

Dr. and Mrs. Fitch have not, as was reported, left the country, but are boarding now at Mrs. Esdaile's.

The Orpheus Club gave a Complimentary benefit concert last night to Mr. S. Porter, organist, of St. Paul's, who is about to change his residence to Annapolis. The hall was well filled, and the programme a very taking one. The soloists were all popular favorites; both orchestra and chorus did good work, and altogether the concert may be called a success both musically and financially. Mr. S. Porter has done a great deal for music in Halifax, and has been connected for a very long time with our musical affairs: he was always ready to give a helping hand to all movements in musical matters here, and it was therefore only to be expected that a good house would testify to our appreciation of his long, and faithful services.

We trust that we will be pardoned for remarking that what is called a "Testimonial Complimentary Concert" is somewhat of a misnomer: there is always a good deal of trouble in selling the tickets,—intending purchasers scrutinize the quality of the programme, and are careful to secure 75 cents worth of music in return for a 50 cent investment, not to mention the satisfaction of passing as patrons of music and friends (!) of the beneficiary.

In England and in the United States, a substantial Benefit is given by friends taking a number of tickets, and paying for them,—not for sale, as is done here,—but to give away or even not use at all. This is the true and correct meaning of a "Benefit," which is not understood or appreciated in Halifax.

The Academy was thronged on Tuesday night, to witness an Assault-at-Arms, given by members of the 63rd Rifles, and great credit redounds on all concerned. The full band of the Regiment was in attendance and played a good selection of music.

It is needless to say that the chief attraction was Instructor Sergt. Kelly, who proved himself a first-class man all round, and his pupils may congratulate themselves on having one with them that can not only *tell* them, but also *show* them how. Through unforeseen circumstances one or two lines in the programme had to be omitted, but the only harm this did was to render the termination of the performance rather abrupt. The dumb-bell exercise was noticeable for the good time kept by the performers. In the parallel bar, and vaulting exercises, the squad was seen at its best, no one member could with truth be put in the "awkward class." Where all were good it may seem invidious to pick out any for special praise, but perhaps after all it may lead to a greater spirit of emulation to mention one or two names—W. J. Forbes as an all round man, is an athlete of whom any Gymnastic Society might be proud, doing all his work clearly and well, looking all the time as if he meant business. And the latter remark applies to all the men, and tho' we have seen many such performances, we have very seldom seen one go off with so little stiffness. Private McCulloch was very neat in all his work, doing it in a quiet unobtrusive manner, and showing in the Trapeze act with Instructor Kelly an amount of nerve not generally possessed by amateurs. We do not wish to find fault, but we think that this number might very well be omitted from an Amateur performance, and left to those who make a living by taking these extra risks. We must not forget to mention the magnificent vaulting of Private Ruggles; it was a treat to witness. The foregoing acts introduced a new feature to Halifax, except when we are visited by a peripatetic circus. "Skibbo" is a clown, and a good clown too; there is no amateurishness noticeable in him, in fact, we have a very strong idea, that this was rubbed off years ago, by the aid of a ring sprinkled with a liberal supply of saw-dust. We can only say that if he is as good a soldier as he is a clown, he is of value to his regiment. We expect when he next appears he will show that he can even do more than he did at this entertainment. And here we must enter one protest, and that is that when an individual takes part in any performance, under an assumed name, for reasons known only to

himself, it is worse than bad taste for a newspaper man to publish his proper name. The Indian Club-swinging by Private A. Smith, cannot be too highly commended.

The only thing we can say about the boxing, the exponents being so unequally matched, is to congratulate the receiver on the good-tempered way in which he took the "gruel" administered by Instructor Kelly. We congratulate the 63rd on having secured the services of such an able man as their Instructor, and the Instructor on having such material to work upon.

So Mr. Ferguson is not going to be flogged, after all! This humanitarianism is a sign of the times, and almost more than would be expected in a new country. The question of violent punishment by the state is, and will be for some time, one of the burning questions of the day. We would ourselves take one of two standpoints. We do not believe in the present system, which is obviously a transition stage, and therefore unsatisfactory. It is very doubtful whether capital punishment or flogging act as deterrents to any extent; most men who commit the crimes so avenged are either mad—by anger, drink, or constitution—or think themselves clever enough to escape detection. On the other hand, this method continually familiarizes the public mind with ideas of brute force and murder, and familiarity in the long run is the strongest incentive. We would, therefore, advocate one of two courses; either to abolish capital punishment and flogging altogether, endeavoring to utilize the labour of convicts so as to make it pay expenses; or to make the system more general, and administer the floggings to all who are convicted of being useless to society, so long as there is any possible hope of their redemption; those who are found hopelessly useless being eventually hanged, or otherwise disposed of. This latter system will be condemned at first sight as brutal, but it is more just and more rational than the one at present in vogue: as it is we dismiss to the other world an occasional member whom we are quite capable of reforming, and who has possibly done his share of real service to the community at large; while we keep in our midst many who are, and always will be, utterly useless, whose presence is a constant hindrance to social progress, and whose reformation lies beyond the power of earthly appliances. If we are to refer any to the highest Tribunal before their natural time, surely it should be the latter class and not the former.

But all this has nothing to do with Ferguson. The real question at issue just now is whether or not it is time for flogging to be erased from our penal code. If so, let it be erased, and have done with it; but if not, let it be enforced; one thing or the other; but it is absurd to keep penalties in the statute-book only to be waived in response to a sentimental petition.

Major Bor and Mr. MacGowan have returned from their shooting expedition in New Brunswick, with hardly a big enough bag to compensate for so long a journey.

Mr. H. B. Clarke has arranged for the Redmund-Barry Company to appear at the Academy in a few days, starting off with "*A Cure for the Blues.*"

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