

THE STAGE

(By "Comus.")

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

WATKIN MILLS' RECITALS.

The famous English basso, who possesses Santley's power and art, in addition to a strength and juvenility all his own, has made good the claims of eminence that preceded him. Like Santley, he charms so completely by his naturalness that you are haunted with the suspicion that you have been cheated. "Why," you say, "that is just how I would sing myself, if only I had the voice and the knowledge of technique." What you mean to express is that the singer satisfies your own sense of completeness, and when you say that you pay him the highest compliment in your power. His art has the rare quality that "grows" on one. His first few notes produce a feeling of disappointment. You expected a supernatural tone and you got just the sound of a man's voice. You had heard scores of other voices that resembled it so closely that you could not tell the difference. Exactly. But you soon found where the difference lay. It was in the marvellous manipulation of the natural gift. All buildings are made of brick and stone, all gardens are formed of flowers, and grass, and trees, but the difference between Milan Cathedral and the warehouses by the London docks; between Versailles and a London suburb! The range of Mr Mills' art is astonishing. He loves the classics, but his taste is Catholic as that of his audience, and he beautifies everything he touches, from an aria by Gounod, or Handel, or Mendelssohn, or Abt, to the popular ballads of the day, the rollicking rhymes of the Highlands, or the rustic songs of Somersetshire. Mr Parlovitz, the pianist who accompanies Mr Mills, is a genuine artist, and his contributions in their own way gave equal delight with those of the great singer. As an accompanist he is simply admirable. The recitals were resumed last night, and will be continued to-morrow (Friday), when the season closes. No lover of music should miss the present all too scanty opportunities.

MR JACK CARKEEK.

A SCIENTIFIC WRESTLER.

It will be welcome news to the thousands of athletes in and around Auckland to learn that Jack Carkeek, the champion wrestler of the world, is not to leave for his home in America without paying Auckland a visit, and consequently his short season will commence at His Majesty's Theatre on Saturday next, when he will be supported by an unusually strong Vaudeville Company, specially selected by Mr Harry Rickards, under whose auspices Carkeek visited Australia. Carkeek is an American by birth, although his parents hail from Cornwall, England, and inherited his love for the game he follows so ardently from his father, who made a name for himself in the Cornish rings, when doughtier men than those prominent to-day were won't to cry, "Stand back, sticklers! Make a ring for them," and "Cornwall's the country for the men who can play."

Carkeek holds the undisputed right to the title "Champion Wrestler of the World." To him is undoubtedly due the honour of being the pioneer of the new birth of wrestling London has witnessed during the past eighteen months. The famous wrestler came to Australia six months ago under engagement to Mr Harry Rickards, and his appearance everywhere throughout the Commonwealth has been a tremendous success, fully justifying Mr Rickards paying Carkeek the highest salary ever paid to an artist that ever came to the country. Carkeek is particularly modest, and impresses one with the fact that his end and aim is not "to wipe the floor with everybody" nor to brag about who he has beaten in his time. Carkeek comes prepared to meet all comers, and should he not throw any competitor within fifteen minutes he is prepared to forfeit £10 as penalty for his failure. His measurements will be read with interest by all athletes. He scales 14st 7lb, is 45in round the chest (normal) and 3in more expanded, waist 36in, neck 17½in, biceps 17½in, calf 17½in, thigh 22½in, and height 5ft 9½in. On the subject of

"falls" Carkeek favours only both shoulders on the ground.

The following paragraphs from the Sydney "Telegraph's" notice of Mr Carkeek's first appearance in Sydney makes a reference to Mr Harry Pearce, who recently showed here with the Fullers. The "Telegraph" says:—

The world's champion appeared first in evening dress, but soon shed that garb, and stood in the orthodox wrestling costume—a splendidly-built man, evidently fully up to all his reputation credited him with.

Carkeek began with his newly-engaged partner, Harry Pearce, who has been in Australia several years and defeated many first-class wrestlers, including two or three doughty Afghans. Pearce, through not having had a match for a long time, stripped very gross, and carried perhaps 2st or 3st of superfluous tissue. Under these circumstances it was only to be expected that Carkeek would prove master from beginning to end, albeit Pearce frequently exhibited flashes

the scarcely inferior tenor, Mr Hart, Miss Kate Maher, the winsome little McAuley Sisters, Tillie Dunbar, Joe Rocks, Tod Calloway, and other comedians, continue to charm, and Victor, the ventriloquist, every evening sets up a colourable claim to be considered the rival of Valentine Vox. The show is growing in public appreciation, and good houses continue to be the rule.

CHRISTCHURCH NOTES.

My Christchurch correspondent writes:—The visit of the Williamson Comedy Company is proving as welcome as sunshine to this flat and dreary city. "The Marriage of Kitty" was an immense success, and "Sassie," with a big "S" has attended the nuptials of the fascinating Kate. Of course, lucky Aucklanders have seen the famous comedy ages ago, so that any detailed notice of the plot, and so forth, would be out of place. Perhaps the most striking feature of the performance was the wonderfully natural way in which the company enacted their

adventures, pure and simple. And yet, here again, the clever actress scored a great artistic success. Maggie Knight (now known as Mrs Henderson) is in the cast, and plays Mrs Bolingbroke with conspicuous ability. Mr Draycott makes an admirable Governor, and Mr A. Ford (made-up to represent a political celebrity of world-wide fame) confirmed the good impression he produced in the opening piece. To-night (Saturday) "The Haymarket success," "The Widow Woos," as a curtain-raiser, and on Tuesday and Wednesday, the two last nights of the season, the bill is to consist of "Margery's Troubles" and "Cousin Kate." The season, so far, has been enormously successful, both artistically and financially. Somehow our old friend, Harold Ashton, touring manager for J. C. Williamson, always manages to bring us something good, so that his mere presence in advance of a company sets us all on the tip-toe of expectation.

Fullers' Opera House show is better and brighter than ever. The marvellous Uessem's packed the house from floor to ceiling every night they were here, and now Professor Parker, "The Handcuff King," is proving a trump-card for the management. His performance is probably the most wonderful of its kind ever witnessed on any stage. The Swifts are also a great attraction, and their admirable rendering of the little play, "Counsel's Opinion" (rendered familiar to New Zealand theatregoers by the Hawtrey Company) never fails to meet with the appreciation of Opera House audiences.

Paderewski appears at Canterbury Hall on Monday and Tuesday, September 19 and 20. The advance booking is very heavy, the demand for both guinea and half-guinea seats being keen. When Levy, the famous cornetist, was here many years ago, he complained that his largest audiences assembled "outside" the hall at which he appeared, and enjoyed his inimitable playing "on the cheap." It is to be hoped that Paderewski will fare better.

Mr Allan Hamilton, who is at the head of the Carkeek-Vaudeville combination, which opens at His Majesty's Theatre on Saturday, arrived on Sunday from Sydney. The shadow of the genial Allan grows more and more, and his good nature increases at an equal pace.

Miss Evelyn Millard, who retired from stage life on her marriage a few years ago, is announced to re-appear at the Imperial in "The Head of the King's Company," under Mr Lewis Waller's engagement.

Mr and Mrs Lumsden Hare (Miss Frances Rutledge) left Melbourne for England the week before last. Mr Hare was here twice with the "Sherlock Holmes" Company.

Miss Hilda Spong is appearing in "Joseph Entangled" in New York.

The Williamson Dramatic Company and Miss Tittell Brune tour New Zealand next year, opening at Easter in Auckland.

Geo. Stephenson's English Musical Comedy Company opened a short season in Geelong last Monday week, thence goes to Ballarat, after which a season in Adelaide will be inaugurated.

William Anderson's season at the Melbourne Bijou is for four weeks. Miss Duggan and the Dramatic Company open in Adelaide for a six weeks' season on October 8. A season in Broken Hill follows.

The Pollard Juvenile Opera Company, with Fred. Henningham still in advance, continues to do well in Northern Queensland. A tour of the East follows the Queensland season.

George Herron, formerly with Williamson and Musgrove, is organising a dramatic company for a tour of the Western District of N.S.W., and opened in Bathurst last Monday. Miss Marv Milward is leading lady with the organisation.

The late Mr George Leopold left £2814 to various members of his family. The real estate was valued at £2265 and personal £549. The will was proved under his proper name—Geo. Wooldridge.



THE McAULEY SISTERS, of Fuller's Empire Company.

of skill which impressed the new arrival sufficiently to cause him to say afterwards that Pearce was a really good man who would surely shape better as he became more fitted for the ordeal. Pearce had the fall given against him in 1min 22sec.

OPERA HOUSE.

FULLER'S EMPIRE COMPANY.

The star attraction in an all-round excellent combination this week is Mr Frank Harwood, descriptive actor-vocalist, who is fresh from the London music-halls and the companies of Harry Rickards in Australia. He is an exceedingly clever artist, and rouses the audience to the pitch of enthusiasm by his various numbers. He has a fine voice, an admirable stage presence, and his numbers are new and striking. In Mr Harwood the Fullers have got something good. Miss Vida Loder, another newcomer during the week, in Scotch songs and dancing is also a distinct acquisition. The other members of the Company, including the fine basso, Mr James Williams, and

respective parts. Rose Musgrove's "Kitty" is a marvellous impersonation. The part "fits" her like a glove. And yet it is no easy one. Only an actress of Miss Musgrove's marked ability could possibly do it justice. The character of "Kitty" requires an artist of great versatility, and Miss Musgrove is nothing if she is not versatile. Miss Florence Hamer deserves honourable mention for her Madame de Semiano, and the same may be said of Miss Le Clerq's French maid. Mr Draycott made a great hit as Sir Reginald Belsize, and Mr Athol Forde deserves much kudos for his clever acting as Mr Travers. The piece held the unflagging attention of the house each night it ran, and the hearty laughter and unstinted applause it evoked bore eloquent testimony to the appreciation of the immense audiences it attracted. The second production, "His Excellency the Governor," although clever and original enough, is a piece of a very different character, and will never excite the same interest as the charming "Kitty Silverton's" matrimonial adventures. Miss Musgrove has in "His Excellency" a wholly dissimilar character to play. Stella De Cox is an