

SKETCH OF WILLIAM NORTHCOTT.

This popular cornetist, like the majority of good players upon that instrument, is of English birth, having been born the 13th of May, 1841, in the county of Devonshire, England. His career has been so full of incident and adventure that the brief space of a newspaper article is insufficient to narrate them all, but we will indite a portion of those most interesting to the general musical public.

Mr. Northcott's musical studies were began at the early age of nine years under the tuition of that celebrated cornetist, Norton, who was then leader of the Marine Band at Plymouth. Master Northcott progressed so rapidly upon his chosen instrument that at the age of thirteen years and six months he was requested by Captain Kepple, who was then commanding the line-of-battle ship *St. Jean d'Acre*, of the British navy, (upon which Mr. Northcott's brother was leader of the band) to join the ship. This proposition exactly suited his inclinations, but before it was carried into effect the *St. Jean d'Acre* received her orders and sailed for the Black Sea to participate in the Russian war, without Master Northcott. He, however, was destined to go, and as the *Princess Royal*, of the British navy was to leave Plymouth just one week later for the same destination, young Northcott with his usual determination of character, decided not to lose such an opportunity to see some of the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war."

Provided with a letter from Captain Kepple, he went aboard of the *Princess Royal*, and solicited her commander, Capt. Paget, to give him a passage to the Black Sea that he might join the *St. Jean d'Acre*. The request was granted, and on the voyage our youthful hero played the cornet so effectively that he became a general favorite with the officers and crew. A month after leaving Plymouth he had reached the Black Sea and was gladdened by being received on the *St. Jean d'Acre*, where, with his usual success he speedily became one of the most popular members of the company. In a few weeks Capt. Kepple, his ship and band, were transferred to the naval squadron at the Crimea, and thus Master Northcott, before attaining his fourteenth birth-

day, was right in the thickest of the fray, and experiencing the rigors of the most trying winter for which Russia is noted in recent history: He participated in many battles and was present at the memorable fall of Sebastopol. At the close of the Crimean war he returned to Merry England and was paid off from the *Rodney* at Portsmouth, January, 1856.

Sighing for new adventures and pleased with naval life, Mr. Northcott joined that famous man-o-war, the "*Conqueror*," at Plymouth and sailed for the Mediterranean, remaining on that ship during its commission from 1856 to 1859. During this period he made great progress and was especially distinguished by his playing at Naples before the King and other exalted personages.

This cruise was completed by the crew and band being paid off from the "*Conqueror*," and Mr. Northcott then joined the "*Nile*," as leading cornet player and soloist of the band. A noteworthy incident of this engagement was that the band of the "*Nile*" was detailed to accompany H. R. H., Prince of Wales, and his retinue in their travels through Canada, throughout which occasion Mr. Northcott received the highest encomiums from the Prince and his conferees for the masterly rendition of his elegant solos.

At the expiration of the ship's term, which consisted of four years and four months, Mr. Northcott having been ten years in Her Majesty's service, concluded to pay a visit to his parents. As they had been infected with the Australian gold fever and had removed to that far-off clime, he sailed in 1864 for Australia, arriving there in due time and without special incident to mark the voyage.

At Sandhurst, Victoria, our irrepressible organizer and executant started the Northcott Sandhurst Brass Band and created considerable stir by introducing "sacred concerts" on Sundays in the Camp Reserved at that town. It was so successful that he remained in Sandhurst for four years, when the roving passion again attacked him and he betook himself to New Zealand. Here he assumed the charge of a band at Christ Church over which he presided for six months, but those were stirring times and he then left that quiet locality for the gold fields at Auckland, to try a miner's life. He soon found that

he could draw more "notes" from his horn than he could nuggets from the earth, and he joined a concert company playing through New Zealand with great success. Having used up that section of the globe he determined upon a visit to America and embarked on the "*City of Melbourne*," for San Francisco.

Before reaching Honolulu, Northcott had heard that the steamer would lie over to coal for two or three days at that port and immediately determined upon giving a concert to the Sandwich Islanders. During the voyage he had discovered considerable musical talent among the passengers and after a hasty preparation he succeeded in rendering a very creditable concert. So much so that Mr. Northcott was immediately applied to by the government of that locality to remain and take charge of a band which was then being formed. As this offer included a fine salary he signed contracts with the government and remained until he had brought the band up to a high pitch of excellence. This is especially noteworthy as the band at its inception were mostly youths entirely ignorant of the technicalities of music. This band still exists as a veteran organization, and are never weary of sounding the praises of their first instructor, who in his turn ascribes to the native boys of that island an unusual aptitude and diligence in the study of music.

At the expiration of fifteen months, however, the desire to visit America returned, and he embarked for San Francisco, where he landed in the month of September, 1871. At that time there was being incepted a performance by a grand orchestra of one hundred and thirty performers for the benefit of the sufferers by the great Chicago fire. Mr. Northcott was selected as one of the soloists, and this gave the young artist a grand entree to the affections of the inhabitants of the Pacific Slope, where he remained for three successful months giving many well-received entertainments at the Woodland Gardens, etc.

The following winter Mr. Northcott came east, and settled in New York City, taking his first engagement there with Henry Tissinging (leader at the Grand Opera House,) as soloist; afterwards in the same capacity with Mme. Parepa Rosa. In the autumn of 1872 he joined Carncross' Minstrels, an organization then famous for the excel-