no less than the arrival of “The Coppins,” with a select corps of dramatic players. They sailed in the “Swan” schooner, from Launceston, and landed in Melbourne on the 14th June—a day which should be red-lettered in the Dramatic Memorabilia of the colony. And as I have now made the acquaintance of Mr. George Coppin, a few lines of digression, devoted to a brief résumé of the earlier portion of his remarkable career will not be considered out of place, especially as he is still (1888) amongst us, at anchorage probably for the rest of his days, essentially an old colonist, who has served his adopted country in various capacities, and has ever proved himself a good man, and a loyal citizen.

The son of a father educated for the medical profession, which he abandoned for the stage, young Coppin was born in Sussex (1819), became a violinist at an early age, and as such appeared at intervals with his father’s company. On taking an avowed final stage farewell of the citizens of Melbourne at the Theatre Royal on the 9th December, 1881, Mr. Coppin thus sketched an amusing outline of his appearance as a “twinkle, twinkle, little star” of the dramatic firmament, and his gradual progress in the profession:—“The first printed record I have of my first appearance in public, is the bill of a concert given at Peterborough under the patronage of Viscount Milton, on the 14th of November, 1826, in which I am announced amongst the violin players. I was then seven years old, and used to be placed upon a table to play the ‘Cuckoo Solo’ between the pieces. I remember having coppers and small pieces of silver thrown upon the stage to me, little thinking that I should live to see nuggets of gold wrapped in bank notes thrown upon the stage, as I have done at the old Queen’s Theatre in this colony, to the Chambers family. I wonder how I should look now in petticoats upon a table playing the ‘Cuckoo Solo.’ My next bill is for the benefit of Mrs., Miss, and Master Coppin. I was the Master at the Theatre Royal, Scarborough, on the 9th of October, 1826, under the patronage of Lord and Lady Pollington, in which the comic duet of ‘When a Little Farm We Keep,’ is announced amongst the violin players. I was then seven years old, and used to be placed upon a table to play the ‘Cuckoo Solo’ between the pieces. I remember having coppers and small pieces of silver thrown upon the stage to me, little thinking that I should live to see nuggets of gold wrapped in bank notes thrown upon the stage, as I have done at the old Queen’s Theatre in this colony, to the Chambers family. I wonder how I should look now in petticoats upon a table playing the ‘Cuckoo Solo.’ My next bill is for the benefit of Mrs., Miss, and Master Coppin. I was the Master at the Theatre Royal, Scarborough, on the 9th of October, 1826, under the patronage of Lord and Lady Pollington, in which the comic duet of ‘When a Little Farm We Keep,’ is announced by Master and Miss Coppin. At that time I had a regular engagement as ‘second fiddle’ in the orchestra, and child actor in the theatre. The first part I can remember playing was a boy in ‘The Hunter of the Alps,’ when Mr. Charles Kean came down as a star. I had to strut up to him and say, ‘Don’t be afraid, sir; I won’t hurt you.’ He patted me upon the head, gave me half-a-crown, and said that I should be a great comedian. In my father’s company I used to sweep out the theatre, trim lamps, deliver bills, lead the orchestra, and play small parts, until he gave up management. I then commenced the world upon my own account, at the age of seventeen, with my fiddle.
George Coppin
under my arm, and went through strange vicissitudes that would be considered quite sensational in
description. At nineteen I was engaged as 'second fiddle' in the orchestra, and second low comedian
at the Woolwich Theatre by Mr. Faucett, and before the season terminated I became his stage
manager, and first low comedian at a salary of 21s. per week. My next engagement was
with Mr. Davenport (the model of Charles Dickens's Vincent Crummies), at Richmond; salary,
25s. a week, upon condition that in addition to my playing in the orchestra, second low
comedy upon the stage, dancing and singing between the pieces—I should also teach the
infant phenomenon to sing and dance, which I did. I was then engaged for London. Subsequently
took Mr. Compton's situation in the York Circuit, at a salary, of 25s. a week, when that celebrated comedian
went to London. Afterwards visited Belfast, Glasgow, and Dublin. Starred it through Ireland and a
portion of England, sailed from Liverpool in the 'Templar' on the 17th November, 1842, and arrived
in Sydney on the 10th March, 1843, only 113 days on the voyage, which was considered not so bad at that
time. My first sensation in Melbourne was my arrival with a complete company and band, without having made
any arrangement for their appearance at the only theatre. I had to rent the large hall at the
Royal Hotel, and threaten a strong opposition to force the manager of the Queen's Theatre into terms. My next
sensation was covering the stage with a piece of drugget for the production of 'The School for Scandal.'
It was considered a lavish expenditure, although it did not cost as many shillings as I have since paid
pounds for the Theatre Royal carpet. Since that time my motto has been 'Progress.' Having read in
some print that Coppin had sung one song 250 times in succession, I wrote to him for its name,
and was courteously favoured with this reply:—"You sung 'Billy Barlow' 250 times at the Abbey Street
Theatre, Dublin, in 1842, local verses, three and four times a night." Poor Lyster was very fond of relating
a singular circumstance. He was a middy on board a sailing ship. The night before leaving Dublin he
visited the Abbey Street Theatre, and heard me sing 'Billy Barlow.' The ship put into two or three ports
on her way to Sydney. The day after arrival, young Lyster went to the Victoria Theatre, and to his great
astonishment heard me singing 'Billy Barlow'—the same dress, &c. He described the feeling as most
bewildering, and the impression made on him was so strong that he remembered the local verses, and
frequently used to sing them, to the great delight of friends who were favoured with his interesting
anecdote.

The "poor Lyster" referred to here is the "Mr. W. S." of that ilk, so well known in connection
with the operatic history of Victoria, and whose death in 1881 was universally regretted.

Mr. Coppin shortly after his arrival in Sydney arranged to appear at the Victoria Theatre there upon
a share of the profits, and frequently received upwards of £10 a night as his proportion of the takings. He
made a little fortune by acting—lost it in publichouse business through inexperience, left Sydney in debt,

Mr. Coppin remained in Melbourne until August, 1846, when his next move was to South Australia,
where he built a theatre in five weeks, and commenced management in Adelaide on the 2nd of November.
He also built a theatre at Port Adelaide; made a large fortune—lost it in copper mining by the discovery
of gold in Victoria; went through the Insolvent Court; returned to Melbourne; walked to the diggings
without sixpence in his pocket; walked back again within a fortnight with blistered hands, a backache, and
no gold; played a short "star" engagement, and commenced management in Geelong in 1852, and made
another fortune. Monday night's receipts frequently paying the weekly expenses. Retiring from the
management, he revisited his old friends, the Adelaide creditors, who, believing in the man, had, in
the midst of his embarrassments, given him free leave and license to leave their colony. He invited them
to dinner, and by way of dessert handed to each a cheque for 20s. in the £, a condiment not often found
amongst debtors. Returning to Melbourne he was able in January, 1854, to withdraw from business
with a handsome competence, and he proceeded to England, after which he returned to Victoria, and
carved out for himself a future prolific of many and important results, to some of which special reference
will be made before this chapter closes.
THE CHRONICLES OF EARLY MELBOURNE.

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THE LAUNCESTON COMPANY,

As it was styled, was the first complete corps of the kind in the colony, and as a curious theatrical relic, I subjoin a document in reference to it, as supplied to me by Mr. Coppin:

"Copy of Agreement, Theatre, Launceston, V.D.L. March 30th, 1845.

"We, the undersigned, hereby agree to proceed to Melbourne per ship 'Swan' under the management of Mr. Coppin, to perform at the theatre for a season, and to return to Launceston if required, and bind ourselves under a penalty of £25 to be paid to the said George Coppin, that we will not perform at the theatre or any other place of amusement, unless it is under the management of Mr. Coppin, by his free will and consent. (Signed) M. H. ROGERS and wife, CHARLES YOUNG and wife, MRS. THOMPSON, J. E. MEGSON, P. A. OPIE, J. HAMBLETON and wife, F. B. WATSON, WILLIAM HOWSON, ALFRED HOWSON, JOHN WILKES, J. B. KAE. Witness: WILLIAM BELL, Captain of 'Swan.'"

Including Mr. and Mrs. Coppin, this little band of dramatists numbered amongst its members some who in after years took a high position in the profession. As for Mr. Coppin himself, it is needless to write anything about him in Melbourne, where he has shone so long and so brilliantly as a fixed "star," and I will only add that he is the last of the old school of actors left in the colonies. His style is Listonian, and when he appeared at the Haymarket Theatre, in London, he was compared to Munden. Mrs. Coppin was the best leading actress, either in tragedy or comedy, that ever visited the Australian colonies. As Mrs. Watkins Burroughs she held a very high position as a "star" actress in London, Dublin, Cork, and Belfast where her first husband was manager for many years.

In reference to some of the others, Mr. Coppin has favoured me with the following interesting memo:

"Mr. Rogers arrived in Van Diemen's Land as a common soldier. At garrison entertainments he displayed so much dramatic talent that a subscription was made to purchase his discharge. He then engaged with Mrs. Clark, manageress of the Hobart Town Theatre, with whom he remained until I made up my company for Launceston. After my season there, I brought him over to Melbourne. His parents were so strictly religious that he was never inside a theatre until he arrived in the colonies, and therefore had not the advantages of Mr. Lambert, who studied his profession in the very best English school of acting. He was an undoubted genius. His line of business was old men. Mr. Charles Young was a very versatile actor, and in his early days was equally good in tragedy, comedy, burlesque, and could sing and dance well. He opened with me in Melbourne as Claude Melnotte in the "Lady of Lyons." His line of business after leaving the colonies was low comedy and burlesque, etc.—a great favourite in London. Mrs. Charles Young, married in my company, was a Miss Jones, and used to play small parts and dance between the pieces. By study she became a leading actress. Upon one of my visits to England I was present at her first appearance in London at Sadler's Wells Theatre with Mrs. Phelps in the character of Julia in the "Hunchback." She was a success, and afterwards became a very great favourite. She obtained a divorce from Mr. Young, and married Mr. Herman Vezin. She is still playing in London—so is her husband—as one of the very few leading tragedians of the present day. Strange to say, they never play together at the same theatre. Charles Young ended his days some years ago in the Sydney Lunatic Asylum, Mr. and Mrs. Rogers died in Melbourne, and Mrs. Watson, Mrs. Hambleton, and Mrs. Thompson have also passed away."

There were now two dramatic corps in Melbourne—viz., the local and the Launceston, and it was soon publicly intimated that arrangements had been made for the Launceston or Coppin Company to perform on two nights a week for a month; the other to play on alternate evenings, so that an agreeable variety was offered by what might be almost termed the rival companies. As far as the teachings of theatres go, these two companies undoubtedly rendered good service (though possibly less to their constituents than to themselves), until the changed and improved condition of Melbourne society created a further demand, and consequently increased competition.

* The names asterisked constituted the orchestra.
THE CHRONICLES OF EARLY MELBOURNE.

MR. AND MRS. COPPIN’S DEBUT

Was indicated to the Melbournians by the following announcement:

QUEEN’S THEATRE ROYAL, QUEEN STREET, MELBOURNE.

The Proprietor is happy to announce to his friends and the public generally, that he has entered into an arrangement with Mr. Coppin and the entire of his Corps Dramatique to Perform alternate nights with the present Company, for one month only, trusting the greatest combination of talent ever witnessed in any of the colonies will receive the patronage and support it will ever be his study to deserve.

ON SATURDAY EVENING, 21ST JUNE, 1845.

The Entertainments will commence with Sir E. Lytton Bulwer’s celebrated play in five acts, entitled the LADY OF LYONS!

Claude Melnotte - Mr. Charles Young. Colonel Dumas - Mr. Rogers. Beauseant - Mr. Thompson.

Previous to the Play and during the evening, the Band will play—
Overture—“Italian in Algero”—Rossini.—Overture—“Fra Diavolo”—Auber.—Quadrille—“Royal Irish”—Julien.

Wreath Dance, by Mrs. Young.—Song—“Should He Upbraid”—Mrs. Rogers.—Comic Song by Mr. Hambleton.
Mr. and Mrs. C. Young will then dance the “Tarantella” in the costume of the country.

To be followed by an entirely new interlude, never acted here, called THE FOUR SISTERS.

An entirely new Comic Double Irish Jig, by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Young.

The whole to conclude with the very laughable Farce of the TURNPIKE GATE.

Crack, the Cobbler - - Mr. Coppin. Joe Standfast - - Mr. Rogers.

Nights of performance during the present month:—Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

Prices for the season as follow:—The Dress Circle, 5s.; half-price, 2s. 6d. Upper Circle 3s.; half-price, 1s. 6d. Pit, 2s.; half-price, 1s. Gallery, 1s.; no half-price.

Doors to open at half-past Six. Performance to commence at Seven o’clock precisely.

Proprietor, Mr. Smith; Stage Manager, Mr. Nesbitt; Mechanist, Mr. Capper.

The acting of the Coppins, the Youngs, and Rogers, was quite a treat to the community, where hitherto anything approaching dramatic efficiency was the exception, whilst Coppin in his Crack impersonation made a hit such as was never before known in the Province.

The newspapers of the period were neither profuse nor particular in their critical notices, and I find in one of them this business-like semi-apologetic paragraph referring to the event:—“We intended to-day writing a full critique upon the performances by Mr. Coppin’s company on Saturday evening: but the important wool sales and other more “staple” articles compel us to be very brief in our remarks. We have only room to say that Mrs. Coppin is decidedly the best actress by many degrees that ever trod the Australian stage; that her husband in low comedy—his forte, was irresistible, and that his company altogether is very respectable, and worthy of the patronage which, we feel assured, the Melbourne public are ready to award to dramatic merit.”

Coppin’s first appearance obtained the substantial compliment of a bumper attendance and the reception accorded the newcomers was all that could be desired. Their second appearance was on the 24th, in the comedy of “The Soldier’s Daughter”; but Coppin, according to the scribes, “did not show at his best,” while Mrs. Coppin was a “tremendous success” as the Widow Harris, and Mr. Young’s “acting was far from being as good as his dancing.” As for Megson, he had “become musically acquainted with the people, and his violin solo was much admired.”
The Melbourne Company

Was now strengthened by a new acquisition, thus flattering written of:—"Mr. Falchon, the well-established favourite of both the Sydney and Van Diemen's Land theatres, and whose representations of Irish characters are (take our word for it) rich in the extreme, has arrived from Launceston and been added to the Melbourne Company. There is one song in particular, which we have heard him sing at least fifty times, with bursting sides; we mean, 'Paddy's Wedding;' this song has hitherto been awfully butchered by Burgin. Let those who delight in a genuine Irish song, sung in true character, look out for this treat."

The "butcher" Burgin was first a confectioner, and next a billiard player, who occasionally eked out a few shillings a week at the Pavilion.

On the 26th June the Melbourne Company played to a paying house. This was the first appearance of Falchon, from the Theatre Royal, Sydney, and Hobart Town, the bill opening with "The Mutiny at the Nore." Falchon, as Jack Adams, was great; but Nesbitt as Richard Parker, was greater; and Falchon's "Paddy's Wedding" was unsurpassable. Then followed "The Secret," and "The Happy Man," wherein Falchon's "Paddy Murphy" sent the audience away in the best possible good humour.

The Launceston Company.

Competition is the life of trade, and such was quickly exemplified so far as related to theatrical wares. The Coppin steam was now in full puff, and the following attractive bill (for the first time in Port Phillip) was put forth for the 3rd July:—

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

Charles Surface - Mr. Young. Joseph Surface - Mr. Thompson. Sir Oliver Surface - Mr. Rogers.

Moses - Mr. Opie. Crabtree - Mr. Hamilton. Sir Benjamin Backbite - Mr. Ray.

Sir Peter Tattle - Mr. Coppin. Tip - Mr. Wilks. Rowley - Mr. Watson.


Maria - Mrs. Young. Lady Textle - Mrs. Coppin.


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Maria - Mrs. Young. Lady Textle - Mrs. Coppin.


Then followed "The Secret," and "The Happy Man," wherein Falchon's "Paddy Murphy" sent the audience away in the best possible good humour.
The theatre was crowded and money refused at the doors. Mrs. Coppin, Rogers, and Coppin, unmistakably foreshadowed the reputation they would win, and the many laurels they would gather in after years on the Melbourne stage in connection with the same comedy. The performance was thus noticed in a newspaper of the time:

"On Thursday evening Mr. Coppin's corps dramatic performance to a crowded and highly respectable house; the piece selected for the occasion being Sheridan's comedy, the 'School for Scandal.' The principal characters in this were Sir Peter and Lady Teazle by Mr. and Mrs. Coppin, both of which were well sustained; indeed, Coppin's personation of a fidgety, doating old husband, and Mrs. Coppin's coquettish levity, kept the house in an uninterrupted fit of merriment. The characters of the brothers Charles and Joseph Surface, by Messrs. Young and Thompson, were creditably supported; but there is one defect in the Launceston Company, namely, that, with the exception of Mesdames Coppin and Rogers, it is rather inefficient in actresses. In the laughable little piece of 'Why Don't She Marry?' Coppin's mimic powers were agreeably brought into play, and the song, 'My Beautiful Rhine' was sung with great éclat by Mrs. Rogers as Lisette; but it would appear that all the mirthful faculties of the audience were to be reserved for the concluding farce of 'Winning a Husband,' in which Mrs. Coppin's dramatic talent eminently told that it possessed no little powers of versatility—as she sustained eight different characters to admiration, metamorphosing herself from a pork butcher's widow to a 'Highland lassie,' and as quickly taking herself from the Land of Cakes to the Kilkenny Flamers; and then from a boy of Kilkenny, a dark roving blade, to the impersonation of a Parisian paramour. All these characters she did in a very superior style, and received the enthusiastic greeting of the assemblage. Mr. Rogers as Sir Robert Strange was very good, as also Coppin himself as the man Davy. It gave us pleasure to see that upon this occasion the dress circle plainly showed that a taste for theatricals was not on the decline. In fact it was one of the best attended houses we have yet seen, and the most general satisfaction was rendered."

The Melbourne Company now mustered sufficient courage to procure a Shakespearean tragedy on the 10th July, and as this was the first representation of the piece on Melbourne boards, the cast will be conned over with a curious interest by the theatrical devotees of to-day.

**MACBETH.**


The attendance was large, and the work was on the whole moderately well got through, Nesbitt and Falchon being exceptionally good.

On the 26th July Capper took a benefit, at which the Launceston Company appeared. It commenced with the comedy of "The Youthful Queen," with Mrs. Coppin as Christine, and was succeeded by a variety of overtures and entertainments, concluding with "The Spectre of the Nile," Coppin representing Pagnay, and his wife Orynte. The last scene—the Earthquake, and Grand Fall of the Great Aqueduct at Memphis—was something out of the common. Mr. Richard Capper, though What is technically known in theatrical "biz" as a mechanist, was a reliable ally in small parts; and having shared in the fallen fortunes of the Pavilion was looked upon as a sort of veteran, so the people came to like him, and his "benefit" was a reality.

Davies, an "artful dodger" in working out benefits for himself a couple of weeks after induced Smith to let him have another turn, when, with his usual luck, he secured a capital house, chiefly through the instrumentality of the St. Patrick's Society, whose patronage he obtained. The members marched in procession to the theatre with insignia, band and banners, and the Irish music, and the unfurled Irish green drew along with them a crowd which contributed materially to render the occasion a pecuniary success.

Coppin by this time had "taken the measure" of the Melbourne community, and entered into an arrangement with Smith, thus adding to his own the cream of the Melbourne Company, viz.—Nesbitt, and...
Mr. and Mrs. Cameron. Falchon and he, it was said, could not come to terms. Davies did not at all relish this "turn of the tide," fancying, probably, that Coppin would prove a tougher customer than Smith in the "benefit" game, so he immediately not only threatened to start an opposition shop, but actually meditated the revival of the Pavilion. He made a special application for a license to the Magistrates, undertaking to put the old shed into a thorough state of repair, and to conduct it creditably. The application was opposed by Smith, who declared he had expended £5000 on the Queen Street premises (theatre and hotel) in the belief that if he established a respectable theatre he should be protected from competition, at least until he could be reimbursed some of the outlay; it was also contended that one theatre was enough for Melbourne, and if a second was then allowed, the inevitable result would be the ruin of both. The Magistrates unhesitatingly refused the application.

THE COPPIN MANAGEMENT.

And now Coppin was "Cock of the Walk"—the lessee of the new theatre, with the reins solely in his hands. It was no sinecure he had assumed, and he tackled to his work with skill and energy. He endeavoured to place entertainments before the public suited to its taste, and one of his first novelties was Mr. Howison, "a newly-arrived performer on the violincello," and member of a musical family which came over with Coppin in the "Swan" from Launceston, and some of them (ladies) in subsequent years attained a European celebrity.

But it was not always smooth water or favouring gales for the Queen's Theatre. The attendances were variable; sometimes an overflowing house, and the next night down nearly to low water mark. On the 1st September, though the "Rent Day" was very well performed, there was only one solitary paying individual in the boxes.

Towards the middle of the same month Melbourne was astounded one morning by the terrible intelligence that the "Cataraqui" emigrant ship, from Liverpool to Port Phillip, was totally wrecked on a reef at King's Island, when there was a frightful destruction of human life, the only survivors being the chief mate, one immigrant, and seven seamen. These arrived by a schooner in the Bay, and their heartrending narrative produced the most intense consternation. Immediate steps were taken to raise funds for their assistance, as well as to reward a sealing party stationed at the time on the island, by which the unfortunates were saved from death by starvation. Coppin, though in a certain sense commencing the world, unsolicited offered a theatrical performance in aid of the Relief Fund. This was the first occasion of the proprietor or lessee of a theatre giving a benefit for a charitable purpose in the colony, and it will be interesting after such a lapse of time to read the manifesto by which Mr. Coppin made the announcement:

QUEEN'S THEATRE ROYAL, QUEEN STREET,
Under the immediate Patronage of His Honor the Resident Judge and His Worship the Mayor.
Upon which occasion the proceeds of the evening's entertainment will be given in aid of the survivors from the late melancholy SHIPWRECK of the EMIGRANT SHIP "CATARAQUI."
And to reward Mr. Howie's party for their meritorious assistance.
N.B.—The manager does not think it necessary to solicit the support of the public for this evening, feeling assured (from the well-known liberality of the Melbourne inhabitants) the above announcement will in itself—without taking into consideration the attractive entertainment—fill the theatre for the relief of the unfortunate.

On THURSDAY EVENING, 18TH SEP'T., 1845,
The entertainment will commence with Sheridan Knowles' celebrated play, entitled,
THE HUNCHBACK; OR, NO MAN'S LOVE.
To conclude with the Nautical Drama of
THE SEA; OR, THE OCEAN CHILD.

The public cheerfully responded to the call, and the house (of course much more restricted in dimensions than our present places of entertainment) was crammed. There were 177 persons in the boxes, 453 in the pit, and 313 in the gallery. The gross proceeds amounted to £91 11s., which (less £25 11s. expenses) brought £66 to the charity—a considerable help as things went then. This timely act of
benevolence was much appreciated, and at a subsequent meeting of the general subscribers to the Shipwreck Fund it was decided that a special letter of thanks should be transmitted to Mr. Coppin.

The theatre now began to fix itself in public estimation, and though Coppin’s patience was severely taxed at times, much care and cleverness were bestowed upon the performances, and a reasonably uniform degree of success followed. On the 2nd October, that awkward encumbrance (a mother-in-law) caused the secession of the Youngs from the company, because Mr. Coppin would not pay Mrs. Thompson (Mrs. Young’s mother) as highly as her abilities were assessed by her relatives.

From a newspaper of the 18th October I take this notice of the theatrical doings of the period:

QUEEN’S THEATRE.

“This emporium of public amusement opened on Saturday evening with the drama of ‘Robert Macaire; or The Two Murderers of France,’ in which Coppin as ‘Jacques Strop’ afforded considerable merriment. Thompson, as ‘Macaire,’ acquitted himself with great credit. Mesdames Coppin and Mereton were not in the back ground, and the latter, in disclaiming the foul imputation of a murderer, and watching the departing spirit of her homicidal husband, was very touching. Black Harry’s hornpipe was well received, but the interlude ‘The Review,’ was the attraction of the night. This was Nesbitt’s first appearance in Irish comedy, and he ‘came out’ in a very creditable way. In adapting himself, however, to the dialect of Mr. Lowery Macwalter, the real accent would at times break through the one of fiction—not a very extraordinary circumstance, when it is considered that Mr. Nesbitt’s forte is tragedy. As it was, however, he kept the audience in a roar of laughter; his personification of an insolent Irish servant forming a very agreeable contrast to the pliancy of Opie in Johnny Lump. Rogers, as Mr. Deputy Bull, gave a good specimen of a doting old fool, while Coppin, as Caleb Quoten, showed himself to be a regular business man. His song was first-rate. The theatre opened last evening with the ‘Rent Day,’ under the patronage of the Licensed Victuallers of Melbourne, and the house was well attended. On Thursday his Worship the Mayor will patronise the performance for the last time prior to his vacating the Mayoralty.”

On the 24th November Coppin had a slashing benefit, which must have delighted him much, for the house was crammed. The “School for Scandal” was played, Mr. and Mrs. Coppin sustaining the parts of Sir Peter and Lady Teazle with marked ability. Coppin gave an original version of “Billy Barlow;” his hits about the Mayor and his salary, the Corporation, and other local topics brought forth thunders of applause. He netted £80, and this put him in such high good humour that he lost no time in entering into a fresh agreement with Smith, and declared he should stick to the concern for another season. Nesbitt now struck for higher wages, and as Coppin would not accede to his demand, he cut the connection and left for Sydney.

In December 1845 Coppin began to think that the speculation was not, after all, making him as rich as he anticipated, so he took a notion of going to India, and purchased a schooner called the “Apollo,” and until he should be quite ready to set sail, placed her in the coasting trade between Melbourne and Portland. She was commanded by a Captain Loutit, who had occasion to run her at times into some of the small bays for shelter, and from this cause Coppin called one of them Loutit Bay in compliment to his skipper, and a second Apollo Bay, after the schooner. Changing his mind afterwards as to the Indian trip, he sold the craft to the Government for a buoy boat.

POPPING AT COPPIN.

There were elements of fun in the old theatrical times in Melbourne, to enliven the occasionally dull performances, which are altogether absent from the dramatic entertainments of modern days. Smoking then, though nominally prohibited, occasionally caused much trouble and annoyance. Shying coppers was a pleasant variation, and sometimes profitable to the under (and often not) paid actors, who generally had the presence of mind to pick up the shot bullets. It was the lot of George Coppin to be sometimes placed
on a pedestal of Hero-worship—transformed into a sort of William Tell—with this difference, that, instead of sweeping an apple off a fellow’s head, Coppin used to be popped at with the apple. And he, to do him justice, never took kindly to this species of by-play. He used to resist it manfully, heard the sharpshooters, whether in pit or gallery, and threaten them with all sorts of pains and penalties. One night some profane urchins, deeming themselves secure in the gallery, imagined Coppin a sort of Aunt Sally, and began to play pitch and toss at his nob. A night or two after they set to “applying” him, when one of them was caught flagrante delicto by a policeman, collared, and dragged off to the watch-house. George appeared to prosecute, and the following report of the case is transcribed from an old newspaper:—

**AN APPLE OF DISCORD.**—As Coppin was electrifying the audience of the Queen’s Theatre on the evening of the 26th March, 1846, and all his dramatic powers were being brought into play, one of the gods hurled a thunderbolt from Olympus, in the shape of an apple, which grazed Coppin’s left eye. He (the god) was accordingly given into custody. The prisoner was brought up before the magistrates next morning and admitted the impeachment, but justified his conduct by stating it to be all a lark, especially as on the previous evening a practice prevailed of playing pitch and toss with pence and halfpence at Coppin’s head: and if it was legal to fling coppers at a man’s head, it could not be much harm to indulge the innocent amusement of apple throwing. In consequence of the complainant not wishing to press the charge, the Bench let off the offender on payment of a fine of five shillings.

As a rule, the Queen’s was a paradise of propriety compared with the Pavilion; but on the evening of the 18th May, 1846, however, there was a regular rumpus through the misconduct of Mr. William Dana, brother of the Commandant of Native Police, of which force he was second officer, was, with a boon companion, named Croker, comfortably enjoying a cigar in one of the boxes or dress circle. The “blowing of the cloud” soon attracted the olfactory attention of the proprietor (Mr. Smith), who rushed to the footlights, declared smoking to be prohibited, and requested the offending party to desist. Dana coolly replied, “He would see him hanged first,” whereupon Smith invoked the assistance of Sugden, the Chief-Constable, who happened to be in the house, but he declined to interfere until there was a breach of the peace, with which he was soon gratified. Smith, summoning some of the employes to his assistance, proceeded to eject Dana, who showed fight, and cuffed and kicked all round, Croker remaining a passive, amused spectator. Smith was very partial to the display of large white shirt fronts, and in the fray one of these fineries was irretrievably demolished. Dana was at length overpowered and cast forth, when he fell into the clutches of another batch of Philistines—the Chief-Constable and some of the police—by whom he was unceremoniously hauled off to the lock-up, but was bailed out during the night. The next morning the case turned up before the Police Court, when Smith appeared to prosecute, and Mr. Stephen (Barrister) was defendant’s Counsel. The presiding Magistrates were the Mayor (Dr. Palmer) and Mr. James Smith; and on defendant being ordered to stand forward in the prisoner’s dock, he refused point blank to do so. The Justices declared that they could not recognize any distinction of persons charged before them; but, as doubts were entertained as to their power to compel a person accused of making a disturbance to appear in the felons’ dock, they remanded the hearing for a few days, and renewed the defendant’s bail. The case was resumed on the 25th May, before two other Magistrates (Messrs. Henry Moor and M’Lachlan), when it was proved that, in addition to other improprieties on the evening of the fracas, Dana had given a general challenge to the dress circle to fight single-handed all its occupants (ladies and gentlemen) in rotation, and that one man had not only accepted the challenge, but had thrown off his coat preparatory to engaging in hostilities, which the subsequent events prevented. A copy of a printed circular was put in to the effect that no smoking would under any circumstances be permitted during theatrical performances. The defence set up was that Dana was only smoking in the theatre, for doing which he had been roughly treated, that smoking in a theatre was not per se illegal, and ergo, the original removal and arrest were illegal. In their decision the Magistrates adroitly evaded an opinion on the point of law propounded, and simply fined the defendant 40s. and costs for resisting the constables in the execution of their duty.
COPPIN'S LAST APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE.

The Coppins took as large a benefit as the house could possibly hold on the 18th June, 1846 (Waterloo Day), and announcements were made that it was to be "most positively the last appearance of Mr. Coppin and his wife on any stage." The pieces produced were "Captain Charlotte," a new production by E. Sterling, and the "School for Scandal." Madame Veilburn and a Master Chambers (new attaches) figured fantastically in a new-fashioned polka; and another new version of Coppin's "Billy Barlow" was served out in such a racy manner as more than satisfied everyone.

During the month of August the Coppins left for Adelaide, after making a favourable impression, which the sponge of time has never thoroughly erased from that day to this; and Smith again assumed the joint position of proprietor and manager.

What a singular contrast is presented by a comparison of the cost of working a Melbourne theatre in 1845 and forty years after. In 1845 the Queen's Theatre was opened only three nights in the week, and the entire expenses, taking an average of twenty weeks, were £47 per week, the salaries varying from 5s. to 40s. per week. In 1877 the weekly expenses of the Theatre Royal averaged £420 per week, the salaries being proportionately high. On this subject I quote from a recent communication from Mr. Coppin:—"I cannot give you a better illustration of the progress of the drama than the fact that during my management of the Queen's Theatre my weekly expenses, including rent and a salary for myself, were £45 a week. Ever since the erection of this (the Royal) theatre the weekly expenses have been close upon £400 a week, and I do not hesitate to say that I had leading talent in my company at £45 a week that cannot be equalled at the present time in Australia."

FRANCIS NESBITT

Was an actor of considerable merit, who never settled down steadily for any time in one place. A theatrical meteor, shooting about between the colonies, of no steadfastness of purpose, bothering himself little as to what the morrow would bring forth; a good fellow and well liked, it was regrettable that one of his undoubted ability should be so deficient in the brain ballast necessary for a fortunate trip through the world. An Irishman by birth, he found his way on the stage at an early age, and was for years a "stock" actor in the Mother-country, his last "Home" engagement being in Glasgow. On reaching Sydney, being unable to obtain theatrical employment there, he was glad to accept the baton of a policeman. In a short time he interviewed Mr. Joseph Simmons, stage manager of the Victoria Theatre. Simmons, who played everything that was good, asked the applicant what he could do, and the reply was "any leading part," but he should like to open as Rolla in the tragedy of "Pizarro." Simmons, somewhat scoffingly, rejoined that Rolla being one of his own specialities, the Sydney public would not recognize anyone else in it. It was decided, however, that the tragedy should be put up, and Nesbitt to play Pizarro. This impersonation is a very showy one, and, set off with Nesbitt's fine manly figure and splendid voice, Simmons, much to his own discomfort, was completely cast in the shade. The contrast between the style of the two performers was such as to exclude any professional comparison. In a few nights after, the public recognition which Simmons fancied he had exclusively for himself, was so impaired that he was not unwilling to change places with the newcomer. He remained for some time at a very moderate salary, but his Australian wanderings soon commenced, and he kept flitting from place to place until his death. On applying to Mr. Coppin for information as to Nesbitt's ultimate fate, he favoured me with the following ray of hallowed light shed over the untombed grave which Brooke found in the Bay of Biscay, when he went down with the "London" steamer on his voyage from England to Melbourne in 1866:—"Nesbitt was of the same school of acting as Brooke, and very like him in voice, manner, and talent. I buried him at my own expense when I had the Geelong Theatre, before going to England. Upon my return with G. V. Brooke, I took him to see Nesbitt's grave, and gave him the history of his countryman. The result was that poor Brooke erected a headstone with the following inscription:—"Erected in memory of Francis M'Crone Nesbitt, who departed this life 29th March, 1853, aged 42 years, by his fellow countryman Gustavus V. Brooke, as a last tribute to the genius of a brother tragedian."
Was not now remarkable for efficiency, yet on the whole the entertainments possessed a tolerable share of attraction, in which a novelty, known as the "Veilburn-nw-Chambers dancing" constituted a main feature, and was much appreciated. There was besides an inclement winter, but as spring advanced, the theatrical horizon began to brighten, and towards the close of the year there was an evident change for the better in both management and professional material. Christmas-tide brought Mr. and Mrs. Hambleton, from Sydney, but with the passing away of the holidays, the aspect of affairs was discouraging. On the 11th February, 1847, the St. Patrick Society returned Smith's good turn by crowding the theatre when "The Lawyer's Clerk" and "Paddy Murphy" were played, and £65 taken. But a heavy blow was in waiting for the proprietor, and fate struck it in the early days of April, by inducing Madame Veilburn, the popular danseuse, to caper away from the establishment, and Smith put the police after her with a warrant of arrest for a breach of the Masters and Servants Act. In plain language, the "light-legged lady" had struck work and bolted, and the police found her stowed away on board "The Sisters," bound for Adelaide. She was apprehended, and brought up at the Police Office, but the Magistrates held they had no jurisdiction, as a terpsichorean artiste was in no sense a servant, within the meaning of the law. Smith survived the Veilburn defection and plodded away with a degree of quiet perseverance, proving himself the possessor of more stamina than he was credited with. The winter solstice was now on, and winter in old times meant bad business for evening entertainments. The 10th May, was a gala occasion at the theatre, by reason of the "benefit" of a Mr. Searle, an actor moderately clever as an utility man, and a great gun with the Oddfellows. The event was under the patronage of the "Duke of York" Lodge of the Ancient and Independent Order, who made a grand turn out, and the house held £66. The brethren mustered in full force, and the interior of the theatre was so "Oddfellowsingly" done up as to give it a novel appearance. A "chaste and beautiful banner," by Ople, the scene painter, was displayed over the stage, and on each side the "Dispensation" and a splendid oil painting of "Justice." The P.G.s and N.G.s and other alphabetically distinguished officials of the fraternity, exultant in satin collars and sashes, trimmed with gold and silver lace, bloomed forth from the central boxes of the dress circle—the minor officers with "plain silk and velvet sashes" in the adjoining boxes, so many sitting satellites within the orbit of greater luminaries. When the curtain rose, the solitary figure of Brother Hambleton appeared in full fig as an Oddfellow, which "produced a most profound sensation;" every seat in the house was filled, and many were glad to obtain standing room. In an interval, Searle's daughter, a seven-year-old, sang "The Swiss Toy Girl" in admirable style. The juvenile was rewarded with a shower of bouquets, transformed during the transit into half-crowns, and the child instead of being scared by the pattering of the metallic hailstones on the stage, had the presence of mind not only to pick them up but pocket them—an ingenious feat beheld with loud plaudits, in the midst of which the youngest bowed her acknowledgment and withdrew. Hambleton, in about a week after had his turn, when the house took £80, the largest receipts ever known. In June the proprietor changed the evenings of performance to Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, Saturday being exempted in consequence of Smith's desire not to trench upon the Sabbath. A Mr. Saville, from Sydney, introduced as "a near relative of Helen Faucit," was taken on, and a final exit occurred by Mr. G. P. Groves, an actor of much promise, dying one night from delirium tremens at the Rose Thistle and Shamrock, in Elizabeth Street. The season wound up with a proprietorial benefit, patronised by the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows; and Smith appropriated half the takings of another night, towards the erection of some public lamps, as a commencement of the lighting of the town. In July he advertised for tenders for the erection of 15 lamps in Queen Street, two to be placed at the intersection of each street, as far as Flinders Street, and the rest to be set up about the theatre. Nothing further worthy of special mention occurred until the evening of the 1st December, when there was a lively time of it. A Mr. Rae took his benefit from an average attendance, but there was some "bilking" of the bill by no means agreeable. It was advertised "that a celebrated American nigger would sing a version of 'Jim Crow' localized by an amateur," but there was neither nigger nor song—a "dark" transaction rowdily resented by the "gods." Lamps were smashed, windows riddled, and pieces of moulding wrenched from the fittings and hurled into the pit and on to the stage. Providentially, however,
The Celestials were under the generalship of an unheavenly-looking sample of a mad-drunken bushman named Francis Kimber. He rushed into the St. John Tavern, and bellowed out that "he was delighted with having given the place next door such a —— hearing." Some police dashed after him, when he was overpowered and locked up. As Kimber was leaving the police office after the enquiry, a Mrs. Chapman recognized him as the person who had some ten months previously robbed her husband at their residence near the West Melbourne Swamp, and for whom a warrant was out. Kimber was returned to the watchhouse on a charge of felony, and served a sentence of imprisonment for it afterwards.

There was a good deal of briskness at Christmas, and the Old Year was bowed out by the appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Mereton, from Launceston, and their "celebrated dog, 'Dragon,'" an animal whose gifts lay more in promise than in practice. On the 17th January, 1848, the "Wood Demon" was placed on the stage in a manner believed to be something unapproachable in the way of scenic accessories and effects. The scenery was all new and freshly painted by a Mr. Lightwood, and the mechanical contrivances were the brain and handiwork of Capper. This branch of the establishment was authoritatively pronounced "to have no superior in the colonies—not even in Sydney."

Morton King.

The intimation that Mr. Morton King, a tragedian of established colonial repute, was engaged for a limited number of nights, stirred up the expectations of the play-going community, and he made his Melbourne début in Hamlet, on the 23rd February, 1848. At this time Mr. King was believed to be unrivalled in his line on this side of the Equator, and his impersonation of some of the principal Shakesperian characters amply sustained this high reputation in Port Phillip. Still his ability was handicapped by inefficient co-operation, which showed an unaccountable laxity in the management, but succeeded so far as to remove all doubt as to his being an actor of sterling ability.

Morton King was in the silk trade in the old country, but gave it up to follow the dramatic profession, in which he held a very good position prior to emigrating to New South Wales in 1842. Upon arriving in the colonies he joined his brother-in-law (a Mr. Scott) in the timber trade, but subsequently returned to the stage, playing in Sydney and Adelaide. His line was tragedy, and his favourite characters Hamlet, Shylock, and Richard the Third. He was of the Charles Kean school, and though not a first-class one, was a very good actor. Mr. King subsequently returned to Melbourne, and resumed his connection with the stage, which in the lapse of time was abandoned, when he engaged in mercantile pursuits, and prospered for several years. As Mr. Mark Last King he held a seat in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, and was an M.P. at the time of his death.

As the annual carnival time, the race meeting approached, great preparations were made to present attractive entertainments, and for the first week in April the theatre was opened every night and well patronised. "Ondine" and the "Wood Demon" were the chief pieces, and the Saturday night wound up with a grand musical display. In May a Mr. Ward (a new arrival) appeared two or three times in "Macbeth."

A Mr. Lee with a brace of educated dogs next turned up. This individual and his animals had previously performed at the Pavilion; the dogs knew their business better than their master, who, a quiet little man, was useful as a sort of small change in those old times.

Batters on "The Burst."

Another of those striking episodes which imparted a fillip to the otherwise often tame entertainments of the age, occurred on the 2nd June, the sole cause of which was big Dick Batters, the Whitlom timber tragedian of the Pavilion. This worthy was in a fully developed state of drunkenness, and butted and "battered" everyone about in the pit. Smith ordered the pannikin-mender to quit the place; and undaunted by the slang and menacing attitude of the disturber, turned out the whole posse comitatus of the
THE CHRONICLES OF EARLY MELBOURNE.

stage, and marched against the foe. Batters saw the coming onslaught, and promptly prepared for a
vigorous defence. The alarmed and shrieking pitites so crushed all round the upper circle as to leave a
clear fighting area in the centre, and into this ring, armed with a chair, Batters jumped and defied anyone
to come within weapon's length of him. Smith would not risk a pitched battle, but retreating with his forces
to the stage, the proprietor tried to talk over Batters in a fatherly fashion, but the tinker, instead of threats,
adopted the admonitory style, and strongly advised Mr. Smith "to go put his head in a bag." Intimation
was given that such as wished to leave should have their money returned, but several, especially women,
had already left without any return, and such as remained preferred to see the fun out. Batters continued
master of the "Central Province," of which he was now the sole representative, and strutted backwards and
forwards from form to form with an assumed calmness and self-sufficiency wonderful in a drunken man;
but every quarter of a minute the exalted chair would describe some unsolvable mathematical figure in the
air, the wild beast would yell, while Smith, from the proscenial citadel, and the midst of a varicoloured
body-guard, vexed in the spirit, groaned resignedly. Sergeant Ashleigh, the head of the detective force,
and one or two constables, were present, and though repeatedly requested to capture the infuriated brawler,
possibly through dread of the chair, would not attempt to do so. Batters professed himself able, and only
too willing, to fight everyone in the house, and challenged and begged and prayed of them to oblige him;
but his entreaties were in vain, so long as he had a chair officiating as a "bottle-holder." At length he threw
up—not the sponge, but the chair, and rushed roaring into the street. Making a circuit of the outside crowd,
his was running back again, when a valorous check-taker rashly barring his way, got a "facer" in return,
which floored him. Some of the police, by this time in an ambush, suddenly sprang on the tinker, who was
overpowered, tied up, and rolled off on a handcart to the watch-house. The next morning Mr. Bowler, a
solicitor, pleaded for him before the Court, when Smith (who knew best the reason why) did not press for
punishment. The outrageous delinquent was set at large on his personal recognizance to keep the peace
for six months.

The season wound up with another benefit by the St. Patrick Society. In September intelligence
was received of the death of Mrs. Coppin at Adelaide, whose short career in Melbourne brought her many
friends, private as well as professional.

Mr. Morton King reappeared in the course of October, and subsequently managed the theatre for
some time.

In January, 1849, there arrived from Adelaide a Mr. Thomson, "unequalled on the colonial stage
as a general utility man." He was soon followed by Mr. Clarkson, "a celebrated acrobat from Batty's
Circus, London." King, supported by Elrington and Thomson, Mesdames Mereton and Chester, with a few
others, started a round of Shakesperian pieces, and managed to get through "Hamlet" and "Macbeth"
tolerably well. Megson's orchestral music was an unfailing attraction. Rowdism could not be thoroughly
stamped out, but apple or orange throwing was the favourite recreation. One night a bottle was flung,
striking one of the company without maiming or killing him, but owing to the loyalty observed by the
blackguards, inter se, a successful prosecution was an impossibility.

In June there was introduced a Mr. Quinn, "the Australian rope-dancer," who went through some
clever evolutions.

King's reign terminated towards the close of the year 1849, and now, if ever, something wonderful
was to be done. Smith again combined the functions of proprietor and manager, and the new season
began on the 24th September. Mr. Charles Young returned from Adelaide, and was appointed acting
manager. Furthermore, it was publicly advertised "that the editors and reporters of the Melbourne
journals will have free admission to the theatre. The sergeants of the town and the detective police will also
be admitted free." Young used to sing rigger melodies with bone castanet accompaniments. Mrs. Young's
dancing was always a treat. In October Mr. Jackson, "the celebrated American Serenader," appeared as
the "Congo Minstrel," singing the Ethiopian melody of "Dandy Jim from Caroline," and accompanying
himself with the Congo bone castanets, "as originally performed by him with two thousand stick
approbation."

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays were the entertainment evenings, and there were further
acessions to the corps by the annexation of Mr. and Mrs. Deering, Young's returned mother-in-law.
Mrs. Thomson), and a colonial actor and author named Belfield, who took a poorish benefit in a piece of his own, entitled “The Rebel Chief.”

Christmas Eve, 1849, was very near presenting a tragedy in real life, for Mrs. Thomson went (so saith the doctors) within an eighth of an inch of killing herself. Having to appear in a prominent character in “The Bridge of Sighs,” she is supposed to stab herself, and drop to the ground. By mistake the dagger handed for the suicidal finale was a sharp-pointed one, and when she delivered the prod it went further than intended, and was nearly fatal. Self-wounded, she tottered and fell on the stage. The blood spurted out, and in the midst of tremendous uproar Dr. Campbell was hurriedly brought. On examination he ascertained that the weapon had penetrated two inches into her body in the immediate region of the heart, and very little further would have ended the lady’s career on and off the boards of a theatre. He staunched and dressed the wound, had the patient removed, and after a short laying-up she recovered.

Nothing worthy of special notice occurred until 5th March, 1850, when a grand concert was given by a Mr. Reed. It was under the patronage of the Superintendent (Mr. Latrobe), and was most respectably and numerously attended. Miss Sara Flower made her appearance, and was supported by Messrs. Young, Megson, Thomson, Lord, and Miss Emma Reed. The usual orchestra was reinforced by Hone’s Sixhorn Band, and a capital bill of fare, very meritoriously disposed of, wound up with “Julien’s celebrated Drum Polka.”

The First Local Pantomime

Was produced on 13th May, 1850, when Young took a benefit. The pantomime, entirely new and local, was “written by Mr. Young expressly for the occasion.” The introduction of such a novelty—the first home-made composition of the kind—seems in itself of sufficient importance to justify the insertion of the name and characters of the piece. It was entitled—

THE GOLLIN OF THE GOLD COAST;

On, Harlequina and the Melbournites in California,

CELESTIALS:

Jupiter ... ... Mr. Belfield 
Mercury ... ... Mr. Charles 
Mars ... ... Mr. Wood 
Juno ... ... Mr. Turner 
Neptune ... ... Mr. Thompson 
Venus ... ... Mrs. M’Knight 
Minerva ... ... Mrs. Deering 
Diana ... ... Mrs. Avins

TERRESTRIALS:

Chief-Constable: Brodie Mr. Ward 
Dick Batter (the Tinman) Mr. Young (in which he will sing an entirely new Parody, written for this occasion, entitled, “Hurrah! Hurrah! For the Gold!”) 
Fowl Courtier, of Cookshop Notoriety Mr. Thompson 
Bernard Reynolds (on the patriotic principle) Mr. Belfield 
Lamina ( afterwards Columbine) Mrs. Avins

INFERIALS:

The Demon of Discord Mr. Deering 
Gilderkin (the Goblin) Mr. Hasker 
Platina (the Gold King) Mr. Crisp 
Flaxus the Gold King Mr. Crisp 
Ironspark, Firefly, Pinchbeck, Quicksilver, Virgingold, Copperous, etc., etc.—By a host of Auxiliaries.

There was not much merit in the production, and the “locals” had neither point nor humour to recommend them; but the sound and fury, the jumping and capering, seemed from the uproarious acclamations to afford unstinted gratification to a thronged audience, and Young and his patrons parted at a late hour mutually delighted with the interview.

For some time Mr. J. T. Smith had ardently ambitioned election to the Mayor’s Chair. He was a leading member of the City Council, and so surely did he calculate the probabilities of his election, that he divested himself of the theatrical management, which he held to be incompatible with the office of Chief Magistrate. In October, Messrs. Morton King and Charles Young became the lessees, and declared it was their intention “to introduce all the available talent of the colonies as soon as possible, and to conduct the theatre upon a scale of respectability and liberality.” Amongst other so-called improvements the place was decorated with gorgeous Italian scroll-work, painted in a most elaborate and chaste manner by
Mr. J. P. Watts; entirely new scenery by Mr. Lightwood. The entertainments were to be a source of moral and intellectual amusement for all classes; and any person "smoking, or using bad language" would be immediately expelled. There was a grand new drop-scene, "View near Rome," and as the "Separation" rejoicings were at hand, the theatre was to be opened every night. Madame Veilburn, the runaway danseuse, returned; and was received back into the fold. Mr. Ward, an actor of some ability, was also engaged. And so the limited theatrical world went on swimmingly and remuneratively, playing the old year out and the new year in.

In February, 1851, two rival acrobats performed every night, and it was amusing to witness how each tried "By holding out to tire the other down."

They were known respectively as Mr. R. Lin, "a famous Chinese acrobat," and Mr. Clarkson, an Englishman.

About this time news of Coppin's success in Adelaide had reached Melbourne, and prompted thus, no doubt, King and Young made up their minds to seek their fortunes in South Australia, King to get into the hotel business, and Young to join a new theatre erected in Adelaide, under the auspices of Messrs. Coppin and Lazarus. King consequently made, what he then believed would be, his last appearance on the 19th February, in the character of Shylock, and was enthusiastically received.

The theatre, as such, was now closed for a short time, and during the interval Mr. W. S. Gibbons, who had been giving at the Mechanics' Institute an exhibition of the hydrogen gas microscope, dissolving views, and the chromatrope, transferred his apparatus and operations hither.

King went his way, but Young, on second thought, remained as manager. The theatre was shortly re-opened, and had a good run during the race month of March. Some new blood had been introduced, including Messrs. Shearcroft and Gordon, a Madam Dias, Mrs. W. Evans, from the Theatre Royal, Adelaide, and Mr. Roche, a singer and dancer. During this month intelligence was received of the suicide, in San Francisco, of Mrs. Hambleton, a former associate of the theatre. She contracted an intimacy with a Mr. S. Croad, of which her husband did not approve, and on his telling her he would blow out Croad's brains, she, to save him any further trouble, on the 14th January blew out her own.

In April, Mr. C. Young became sole lessee, and the theatre was now propelled by a fair share of steam, there being a good many attractions which pleased the public so well that the place was liberally supported. But then there was no other mart where amusement could be purchased. There was a grand concert occasionally at the Mechanics' Institute, but the prices were high, the snobbishness rampant, and the carte often more select than attractive. The Queen's Theatre was essentially the only popular establishment in existence, and to it the multitude bent their steps and took their half-crowns.

Madame Jaubert, "from the Haymarket Theatre, London," arrived in Melbourne, and made a favourable impression in "The Soldier's Daughter." She was followed by a Mrs. Wheeler, and a Mr. Burton, an uniting spouter of comic songs; whilst Mrs. Young's lively, graceful, and artistic dancing established her a special favourite. "The Dream of Life," then recently played in London, was brought out, in which Mr. and Mrs. Young, and Messrs. Burton and Ward scored honours. Mr. Meadows, from the Victoria Theatre, Hobart Town, also made a mark.

A Masquerade Ball.

Port Phillip was on the eve of its emancipation from the thraldom of New South Wales, the "union" was about to be repealed, and the common belief was that a few weeks more would see the province "Great, glorious and free, First flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea."

Loyalty to the Queen, who had given her name to the young colony, was also in a state of gush. It was therefore considered by the Theatrical Executive that it would be a great hit to get up a grand
spectacular demonstration on the Queen's Birthnight (24th May), and it was done accordingly. The Superintendent (Latrobe) would, it was known, be appointed the first Governor; and he was already honoured by the complimentary designation of "the Lieutenant Governor Elect." His patronage was asked and freely given, as much as possible being made of the incident in the theatrical placards and advertisements. It was decided to hold a public Masquerade Ball. The front of the theatre was lit up by a magnificent display of fireworks, and "Gustavus, King of Sweden," was produced on a scale of splendour never before attempted in Australia. The admission tariff was fixed at 10s. 6d., double tickets; single, 7s. 6d., not transferable, for which "none but respectable persons need apply."

Two months after, in July, the opera of "Maritana" was produced, wherein Young, as Don Carlos, showed off "with his usual vivacity." Elrington, as the crafty and intriguing Jose, was "admirable," Mrs. Young's Maritana "equal to anything ever seen on the colonial boards," and "the sombre, weak, vacillating King of Spain, was well sustained" by Ward. The overture by Megson's band was "decidedly the finest ever heard in Melbourne." In August, a new trio were added, viz., Mr. Tomlin's band of Ethiopian Minstrels, "universally acknowledged to be the only genuine band in the colonies," Mr. Smith, from Adelaide, an adept at light characters and hornpipe, and Mr. Fawkner, who made grotesque efforts to be funny with dubiously funny songs.

THE YELLOW FEVER.

The gold mania was now in its incipient throes, and as the year advanced the intensity of the yellow fever increased. The theatre of course required another brushing up, and Duke and Opie, the two best painters available, were commissioned to go to work. The season opened on the 17th November, 1851, for which occasion "an entertainment of the most novel and brilliant description had been prepared." Magnificent scenery was produced by Duke, and a new drop-scene by Opie. The burlesque, which recently had a long run at home, was called "The Enchanted Forest," and the acting of Mr. and Mrs. Young, was declared to be "first chop." A new comic song by Evans, was followed by the celebrated recitation "Bucks Have At Ye All!" by Mrs. Young, and a Highland Fling by an amateur—"the whole concluding with the laughable glee of "Our Mary Anne."

Lucky gold hunters were now returning to the town to "melt their nuggets," and as a compliment to their good fortune, the performances on the 16th December were under the unsolicited but freely given patronage of the gold diggers. The special novelties comprised favourite dances by a Miss Daly, comic duets by Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, the always welcome "pas seul" by Mrs. Young, comic songs by Gardiner, Sylvester's "wonderful performances on the slack rope," and, per contra, Riley's "unparalleled and astounding feats on the tight rope." On the 29th December was produced "A splendid spectacle, adapted and localized from a German Romance," followed by a stupid trifle termed "The Gold Field, or the Mines of Mount Macedon." The year wound up with "The King of the Mist, or the Miller of the Mountains."

The Theatre was continued for some years, and attained a high position from the class of pieces put on the stage, and the reputation of some of the performers who trod its boards. It was there the celebrated G. V. Brooke made his first appearance in Melbourne on the 26th February, 1855. Its career as a Temple of the Drama had its end, and when other theatres sprung up in more central places, the old "Queen's" was compelled to bow to fate, and the sock and the buskin, the orchestra and gods and goddesses, bade it good-bye for ever. The drop-scene was lowered for the last time, and it is now (1888), turned over to the common-place and matter-of-fact purpose of a carriage factory. "Sic transit gloria mundi."

THE CHRONICLES OF EARLY MELBOURNE.

ADDENDA.

Though I have closed my sketch of Melbourne's second playhouse, it would be unpardonable to dismiss the subject finally without some supplementary notice of the after career of one extraordinary man, first introduced to a Melbourne public through the medium of the Queen Street Theatre, viz.,
Mr. George Coppin. To do anything like justice to such a colonial career as his, would far exceed the necessarily restricted limits of a general work such as I am writing. Coppin’s professional biography would of itself exhaust a tolerably bulky volume, and form a contribution to dramatic literature second in interest to no other that has yet appeared. My résumé of his subsequent eventful procedure (unprecedented in this or any other country) must therefore be of a curtained and cursory character. Cynics and jokers have frequently found pleasure in designating George Coppin an “Artful Dodger;” but anyone having a knowledge of, and dispassionately reviewing, his public life, cannot do otherwise than aver that though “dodging” might have been reduced to an art with him, it was not always to his own permanent advantage. No man in the colony made more fortunes, or had the misfortune to lose so much of what he had won by honourable and persistent industry. No sooner had he a good “pile” raised than it rapidly disappeared, and, in his singular transitions from affluence to insolvency, he had no comppeer in again righting himself, replenishing, and paying off his creditors. Every reverse he met with only enabled him to recover from his downfall with renewed vitality; and the unfailing courage and indomitable energy with which he cheerfully re-commenced the battle of life, indicated the possession of an organization accorded to but few individuals. Coppin’s grand mistake was a disregard of the golden rule, ne sulor ultra crepidam. He made his money by the legitimate business to which he was bred, and outside that he should not have travelled into other speculations.

In 1855, after realizing a fortune at Geelong, he visited Adelaide. After paying off his creditors, he proceeded to England in January, 1856, and fulfilled several successful engagements there. When in England Mr. Coppin arranged for the construction of an Iron Theatre to bring with him to Melbourne, the contract for which he actually signed one night whilst playing “Paul Pry” at the Theatre Royal, Manchester. This was “The Olympic,” better known as “The Iron Pot,” erected at the south-east corner of Lonsdale and Stephen Streets, the foundation of which was laid by G. V. Brooke on the 18th April, 1855. In six weeks it was completed, and opened by Professor Jacobs, a wonderful Wizard imported by Coppin. Aoptez dramatique, scarcely since excelled in the colony, was transported hither with “The Pot,” in which the dramatic season commenced on the 30th of July, the opening pieces being “The Lady of Lyons” and “To Oblige Benson,” the company consisting of Messrs. G. V. Brooke, R. Younge, R. Heir, Harry Jackson, Leslie, Ryan, Webster, Robins, Perry, Wheeler, Lester, Sefton, McGowan; the Misses Fanny Cathcart, Herbert, Glyndon, Graham, St. Clair, Julia Matthews; Mesdames Brougham, McGowan, Avins, the Chambers Family, and though last, by no means the least, Coppin himself.

On the 11th of June, 1855, they inaugurated the first Grand Opera season in Melbourne, which lasted eight weeks, and a short season of English Opera was afterwards given. The artists engaged were Madame Anna Bishop, Sara Flower, Julia Harland, Mrs. Fiddes, Madame Carandini, Mrs. Guerin, Mrs. Hancock; Messrs. Laglaize, Lyall, Walter Sherwin, E. Conlon, Howson, Farquharson, Gregg, and Hancock. Conductors: MM. Lavenue and Lindley Norman; leader of the orchestra, M. Strebenger; a chorus of twenty-six, who received 20s. a night each; and a ballet led by Strebenger. The operas produced were:—”Norma,” “La Sonnambula,” “Lucia de Lammermoor,” “Martha,” “Der Freischütz,” “Lucrèzia Borgia,” “Bohemian Girl,” “Maritana,” “The Mountain Sylph,” and “Masniallo.” Coppin and Brooke subsequently entered into partnership and purchased the lease of the Melbourne Theatre Royal for £2,000, which they opened on the 9th June, 1856, with the comedy of “She Stoops to Conquer,” Coppin delivering an introductory address, and playing Tony Lumpkin. The receipts amounted to £478 15s. 6d.

As this was the first introduction of Grand Opera, the public taste had not been educated in those days to so high a standard as to appreciate the treat, and the result—in consequence of the heavy expenses—was a loss to the management of £300. Upon an off night, the 2nd July, when Mr. G. V. Brooke was passing through Melbourne on his way to Sydney, he made his first appearance at the Theatre Royal in “The Serious Family.” Coppin also playing in the comedy, “To Oblige Benson,” supported by the best company ever seen in Australia. The receipts were £311 16s.

The regular dramatic season commenced on the 25th of August, 1856, with “Love’s Sacrifice,” and the following very excellent company:—G. V. Brooke, G. Coppin, R. Younge, R. Heir, G. Rogers, C. Young, H. Edwards, F. Young, Gordon, Sefton, Leslie, Burford, Webster, Gould, Burton, Evans,
The Chronicles of Early Melbourne.

Brooke and Coppin purchased the freehold of Cremorne Gardens, at Richmond, which were opened by them on November 30th, 1856.

In the primitive times this place was known as Wright's Swamp, now an Inebriate Asylum, upon which £100,000 has been expended. There the Pantheon Theatre was erected, and there the first balloon ascent in Australia took place on the 1st February, 1858. Two balloons were imported with Captain Dean and Professor Brown, two English aeronauts, who made several successful ascents.

The late Mr. Pond brought out for Coppin the first white swans ever seen in Australia; also 500 gold fish, only landing nine of the latter, from which the whole of the colony was eventually stocked.

Three Wizards—Professor Jacobs, Mr. Anderson (the Wizard of the North) and Mr. Heller; Woodroffe's Glassblowers; the Lancashire Bell Ringers; Skaters, &c., &c., also appeared. The Cremorne "spec." was not success, and Brooke and Coppin dissolved partnership on the 26th February, 1859.

When George Evans, the real founder of Melbourne, was putting up his hut off Flinders Street, the future Cremorne was visited only by aborigines, kangaroo and wild fowl. The settlement of the country led to its partial reclamation, and subsequent to the gold discoveries it was converted into a grand entertainment mart, over which big pots of money were made and lost. In connection with the subject I present the following curious fact, the first advertisement issued about the place. The original was procured from Dublin for a professional purpose, by the well-known solicitor, Mr. J. S. Woolcott, who courteously favoured me with a copy:

UNDER THE PATRONAGE
OF
THE HONOURABLE DR PALMER,
SPEAKER of the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

And

The Right Worshipful The Mayor,
JOHN HODGSON, ESQ., M.L.C.

CREMORNE GARDENS,
RICHMOND.

LESSEE MR. JAMES ELLIS

Who generously devotes the entire receipts of the Opening Day in aid of the fund for building a left wing to the Melbourne Hospital.

SATURDAY, 10th DECEMBER, 1853.
These MAGNIFICENT GARDENS will be OPENED at One O'clock.

The Band will perform during the afternoon.

A Renowned Troop of Acrobats will exhibit their wonderful feats.

Vocal and Instrumental Concert at half-past six.

Dancing on the Great Platform at Eight O'clock.

Fireworks at Ten.

ADMISSION FIVE SHILLINGS.

The entire arrangements will be under the direction of Mr. Francis W. Wright.

Tickets to be obtained of Mr. Baker, Stationer, Swanston Street; Mr. J. Williams, Stationer, Collins Street; and of S. Goods, Printer, 56 Swanston Street, Melbourne.

It would occupy more space than I can spare to recount the various phases of Coppin's subsequent ups and downs, his wanderings by sea and land, his enterprise in securing the highest histrionic ability, or the theatres he built (six in the Australian Colonies), leased or managed, and his final return to, and permanent settlement in, the land of his adoption. Through his instrumentality more than two hundred "artists," as they are conventionally termed, were introduced here, including Brooke, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, Sir William and Lady Don, Madame Celeste, Collins (the Irish comedian), James Anderson, and Talbot.
THE CHRONICLES OF EARLY MELBOURNE.

The following items in Coppin's professional career, posterior to the date of my CHRONICLES, will be read with interest.—Sailed for California on the 9th of July, 1864, after fulfilment engagements throughout America with Mr. and Mrs. C. Kean and Company. Returned to Melbourne on the 18th of January, 1866, with very satisfactory pecuniary results. Appeared at the Haymarket on the 27th January, 1866, in a round of his popular characters, including for the first time, "Milky White" and "Coppin in California." Made a considerable sum of money by the engagement of the Glassblowers, Skaters, Madam Celeste; Robert Heller's Entertainment, Collins the Irish Comedian, etc. Joined Messrs. Harwood, Stewart and Hennings in the management of the Theatre Royal. Purchased his partners' interests, and, after conducting it for twelve months upon his own responsibility, a fire broke out upon the stage; the interior building was burnt to ashes on the 19th March, 1872, without any portion being insured. This was another very serious loss. He rented St. George's Hall for the sake of giving employment to his very excellent Dramatic Company. He then leased the ground for 99 years upon which the ruins of the old Royal stood. Built the present Theatre Royal, which he afterwards formed into "The Theatre Royal Proprietary Association, Limited," now paying a good dividend. Let it to Messrs. Harwood, Stewart, Hennings and Coppin, who opened it on the 9th November, 1872. At the termination of their five years' lease, it was let to Messrs. Coppin, Hennings and Greville for 4½ years, after which Mr. J. C. Williamson became the Lessee.

But it is not only as a theatre-builder and amusement entrepreneur that Mr. Coppin has distinguished himself, for outside his professional and other pecuniary enterprises, he has thoroughly proved himself a good man and a valuable citizen. He has become an identity of Richmond, and was twice elected Chairman of that Municipality; whilst, in the broader range of Parliamentary life, he still (1888) evidences a business-like ability in legislation. He has attained the not common distinction of having been elected to both Houses of the Victorian Parliament.

An instance of consistency not usual with our public men, is attested by the fact that after strenuously opposing payment of members of Parliament, when the system was legalized, though he drew the £300 a year, instead of pocketing it, he patriotically appropriated it to purposes of charity. As an Oddfellow he has rendered signal service to the Craft in Sydney, Adelaide, Geelong and Melbourne; and as the founder of the Victorian Humane Society, the Dramatic and Musical Association, and the Old Colonists' Fraternity, he has made a name aperennis, which Time cannot obliterate. From his début in 1845 to the present moment he has been identified with almost every undertaking, charitable or otherwise, projected for the public weal, and in any way you take him, George Coppin is a man who has paid his devours as a true knight to the land with which he has been so long and so honourably associated.

It is a singular incident that only two individuals connected with the Melbourne stage, Messrs. Coppin and M. L. King, ever found their way to the Victorian Parliament; and it is no less singular that their performances in the one arena were the direct opposite of their special roles in the other. Coppin always put away his low comedy at the doors of the Parliament House. There was little of the "funny man" in his Legislatorial career, for he invariably had the good sense to cast himself as if for a part in a "Serious Family"—and solemnly and seriously he played it. On the other hand, King, whilst a member of the Assembly, usually took to comedy, if not of a very low, most certainly never of a very high class, though professionally his line was tragic business. I believe I am correct in stating that the only two members of the theatrical profession in the British Empire ever known to have been elected members of Parliament, were Messrs. George Coppin, and Morton (Mark Last) King.

Mr. Coppin was out of Parliament for a few years, but at the General Election in 1883, East Melbourne, in a fit of repentant enthusiasm re-embraced her old love and he now figures as a revivalist in the Legislative Assembly. Every admirer of political integrity and capacity will ardently hope that the day may be distant when Coppin shall appear "On his Last Legs."

CONCERTS.

The first recorded notice of a Vocal and Instrumental Entertainment given in Melbourne was on the 23rd December, 1839, when a Mrs. Clarke, announced as "One of the lights of the Sydney stage," treated
the inhabitants to a ten-shilling "grand soiree" in the large room of the Lamb Inn (West Collins Street). Considering the population and tastes of the time, there was a tolerable attendance, but the value given was of the most meagre kind. The valetudinarian piano, disordered in some of its strings, was amply compensated, at least in sound, by a Mr. Tickel, who piled a key begle with much animation.

On the evening of the 18th May, 1840, the same Tickel organized a concert entertainment at the same place, of which the following brief and unmincing notice was printed in a newspaper the following day:—"The room was crowded to witness one of the most disgusting exhibitions of tomfoolery seen for some time."

Another concert is announced to have taken place soon after this, at the auction room of Mr. William Barrett, north-west corner of Queen and Little Collins Streets. It is reported to have got up by Messrs. Mills, Eburn, and an amateur. Mills' performance is described as very fair "though marred by Cockneyisms." The amateur "showed singing of much promise but he broke down in two Scotch songs;" the accompaniment was bad, but Eburn "damped the whole thing by his vanity or vulgarity." As a finale, "the attendance was not very numerous nor respectable."

THE FIRST CHARITABLE CONCERT.

Contemporaneous with the white settlement, there were musical amateurs in Melbourne, and at times they assisted at what were little more than tap-room entertainments, generally consisting of a wild chorus of songs, fiddling, and flute playing, aided by a hoarse, spasmodic piano. The advent of the Gautrots (popularly pronounced Go-trot) was hailed with satisfaction, for Monsieur and Madame were not devoid of artistic ability, though from some cause or other they never attained that degree of success which they deserved. In 1841, efforts were made to found some kind of a hospital. The amateur portion of the community had been strengthened by some two or three attorneys of musical proclivities, and it was suggested to organize a concert in aid of the Hospital Fund. Gautrot gave his gratuitous assistance, and the following announcement, the first of the kind issued in the colony, was circulated:—

AMATEUR CONCERT
(For benevolent purposes) to be held on WEDNESDAY EVENING, THE 3RD FEBRUARY, 1841, AT THE CALEDONIAN HOTEL, LONSDALE STREET.


FIRST PART.

Overture.—"Il Nozzi di Figaro"—Mozart. Song.—"The Blighted Flower"—Balfe. Glee.—"The Wreath"—Mazzinghi. Quartette.—"Introduzione"—Sola. Song.—Air from the "Siege of Corinth" (Monsieur Gautrot)—Rossini. Solo—Violin.—"Air varié" (Monsieur Gautrot)—Kreutzer. Glee.—"Life's a Bumper"—Walsh. Song.—"All is lost now" ("Sonnambula")—Bellini. Septette.—"Air Russe" (with variations for all the instruments, composed and dedicated to the Melbourne Amateur Society by Monsieur Gautrot)—Gautrot.

SECOND PART.


Single tickets of admission, 15s. each ; Family single ticket, 12s. 6d. to be had of either of the Stewards, or at Messrs. Kerr and Holmes' Stationery Warehouse, Collins Street. Tickets not transferable. Doors open at Half-past Seven, and the Concert to commence at Eight o'clock precisely.
THE MELBOURNE HARMONIC SOCIETY.

The first musical combination in the colony was established under the above designation in 1841, with the following office-holders:—Leader, Mr. Charles Beswicke; Conductor, Mr. William Clarke; Treasurer, Mr. John Jones Peers; Secretaries, Messrs. Benjamin, Heape, and William Dredge. They met every Thursday evening in the Wesleyan Chapel, Collins Street, but the effort did not come to much.

A PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

Was started in 1843, but was not successful. Amongst the most prominent names were Messrs. William Clarke, John Pridham Smith, Frederick L. Clay, John J. Peers, C. J. Sanford, Charles Vaughan, and Joseph Megson.

At rare intervals some artiste would take a flying trip from Sydney, and for a performance or two met with a fair share of support. After the Mechanics' Institute was erected, the principal concerts were held there, and sometimes at the large rooms of the Exchange and Royal Hotels (both nearly opposite) in Collins Street. In May, 1846, a Mr. Rayac, from Adelaide, a violinist of high repute, presented some unusually superior musical entertainments at the Prince of Wales, a fashionable hotel in Little Flinders Street East. He was assisted by a Mr. Imberg, a pianist of eminence, both were Germans, and en route to Calcutta.

The Old Charities of Melbourne owed a large debt of gratitude to the Amateur Concert-mongers, through whose instrumentality a considerable amount of money flowed in for the excellent purposes in which every one had a common interest.

Appended is a copy of the Bill of one of these entertainments in 1845:—

GRAND AMATEUR CONCERT,
In aid of the funds of the Melbourne Hospital.

PROGRAMME.

PART 1ST.


Scena.—*For Those Hath Earned* (from *Oberon*), with orchestral accompaniments,—*Weber*.

Song.—*Wanted a Governess*—Parry. Overture.—*Semiramis*—Rosenmuller.

PART 2ND.

Overture.—*Men of Prometheus*—Beethoven. Song.—*Non Più Andrai*—Mozart.


Fantasia.—*Pianoforte*—Kalkbrenner. Song.—*Some Love One Day* (from *Der Freischütz*), with orchestral accompaniments,—*Weber*.

Glee.—*Come Live With Me*—*Webbe*.

Duet.—*When a Little Farm We Keep* (with orchestral accompaniments)—*Parry*. Overture.—*Masaniello*—Auber.

Boxes—Single tickets, 7s. 6d.; Family Boxes (admitting four), 12s. 6d.

Pit—Single tickets, 4s.; Family Pit (admitting four), 9s. 6d.

To be obtained at the offices of the *Pall Mall, Gazette, Herald, Standard*, and *Courier* newspapers; at Messrs. Pullar's, Pitman's, and Clarke's Music and Stationery Warehouses; at the Royal Hotel, Collins Street; and of Mr. Smith, at the Theatre.

N.B.—The Concert will commence at half past seven o'clock p.m. precisely.

THE FIRST PROFESSIONAL CONCERT.

Towards the termination of 1842, Monsieur and Madame Gautrot arrived from Sydney, and took up their residence in a brick cottage in Little Collins Street, wherein the Bank of Australasia commenced business in 1838 (now Henty's stores). They gave a concert on the 17th December in the large room of the Adelphi Hotel, Little Flinders Street, and it was pronounced a success. Mr. Superintendent Latrobe and his wife were present, and a gushing eulogy ecstatically wrote of it, "That the music, both instrumental
and vocal, was really enchanting, and the beauty and fashion of the period were so largely represented that it seemed a perfect Paradise."

On the 18th of the same month Mr. Nathan, a musical composer of some celebrity from Sydney, gave a grand vocal concert at the same place. This was so select, that full dress costume was enjoined from visitors, whilst tickets of admission were (single) 15s., and family ones (for two) one guinea. The attendance was too circumscribed to be profitable to the professional treasury, a circumstance not much to be wondered at.

OLD TOWN BANDS.

The first Town Band in Melbourne was formed in 1839, and consisted of about a dozen players, the names and instruments of some of them being:—Milstead, bass trombone; Oliver, tenor trombone; Browne, bassoon; Griffiths and Tickel, key bugles (cornets being then unknown); Picknell and Smith, clarionets; Drane, piccolo; Holley and Wilkinson, flutes; Anderson (a man of colour, ecliped "Black Jack"), big drum; Hamilton, side-drum; and Samuel, triangle. George Tickel, a plasterer by trade, was the leader. Some old colonists will remember his achievements at many of the early land sales, and, as liegemen of all descriptions were provided by the auctioneers, poor Tickel acquired a habit of drinking, which shortened his days. The band made its first public appearance in the streets of Melbourne late on Christmas Eve, starting from the Golden Fleece, an hotel of dubious belongings, in Bourke Street, near Kirk's Bazaar. Mr. H. N. Carrington, a then well-known attorney, and resident in Lonsdale Street, gave them an acceptable greeting by rolling out a cask of wine into the street, and the welcome Christmas-box was quickly tapped and disposed of. In Spencer Street, adjoining what was known as "the Government block," was a stockade of convicts employed on street-making. These fellows, not knowing what was up, sallied forth in a rather undress condition, and, dashing by the half-drunk, sleepy sentry or two supposed to be "on guard," struck in with the moving assemblage, and added a new feature to the procession. In Little Flinders Street, then a locality of importance, the Ship Inn was kept by a jolly-faced, free-handed Boniface named Lee, and here, after a promiscuous liquoring up, and making other festive calls of a like kind, a noisy dispersion wound up the serenading.

A second and more select band was organized in 1841, of which the Messrs. Middlemiss, Mr. Stainsby, and Mr. Roberts (of a well-known firm, Roberts and Fergusson) were members.

THE FIRST MENAGERIE.

In March, 1847, there was opened in a wooden building, at the corner of Bourke and Elizabeth Streets, opposite the Post Office, a wild beast exhibition, but the enterprise was compelled to shut up shop, and of the future of the elephant and his companions in captivity history sayeth nothing.

THE FIRST CIRCUS.

In the beginning of 1849 there was an area of unoccupied land at the south side of Little Bourke Street East, between Russell and Stephen Streets, in the neighbourhood of a rowdy tavern, known as the Horse and Jockey, and which in after time became the most malignant ulcer of Melbourne back slumdom. This was selected by a Mr. Hayes as the most suitable place for a canvas pavilion, and made such progress that by April everything was ready for action—horses, lady and gentleman "jocks," ground and lofty tumblers, and divers and sundry other accessories. The establishment was to be an Antipodean "Astley's," and application was made to the Superintendent for a license. This was referred by Mr. Latrobe to the local Bench of Magistrates, whereupon other amusement managers urged strong objections to Hayes, the principal one being that a circus should be in a more convenient, central, and reputable position. Mr. J. T. Smith, the proprietor of the Queen Street Theatre, considered that if there was to be a circus he ought to have a monopoly, and he offered to attach one to his play-house; whilst a Mr. Powell Courtier, known as the "Fire King," from his self-vaunted skill in pyrotechnic displays, and who had obtained a small
notoriety by conjuring on the racecourse, promised that, should his application be acceded to, he would produce circus exhibitions beside which anything else attemptable in the Province would dwindle to insignificance. The Justices deferred dealing with the several applications until the 5th May, the annual Publicans' Licensing day, when the circus question was summarily dealt with by a refusal of all the applications.

Hayes at once boldly declared his intention of disregarding the refusal, and would go on without a license. If the law necessitated such a formal permission, he could easily evade it, and in any case his promises to the public should be redeemed, license or no license. Accordingly, on the 9th May, the pavilion was formally opened, the entertainment was free of charge, but every person seeking admission was to purchase a cigar at the door for half-a-crown, and, puffing, pass in. The neighbourhood of the pavilion was then beginning to acquire the bad odour, for which it since became famous, for in every direction were taking root teetotum dens, reeking with infamy, some of which have since been known as the social plague spots of the city. The consequence was, that with little more than the faintest semblance of a circus, the occasion scraped together the scum of all the low villainy of the town; and during, and for hours after, the performances, the place and its precincts witnessed scenes of riot, blackguardism, and outrage of every kind. It so continued, and, whilst the authorities were considering the most effective means for its suppression, the concern suppressed itself by a burst-up, and the few horses and all the other tawdry paraphernalia were turned over to the hammer of an auctioneer. With the disappearance of his circus, Hayes also made himself scarce, and nothing further was ever publicly heard of him.

THE FIRST BLONDIN.

On the 3rd May, 1849, about five thousand persons congregated at the Melbourne Wharf to behold an ante-Blondin named Quinn, perform the feat of "crossing the line" over the Yarra. A rope made fast was passed over some twenty feet above the water, and triced midway to the mast of a cutter moored there for the purpose. Quinn, with a balancing pole, got through half of his journey, when the rope slackened a little, causing him to lose his footing; but recovering, he went through a variety of evolutions with hands and feet, and, by the same agency, worked his passage back to the starting point. The performance, altogether, occupied twenty minutes, and the distance was about a hundred yards. It was declared "that nothing like it had ever before been attempted in the Australian colonies." Mr. Michael McNamara, a tailor and City Councillor, passed round the hat.

THE FIRST VENTRILOQUISTS

To make a public appearance in Melbourne were a Messrs. McGregor and Meymott, Sydney arrivals, who, in June, 1849, gave some clever ventriloquial and musical entertainments at the Prince of Wales Hotel.

THE FIRST MESMERIST.

The first recorded experiments in animal magnetism were effected by Mr. George Wright, at Geelong, on the 22nd October, 1849. Great interest was excited, and several persons were operated upon with much success, especially in the case of three boys.
CHAPTER XXXVI.

HOW PORT PHILLIP WAS PEOPLED.

SYNOPSIS — Immigration and Emigration. — "The Bounty System."— "The Bounty System" Described.—First Immigration Board.—First Immigration Association.—Census, March, 1841.—Orphan Immigration.—Indignation Meetings.—Memorial to the Queen.—German Immigration.—Enumeration Tables, 1836 to 1841.—Condition of Population.

The newly occupied settlement was started by those who made their way to the district from Sydney and Van Diemen's Land by sea, and the adventurous rovers and drovers who attempted the wild and unknown overland journey from what soon came to be known as the Middle District of New South Wales. Fawkner's primitive population of a half-dozen men and one woman, the historical seven, who comprised the first white people of Melbourne, were not left long in a state of isolation, and ere six months had elapsed, they were not without a sprinkling of companions. During 1836 the progress in the way of colonisation was insignificant, though, considering the circumstances, even more than could be expected. Yet, though there was no legally constituted civil authority until the arrival of Captain Lonsdale, as Police Magistrate, in November, and not an inch of land had been legally alienated, there were at the close of the year, 50 acres in cultivation, and 75 horses, 125 horned cattle, and 24,332 sheep, revelling in the finest pasturage in the world. The first population return, taken in May, showed the total number of persons in the whole country (there was then no town) to be 177 souls, i.e., 142 males and 35 females, which number increased before the next New Year's Day to 186 males and 38 females, the six months having added only three ladies. Immigration, as applied to the increase of population in the early days, may be said to have commenced in 1837, for during that year 740 individuals were so added. The Port Phillipian contribution to the territorial revenue, by means of land sales, commenced in August of that year, and the golden eggs, thenceforth laid in clutches, were so eagerly looked after, that apprehensions were at times entertained that the goose would be killed. But all the eggs were rolled off to Sydney, though the produce of many of them, transfused into what were known as "Bounty Immigrants," was returned in human bone and sinew to the district.

OF THE BOUNTY SYSTEM

It may be interesting to give a few details. The Land Fund supplied the means, and was administered by Commissioners in London, acting in concert with the authorities in Sydney. The first regulations were issued on the 25th September, 1837, but as they were restricted, and offered what proved to be inadequate remuneration, they were revised subsequently, and what was termed "the bounties," increased. By a notification formulated from the Colonial Secretary's office, Sydney, and dated 3rd March, 1840, certain Immigration Regulations then in existence were revised, and it was determined to grant pecuniary aid under certain conditions to persons bringing into New South Wales from the United Kingdom, agricultural labourers, shepherds, carpenters, smiths, wheelwrights, bricklayers, masons, female domestics, and farm servants. The sum of £53 would be paid as a bounty for any married man of the foregoing descriptions, and his wife, neither of whose ages, on embarkation, to exceed forty years; £3 for each child between the ages of one and seven years; £10 for each between seven and fifteen; and £15 for each above fifteen years. £10 would be allowed for every unmarried female domestic or farm servant, not below fifteen, nor above thirty years, coming out under the protection of a married couple, as forming part of the family, and destined to remain with it until otherwise provided for; and a like amount for every unmarried male
mechanic, or agricultural labourer, from eighteen to thirty years, brought out by a person, at the same time
bringing an equal number of females, accompanying and attached to a family.

On the ship arriving at its destination the charterers were bound to provide the immigrants
with suitable accommodation on shore, or allow them to remain on board for ten clear days from anchoring,
and to ration them as on the voyage. Before any payments were made the immigrants were required
to present themselves before a Board of Inspection, appointed by the Governor, and the adults were
to exhibit testimonials of good character, signed by clergymen and respectable persons of note in the places
of their former residence; with which testimonials it was necessary that every family and single person
should be provided. The Board had also to be satisfied of the satisfactory fulfilment of the prescribed
conditions, and of the “good bodily health and strength of the immigrants, and that in all other respects
they were likely to be useful members of their class in society.” The wives and families of soldiers
in regiments in New South Wales or in Van Diemen’s Land, and of persons serving under sentence
of transportation in either colony, were excluded from the regulations.

In October, 1841, the bounties were extended to married couples, although above 40, if not exceeding
50 years of age, but hale and capable of work, provided they were accompanied by one child over
10 years, for every two years the ages of the parents exceeded 40. But if either parent was over 50, no
bounty would be paid on account of any member of the family, unless qualified as a single man or woman
under the regulations. It was further to be understood that parties between the ages of 40 and 50,
accompanied by children under 10 years, if in addition to the requisite number above that age, would not
be considered ineligible on that account, nor would bounty be withheld on such children, if the family
were in all other respects qualified according to the regulations prescribed.

The first Immigration Board of Inspection in Port Phillip consisted of Dr. John Patterson, R.N.
(the Immigration Agent), Messrs. Edward Lionel, Lee (Private Secretary to the Superintendent), and
C. M. Lewis (Harbor Master). When an immigrant vessel arrived in the Bay, she was boarded the day
after by the members of the Board, who improvised a kind of court in the cabin, and before them the
immigrants filed off, were looked at, asked if they had any complaint to make, and then sent about their
business. The ceremony was of a very perfunctory kind. The employers of labour crowded the ship’s deck,
anxious to engage town or country hands, and a considerable number would be engaged in this way. Those
who remained left the vessel in a few days, and were for a short time located in tents in Melbourne, where
the engagements would be resumed, and the tents were soon emptied. The first immigrants’ depot was
southward of the Prince’s Bridge, about or on the site of what afterwards was known as the Immigrants’
Home on the Government House Reserve; but its distance from town, the inconvenience of crossing on
a punt, and the establishment between the Yarra and Emerald Hill of a small colony of the rascality of the
period led to the removal of the depot to the “Government block,” west of King Street, where it continued
for several years. The Bounty System was full of abuses, and often afforded reason for well-founded
complaint, but with all its drawbacks, the benefits it rendered the weak, struggling infant settlement were
incalculable.

In 1838 immigration added 1260 units of humanity, a total nearly doubled the next year. 1839 was
an important era in the early peopling, because, during its latter half, there was a number of very desirable
arrivals, merchants, professionals, and others, who introduced considerable capital for investment. The
equitabe distribution of the land fund was a question of much interest, and the first efforts of public
opinion were directed towards preventing the Sydney side from having the lion’s share. Though not
as successful as could be wished, this primitive agitation effected good so far that it undoubtedly obtained
for Port Phillip more than it would otherwise have got.

An Immigration Association

Was formed at a public meeting of colonists, held at the Auction Company’s Rooms (south-west corner of
Collins and Williams Streets) on the 19th December, 1840. It was presided over by Mr. Latrobe (the
Provincial Superintendent), and originated in a proposition made by the Australian Immigration Society at
Sydney for the establishment of a branch Association at Melbourne. It was, however, the unanimous

This Association does not appear to have effected much good directly, possibly through the absence of concerted and continuous exertion; but the Province was indirectly in various ways augmenting its population. Over 4000 persons were added by immigration in 1840, during which year there were 336 births as against 198 deaths.

A census taken (2nd March, 1840) showed the total population of the Province as 16,671, or 11,254 males and 5417 females. The inhabitants of Melbourne numbered 4479, or 2676 males to 1803 females, of which total 152 were children under two years, and only two persons over 60. Geelong had 454 residents, or 304 males and 150 females, including 10 under two years, none over 60, and only one individual between 45 and 60. In all the rest of Port Phillip, outside Melbourne and Geelong, there were only six sexagenarians, and 305 persons under two years. The social condition of this human aggregation was—Males married, 2581; males unmarried, 8673. Females married, 2485; females unmarried, 2932.

In the town of Melbourne there were 809 married, and 1867 unmarried, males; whilst the married females were 785, and the unmarried 1020.

At the close of 1841 the population was over 20,000, of which 6908 were the result of immigration; whilst the births had swelled to 618, and the deaths were 319. The census also shows that 939 persons "emigrated," i.e., I presume, went away to seek their fortunes elsewhere. In 1842 the immigration was slightly over 4000, and emigration slightly under 2000; whilst in 1843, as against 1264 immigrants, there were 2000 emigrants, an adverse balance about squared by the preponderance of births over deaths, for there were 4335 of the former to 315 of the latter. The cry for more people was incessantly rung out by the newspapers, and at every public meeting held for any purpose the question of immigration was mostly sure to be in some way or other ventilated.

The population went on gradually enlarging, and the future Young Victoria commenced to put in an appearance of some significance, for the year 1845, when the total population was estimated at 34,286, of which 4335 were the immediate result of immigration, had to its credit 4521 births. Still the cry was for more; and the settlers especially were always hankering after labour cheap and in sufficiency; and both in the colony, and through the influence of capitalists in England, pecuniarily interested in banking, commercial, and squatting pursuits here, unscrupulous subterfuges were resorted to, either in the shape of open and undisguised convictism, ticket-of-leave men from Van Diemen's Land, or "exileism," as it was termed, from England. Happily for the country such dodges were frustrated by the uncompromising hostility of the population of Melbourne to any measure tending to introduce the penal system, even in the most diluted form. (Further particulars upon this point are given in the chapter on Transportation.)

Public meetings were occasionally held, but emigration had no rallying power in it to stir the multitude to enthusiasm. The following is a brief notice of two such events in 1847, condensed from old newspapers:

"On the 16th August, 1847, a meeting was held at the Royal Hotel, Collins Street, and presided over by the Mayor (Mr. H. Moor). The principal speakers were Messrs. Edward Curr, W. F. Splatt, John Duerdin, and William Kerr. A resolution was passed affirming, 'That in consequence of the extreme scarcity of labour in the Port Phillip District, it was imperative that an effort should be made to prevent the Land Fund of the Province being absorbed in immigration to the Middle District.' The draft of a Petition on the subject was approved, and ordered to be transmitted to the Governor of New South Wales."
Another meeting for the promotion of systematic immigration was held at the same place, 20th September, at which the Mayor also presided. This was got up by "squatters and others" interested in the matter, and addresses were delivered by Messrs. Edward Curr, Colin Campbell, W. F. Splitt, J. C. Riddell, and Edmund Westby. A Petition to the Governor was adopted, and it was resolved to form an Association to advance the object in view.

Orphan Immigration.

In the course of 1848, the Home Government conceived a design to transmit to this portion of the Colony of New South Wales, a supply of female labour, consisting of orphan girls selected from the poor-houses of Great Britain and Ireland—chiefly the latter. In May the first batch arrived, and thenceforth only at infrequent intervals. To provide some sort of machinery for looking after the youngest, and helping to procure them suitable employment, the Sydney Government appointed the Right Reverends the Protestant and Roman Catholic Bishops (Drs. Perry and Goold), Very Rev. P. B. Geoghegan (Roman Catholic Vicar-General), Rev. Irving Hetherington (Presbyterian Minister), Rev. A. C. Thomson (Episcopalian Minister), with Messrs. Edward Curr, Wm. Lonsdale, John Patterson (Immigration Agent), R. W. Pohlman, Andrew Russell, J. H. Ross, and James Simpson, a Port Phillip Orphan Immigration Committee and Board of Guardians.

The girls, though rough enough in some respects, were honest, virtuous, and teachable. After entering service many of them proved to be excellent household servants. There were at the time certain malcontents in Melbourne, chronic fault-finders, and foremost among them were Mr. William Kerr and the Argus newspaper. This journal was not then the influential and money-making Leviathan it is now, but a paltry urchin, only four years old, with a tenure of life precarious enough, and engaged in a hard struggle for existence. It was founded by Kerr, and after parting company with him, continued the mouthpiece of his party. The Pauper Immigration was, therefore, used as a good "cry" from both a national and sectarian point of view, and the most alarming predictions were indulged regarding the demoralizing and proselytizing influences exercised by the arrival of a few hundred young girls in a new colony, where an equalization of the sexes was a requirement which a true philanthropist would welcome with satisfaction. The supposed discontent was fanned at every opportunity. The Argus charged the orphan girls with the grossest incapacity, dishonesty, and immorality, and averred that it was from their ranks that Melbourne street harlotry was recruited. From the newspaper the question was transferred to the City Council, where in 1850 Alderman Kerr moved a resolution for an Address to the Queen, protesting against the continuance of the pernicious system. After much vacillation on the part of the Council, the Address, though at first affirmed and then buried, was finally carried, and transmitted to its destination. It was, however, completely nullified by counter proceedings. A public meeting was held on the 18th April at St. Francis' school-room, off Lonsdale Street, at which Bishop Goold presided, and several indignation speeches were delivered by Dean Coffey, the Revs. H. A. Downie, and T. Slattery, Messrs. J. O'Shanassy, J. Lynch, J. W. Dunbar, J. Ballingall, James Main, S. Duggan, P. M'Donough, H. Cain, P. Kennedy, and others. Strongly worded resolutions were also passed, viz.: (a) "Denouncing in the most unqualified language the charges as 'a base calumny. A wilful contradiction of facts and experience.'" (b) "Pledging protection and encouragement to a highly virtuous and deserving class of immigrants." (c) "Declaring that the City Council had no right to meddle with such a question;" and (d) "The appointment of a Committee to prepare a Memorial to the Queen, in contravention of the mis-statements in the Council manifesto."

But the most irrefutable vindication of the Irish orphan girls emanated from the St. Patrick Society. Mr. E. Finn was then Vice-President of that Association (a sketch of which is given elsewhere), and being connected with the Herald, he had special facilities for hunting out information in days when no Government Statist figured in Melbourne, and anything like reliable statistics were officially difficult of obtainment. He ransacked the records of the Police Court, and the gaol, procured information from the Immigration Agent, the Chief-Constable, the detectives and ordinary police, and, seized of every possible fact that could be gathered, he convened a special meeting of the Society, at which the attendance of the public was invited. On the evening of the 7th May, 1850, St. Patrick's Hall was crowded, for
there were over 700 persons present. Mr. Finn presided, and in opening the business, delivered a lengthy and elaborate address, detailing the result of his investigations with a precision that carried conviction on the face of it. The allegations put forth by the Argus, and in the City Council, were torn to shreds, names of authorities given, facts and figures produced, chapter and verse quoted, and the refutation was so complete that the Argus, as if stricken by its journalistic conscience, did what newspapers were not then in the habit of doing, made an amende, so far as to publish the portion of the address which had so effectually turned the tables. It did so, however, without a syllable of retractation, apology, or even comment. The statement seemed to have come upon the Journal as a surprise, and further than has been stated it maintained a solemn silence. The meeting was also addressed by Messrs. James Wallace, Jeremiah Dalton, P. McDonough, H. Cain, J. Devine, P. Kennedy, J. W. Dunbar, M. H. Hickey, James Greene, Henry Hayden, John Bourke, and W. Finn. Resolutions were passed:

1. "Denouncing as gross and unfounded the charges of immorality and dishonesty preferred, expressing the deepest indignation at the shameful perversion of truth indulged in, and attributing to the slanderers a desire to prejudice Irish emigration to the colony, and to blacken the national character of Ireland."

2. "Averting that the Irish Orphan Female Immigrants had, generally speaking, supplied a description of labour urgently required, as proved by the greater number of them having met with ready engagements and rendered satisfaction to their employers by their honesty and good conduct."

3. "That the interference of the City Council was an uncalled for and unjustifiable abuse of a representative power vested for purely local purposes—the administration of the Corporation Act—and in no other way representative of the Province."

4. "That a copy of the resolutions be forwarded to the Superintendent for transmission to the Secretary of State for the Colonies."

The unprovoked rashness of the City Council was long remembered; but time, which sooner or later softens every animosity, gradually effaced the impressions of the injustice from the public mind.

GERMAN IMMIGRATION

Was from an early period regarded as a desirable mode of increasing our population, and adding to it a contingent which had in other parts of the world proved a valuable contributor in developing the industrial resources of new colonies. Mr. William Westgarth paid special attention to the subject, and during a visit to England rendered valuable service in directing attention to Port Phillip as a suitable place for the exercise of German industry. On his return to the Province in 1849, a public meeting was held at the Royal Hotel on the 4th December, with Mr. C. H. Ebden as Chairman, at which Mr. Westgarth said 400 immigrants were shortly to arrive from Hamburg and Rotterdam, Dr. Thomson, of Geelong, having arranged with 10 families for three years. The immigrants included many vine dressers and were in family groups. They were coming under charter with the Messrs. Godefroy, who gave them credit for one half the passage money, the balance to be paid by those who employed them. Mr. Westgarth suggested the appointment of a committee to render assistance on the arrival of the consignment, and thought there ought to be a paid German Secretary, familiar with the English language. Messrs. Wm. Westgarth, J. Hodgson, R. W. Weede, W. F. Buckey, J. Hoffman, —— Buddoo, Wm. Kerr, Dr. Casperson and Dr. Black, were appointed for the purpose indicated, and Mr. Westgarth was warmly thanked for the kindly and patriotic interest manifested.

The philanthropic exertions of Mrs. Caroline Chisholm in promoting family immigration to New South Wales and Port Phillip have become such well accredited portions of our colonial history as renders it unnecessary to dwell further on the subject here, beyond stating that the lady's husband (Captain Archibald Chisholm) came among us early in 1851, as assistant missionary. Before the ensuing New Year was rung in there was no need for co-operative or sympathetic demonstrations, for Victoria was the golden point of attraction, to which people hurried from every quarter of the civilized globe, and its inhabitants numbered close upon one hundred thousand.
It may not be inappposite to conclude this notice with the following summary of the population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Enumeration</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Number of Houses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 25, 1836</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 8, 1836</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 12, 1838</td>
<td>3,511</td>
<td>3,080</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>1,490</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2, 1841</td>
<td>11,328</td>
<td>8,774</td>
<td>3,554</td>
<td>7,695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2, 1846</td>
<td>30,879</td>
<td>20,184</td>
<td>10,695</td>
<td>5,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2, 1851</td>
<td>77,345</td>
<td>46,202</td>
<td>31,143</td>
<td>6,935</td>
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The census returns for 1851 supply the following particulars:

**SOCIAL CONDITION.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12,529</td>
<td>17,498</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33,673</td>
<td>18,045</td>
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**CIVIL CONDITION.**

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<tr>
<th>Born in the Colony or arrived free</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<td>33,673</td>
<td>36,006</td>
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<table>
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<th>Other free persons</th>
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<th>Females</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,053</td>
<td>3,143</td>
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<th>Holding tickets of leave</th>
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<th>Females</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>In Government employ</th>
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<td>79</td>
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<th>In private assignment</th>
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<th>Females</th>
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**RELIGION.**

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<th>Church of England</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<td></td>
<td>17,433</td>
<td>16,608</td>
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<th>Church of Scotland</th>
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<th>Females</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,988</td>
<td>5,866</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Wesleyan Methodists</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,313</td>
<td>4,888</td>
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<th>Other Protestants</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,313</td>
<td>4,888</td>
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<tr>
<th>Roman Catholics</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18,014</td>
<td>18,014</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Jews</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Mahommedans and Pagans</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<td></td>
<td>201</td>
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<table>
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<th>Other Persuasions</th>
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<th>Females</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>424</td>
<td>424</td>
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**HOUSES.**

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<tr>
<th>Stone or Brick</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<td></td>
<td>4,864</td>
<td>4,864</td>
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<th>Wood</th>
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<th>Females</th>
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<td></td>
<td>6,128</td>
<td>6,128</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Shingled</th>
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<th>Females</th>
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<td>9,912</td>
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<tr>
<th>Slated</th>
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<th>Females</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Finished</th>
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<th>Females</th>
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<td></td>
<td>10,237</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unfinished</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>698</td>
<td>698</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inhabited</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10,866</td>
<td>10,866</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uninhabited</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
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FINK, Edmund, 1819-1896.
The chronicles of early Melbourne, 1835-1852.