

OUR THEATRICAL PLAYGROUND.

THE Casino, for the time being, has deserted the French and German composers of comic opera and taken up the early English humor of Gilbert wed- & d to the modern English music of Sullivan. "The Yeoman of the Guard," the latest production of these two writers, is now in the full tide of its run at the Casino. It is doubtful, however, if its prosperity will approach anywhere near that of its predecessor, "The Mikado." The theme does not admit of the same supply of fun, life, color or picturesqueness in acting, and while Sir Arthur Sullivan has given US some of the best music he has ever written, it is not destined to strike the popular fancy. A comic opera that does not win popular taste is sure to be short-lived. This may not be evidence of good taste, but it is true, nevertheless. The manner, however, in which "The Yeoman of the Guard" is put on the stage here, as regards costumes and appointments, is good; but when the cast is considered it is time to hesitate in praise. With the exception of Miss Bertha Ricci, Mr. Ryley and Mr. Solomon, the other principals engaged to present it are unequal to the task. In women, particularly, is "The Yeoman" weak. Miss Sylvia Gerrish and Miss Isabella Urquhart are, to put it mildly, not happy in the rôles to which they are assigned. Vocally, they are not up to the mark, and their acting is on a parallel with their singing. The male members of the company are also of inferior make-up. All the coaching of Mr. Richard Barker, the London stage-manager, cannot make singers and actors without the proper material. With a good caste, "The Yeoman of the Guard" would have been a great success here, as it is now given. While it is by no means a failure, it has disappointed numbers who anticipated with pleasure its production.

A MELODRAMATIC UNDER-CURRENT.

Augustin Daly has once more plunged into the exciting scenes and thrilling situations of melodrama. With the production of "The Under-Current" at Niblo's, he has gone back to his first and early love. "The Under Current" is a reminiscent kind of work in which familiar scenes are called to mind, but Mr. Daly has been candid enough to acknowledge the source from which he had taken them. To "Under the Gaslight," one of the most successful local dramas of its day, and "A Flash of Lightning," he is indebted for some of his effects. Both plays named were written by Mr. Daly. He has availed himself of some of the material contained in these works effectively. "The Under-Current" is English in story, English in character, and the scenes are all laid in England. The play was not successful, and after a short time was withdrawn from the stage of Niblo's.

THE ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE DRAMA.

Charles H. Hoyt is one of the most prolific writers of the present day in a class of so-called farcical comedies. "A Hole in the Ground," "The Parlor Match" and "A Brass Monkey" are the names of a few of his most successful works. They have been played in this and other cities to overflowing houses. One peculiarity of the Hoyt *pot-pourri* is that while people as a rule declare that the produc-

tions are rubbish and "all that kind of thing," they crowd the theatres in which they are given, to enjoy the Hoyt nonsense and be amused at its absurdities. It is not, however, the story, its manner of construction, or the dialogue of a Hoyt skit which entertains, nearly so much as the situations, music, and rough-and-tumble business of a number of fairly clever people of variety-show tendencies. The Hoyt order of play will not live long, but the prolific author of this curiously named theatrical driftwood is bright enough to perceive that amusement seekers relish nonsense and absurdity on the stage, no matter how ridiculous, and he furnishes a supply equal to the demand.

OUR MARY'S RETURN.

Mary Anderson's return to the United States and her reappearance in this city was hailed with welcome. It is three years since she left here to play a return engagement in England. Her success abroad has been such as she may feel just pride in. It moreover serves as a rebuke to a certain class of people who claim there is no English recognition for American talent. The absurdity of this assumption is self-evident, "A Winter's Tale," as presented at Palmer's Theatre by Miss Anderson and her company is a creditable production.

ENGLISH BURLESQUE BY ENGLISH PLAYERS.

Nellie Farren and Fred Leslie, of the Gaiety Theatre, London, arrived in this city just prior to the presidential election, and opened at the Standard Theatre shortly after in the burlesque, "Monte Cristo, Jr." Miss Farren has been the pet of the London public for twenty years or more. She won her place to honorable regard by her acknowledged abilities as an actress of burlesque characters. Her talent, however, is not confined to this class of entertainment alone. A long experience on the stage—she began her career before the footlights when she was a child—has given her opportunity to attempt all kinds, of parts. In the romantic, domestic and Shakespearian drama she has made a commendable record. Boys' parts are her particular specialty, and in these she excels. Miss Farren has introduced English burlesque in its best form to New Yorkers. The attempt has been made before by other companies from London, but shapely forms in scanty costumes were suborned to the artistic requirements of the performers. In English burlesque, as given by Miss Farren and her Gaiety Company, we get an attractive travesty told with intelligent action, bright music, movement and life. It has made an impression as it deserved, while it has given contradiction to the theory entertained by the few that because Londoners could not recognize the burlesque elements in an American company sent hastily abroad, a New York public would reject an English burlesque company here. Bringing coals to Newcastle must, in the regular order of things, prove unprofitable, but there was no good reason why the theatre-goers of this city should withhold their patronage from an entertainment which has won the attention of the amusement seekers of the British metropolis. The engagement of the London Gaiety Company at the Standard has taught us much in the line of burlesque.

RICHARD NEVILLE.