

THE STAGE

(By "Comus.")

OPERA HOUSE.

FULLER'S EMPIRE COMPANY.

There is a really capital programme at the Opera House this week, and no lover of vaudeville should miss it. Professor Victor, who has been amusing crowds nightly for some time past with his ventriloquism, has displayed his versatility by changing himself into a prestidigitateur, and performs by the quickness of the hand a number of things that the eye fails to detect. His act is an entertainment in itself. The nimble and graceful little McAuley Sisters continue to delight their admirers, and Miss Vida May Loder dances to the complete gratification of every Scot in the house. Miss Kate Maher and Messrs Williams and Hart contribute several first-class vocal selections, and the comedy element is amply supplied by Will Stevens, Joe Rocks and Tod Calloway. The entertainment is one specially arranged to meet the popular taste, and the patronage of the public is in due and proper proportion.

On Monday next Messrs Cowan and Carlton will make their appearance in the bill.

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

JACK CARKEEK AND CO.

The entertainment brought over from Sydney by Mr Allan Hamilton, has hit the taste of the public. The central figure is, of course, the champion wrestler, Carkeek himself, who is "a fine figure of a man," and strips like a gladiator of ancient Rome, according to the pictures of the period. He is accompanied by Mourzouk, a Moorish wrestler, who runs him a very close second, and the joint display of the art given by the two is at once interesting and exciting. The rest of a long programme is filled in with vaudeville, of much the usual type, though embracing several items that are particularly novel. Of these the quaintest is the coon turn of Miss Ethel Whitesides, assisted by her negro picaninnies. It is not exactly what these imps do, but the comical way they do it, that rouses the mirth of the audience. Then there is

the "egg-laying" act of Messrs Ford and Bentley, a daring innovation, but amusing withal. Miss Jeannie Fletcher, a young lady with a pleasant and powerful mezzo soprano, sings several Scotch ballads with great acceptance; Miss Maggie Fraser sings serio-comic songs cleverly, and dances with much more than the average skill, and the Sisters Smith, who are old favourites here, showed that they have made strides in their profession as song and dance artists since we saw them last. But undoubtedly the pick of the vaudeville basket is the performance of Miss Ada Delroy and Mr James Bell. Both are genuine artists, who are able to compel mirth, and their turns are as clean and wholesome as they are humorous. The "patter" of Mr Bell is delicious, while Miss Delroy exhibits all those charms and graces that have made her a prime favourite all over the Colonies and in the Far East. The other remaining feature in the programme is the series of animated pictures, showing Canadian salmon fishing, and the pursuit and capture of a burglar. The latter is one of the cleverest series ever arranged for the biograph, and was greatly enjoyed.

On Tuesday night Constable Skinner had a bout with Mourzouk, the conditions being that Skinner should receive a trophy valued at £10 if he stood up against the Moor for fifteen minutes. This he did, amidst the enthusiastic plaudits of the audience. When Carkeek appeared, two professional wrestlers, Messrs Jenck Sir and Harry Hackenschmidt (brother of the Russian champion), who arrived in the Sierra, mounted the stage costumed for the fray, and demanded to have a "try," but Mr Carkeek explained that 24 hours' notice was required by the management. Ultimately it was arranged that the contests, Sir against Mourzouk, and Hackenschmidt against Carkeek, should come off last evening, so that the results cannot be regarded in this issue.

Considerable progress has, I learn, been made with the romantic comic opera upon which Mr Alfred Hill, the well-known composer, and Mr John Birch, of the "Herald," are collaborating. The whole of the lyrics have found their appropriate setting, and the dialogue is nearing completion. The



MR. WATKIN MILLS, the Famous English Basso.

work is said by those who have heard specimens to possess no small merit. It is probable that early arrangements will be made for putting the opera into rehearsal.

The "Burra (S.A.) Record," in a recent issue contained the following reference to the well-known representative the Steele-Payne Family:—"Mr R. T. Tregaski, who has piloted the Steele-Payne Family through their South Australian tour, can claim to be the most shrewd of the furthest seeing representative of a company that has been seen here for a very long time. His plan of campaign was remarkably well laid out, and his knowledge of how things ought to be done was exemplified. He is an old public entertainer himself, and for many years ran a show of his own with marked success throughout the Australian colonies, and he has now given the benefit of his experience to the popular Steele-Payne Family. From the fact that he got a packed house together on Wednesday night proves that he is a representative possessing extraordinary forethought, and ability regarding the management of travelling companies." Mr Tregaski will soon be on the road again in this colony for the same old firm.

A new Irish historical drama, "Robert Emmett," is going strong in America.

Tom Wootwell, Emily Lyndale, and the Dumonts are at the Johannesburg Empire.

Howard Vernon has been favouring Ballarat with his finished performance of Rip Van Winkle, in Planquette's opera of that name.

"The Flying Dutchman," the Wagnerian opera, has been revived on a big scale at Drury Lane.

"The Orchid," a musical comedy, by Ivan Caryl and L. Monckton, with libretto by J. Tanner, is the next novelty of the Royal Comies. The costumes—one series recalling delicate orchid tints, another a rich array of fancy dresses—are to be a big feature.

In a late number of an Australian publication, the lamented Mel. B. Spurr put his ideals into form as follows:—

"I started out some seventeen years ago to entertain the public with one fixed conviction—that I would give the

world of my best, and eschew all evil methods, if I died in a ditch, and I have not yet died in a ditch! To such an essay to win the public favour by questionable means, I would say: "Think twice before you put an impure thought into a pure mind. Don't sniff pollution; lift your eyes and see all the pure, good humour of which this world is full, and try to reproduce it for the benefit of that world (and yourself incidentally of course); give them a good laugh at a good thing; lift the pall of gloom and depression under which suffering mankind is so often found lying, if only for a few moments, and whether what you do be called an 'art' or not, and whether you receive £100 a week for your efforts, or a humble five, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have honestly earned what you receive, and by pure and conscientious efforts have added to the gaiety of the nation without sullying its purity or insulting its intelligence."

The tragic story of the terrible misfortunes which dogged the juggler Anglo's steps after his arrival in Australia is best made known by extracts from his letter dated His Majesty's Gaol, Adelaide, May 11, 1904, and sent to Messrs Hamley, London:—"Dear Messrs Hamley,—I thought that I would just drop you a line to tell you of my misfortune. Since I left London I have had varied luck. The first thing on landing in Adelaide I was greeted with the news of my wife's death, which had taken place two days before. A few months after I married again, and then my troubles commenced afresh. My second marriage was in every way a complete failure. I had no idea what sort of a woman I was taking for my wife. Everything that I could do to try and live with her in happiness was futile. She so worried me that I hardly knew what I was doing very often. After we had been married three and a-half months she left me and went home to her people. Had she been contented with leaving me all would have been well, but unfortunately for me such was not the case. She used to carry on with other men, and one Saturday night I met her in the street, and, getting wild, shot her dead. I, of course, was put on my trial, and the jury brought in a verdict against me, so to-morrow I die. Wishing you all success and a long farewell, I am, yours sincerely (signed), T. HORTON."



MISS ANNIE HUGHES, in "The Finishing School," at Wyndham's Theatre, London.