

THE STAGE

HIS MAJESTY'S.

THE COURT CARDS.

With two new programmes a week, the items following each other with lightning rapidity, Edgar Warwick's piquant pack keep the appetite well whetted. A little "Drop of Hollands" was offered towards the end of last week and was most relishable. The atmosphere was admirably sustained in the lit of the songs, the characteristic dancing and the accurate dressing, and the Dutch scene should prove one of the most popular in the company's repertoire. Monday night saw another abundance of good things, which exercised the company's versatility, and the audience did their part in double and triple encores. Miss Fane evoked recall after recall for her subtle touches in "Gertie" (incited by Mr Sydney Mannering and Mr George Titchener). "Instinct," "Sophie," "Naughty" and other little numbers that called for arch treatment. Miss Fane also aided and abetted Mr Titchener in humorous duets, the pair making an instantaneous conquest with the inevitable result. Mr Titchener kept the house amused in character numbers of his own. Mr. Edgar Warwick gave a humorous disquisition on the fitness of slang expressions that was hugely enjoyed. Mr Sydney Mannering was responsible for one of the vocal gems of the evening in "For You Alone" and cheerfully paid the toll with infinite success. Mr George Gravstone had equal admirers for his bass solos. Miss Rene Maude sang "Dreamland" with fine feeling, and was a popular contributor. A quartet "Annie Laurie" followed by a nursery rhyme, unaccompanied, was delivered with due expression by Messrs. Mannering, Warwick, Gravstone and Keats. A distinct novelty was introduced in the second part with a miniature musical comedy entitled "Night time in Doll Land," presented with commendable attention to detail. The coming to life of the dolls was admirably conceived and gave scope for some excellent singing and original touches in the hands of Mr Mannering (The Wooden Soldier), Miss Maude Fane (Wax Doll), Miss Rene Maude (Japanese Doll), Mr Gravstone (Policeman), Mr Titchener (Teddy Bear), and Mr Warwick (Mother Bear). Amongst other things one learnt the why and wherefore of Noah's Ark. Violin solos artistically played by Miss Winifred Mitchell, amusing skits in which the company specialise, and effective piano work by Mr Albert Keats made up a pot pourri of items which should stand the Court Cards in superlative favour wherever their lines are cast.

PETER DAWSON'S CONCERTS.

It was an Australian paper that, commenting on the enthusiastic reception accorded Peter Dawson in Melbourne, said, "A popular baritone on such occasions is in the position of the proverbial Saniard who accepts a strong drink. First the man takes an encore, then the encore takes an encore, then the encore takes the man. For every one song that Peter Dawson sang, the audience commandeered at least three others." This certainly met the case at the Town Hall on Saturday night, when Peter Dawson made his first appearance in Auckland. Popularised the world over per medium of the gramophone—Mr. Dawson admits himself that the records have done him a wonderful amount of good—it was only to be expected that he would find an exacting audience. Set down for six numbers, so unbounded was the applause that Mr. Dawson's songs extended to sixteen, the voraciousness of the audience being only equalled by the good nature sonant timbre and telling power, a distinctive charm of manner, with the of the vocalist. With a voice of romantic instinct enabling him to picture all his themes, Mr. Dawson covered a wide range of sentiment, firing

his hearers with the brilliancy of his dramatic excerpts, inspiring ripples of laughter with his lighter ditties, pulling the heartstrings with pathetic little gems, and giving to all that poetic delicacy of interpretation peculiarly his own. It was a popularly satisfying series, and included the stirring "I Rage, I Melt, I Burn," and "O Ruddier Than the Cherry" (Handel), "The Blind Ploughman" (Clarke), "Sands of Dea," "Onaway, Awake Beloved," "Floral Dance," "The Toreador," "The Bandelero," "Blue Dragoons," "Two Grenadiers," "The Little Admiral," "Mandalay" (a new setting), "Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes," "Kangaroo and Dingo," "Oop from Somerset," and an alluringly delightful Irish ditty, sung incomparably.

Supporting Mr. Dawson was Miss Annetta George, who was warmly encoered for her forceful delivery of "Butterfly's Song" from Puccini's opera, "Dearest, I Bring You Daffodils," and "Wake Up," and took similar applause with Mr. Dawson in the duet "Sweet and Low." Miss Grace Newman displayed a thoughtful temperament in her violin solos, which found response in an undeniable recall, while Miss Carlien Jurs accompanied with marked ability.

incident with reference to a visit to Canton some eighteen months ago. They found that the club membership was mainly composed of Germans, with a sprinkling of Englishmen. On their return visit last March for some unaccountable reason there were hardly any Germans in the club. "I thought it unaccountable at the time," Mr. Mannering said to a "Review" representative, "but of course one can see more clearly now."

"Talking about the war, I had just arrived from New Zealand the night it was declared. The scene at Charing Cross was indescribable. The excitement was intense. Such a rush for the latest bulletins! Such a mixture of national anthems! The whole populace throbbing with interest. It is rather unfortunate we should come along in our venture with the Court Cards at such a critical time. But the arrangements had all been made previously, and of course we could not foresee the war. However, we are nothing if not optimistic! We've set out to amuse, and make merriment and music for those who will have it."

Mr. Mannering's position in the Court Cards is no sinecure. His tenor songs one would go a long way to

wick and Mr. Mannering are responsible for some of it. Lawrence Irving, a son of H. B. Irving, has written the words of a number of songs for them, and Ivor Novello has set them to music.

"We make a feature of the wardrobe," said Mr. Mannering. "We have ten different sets of costuming, so it is by no means an inexpensive item of our outlay. But we aim at variety, not monotony. The great art, I consider, in a programme of this kind lies in its arrangement. The items must be sandwiched in to catch the palate at the critical moment. The "Cards" must be well shuffled, so to speak. And no waits!"

OPERA HOUSE.

It would be difficult to oust Eddy Martyn from star place which he attained last week in the Fuller-Brennan programme. He has brought step dancing to a fine art, and uses it as a medium for impersonating familiar characters in life. The soldier going to war, returning home, the club man, the woman in hobble skirts etc, are all expressed to the life, and Mr Martyn was again welcomed with tumultuous applause on



A "DROP OF HOLLANDS," as dispensed by Edgar Warwick's versatile costume concert company, the "Court Cards," in one of their popular scenes.

NO WAITS!

WHY THE COURT CARDS COUNT.

Costume concert companies always hark one back to the Scarlet Troubadours, practically the pioneer of that class of entertainment in New Zealand. The Troubadours are no more. But, pleasant memories they left in their train. They inculcated a taste for costume concert work, and with the lapse of years have since gone on their several ways.

Names to conjure by were Edgar Warwick, Sydney Mannering and Maude Fane—towers of strength to the old organisation. Time has not dimmed their art, nor custom staled their variety. They have come back afresh to give lustre to an offshoot of the Troubadours in the Court Cards. Mr. Edgar Warwick, with two sure tricks in his hand, built up the pack in London with other talented artistes, well calculated to deal out the cream of costume comedy concert work.

The well-remembered trio have seen much since they left New Zealand. With the Troubadours they have exploited India, Straits Settlement, Japan, the Phillipines, Manilla, Africa, etc. In fact there are not many corners left unvisited.

Mr. Mannering mentions a peculiar

hear. His personality asserts itself in stacking up the concerted items, and he is stage manager and producer to boot. Mr. Mannering has done good service on the London stage, and was in the original cast of "Floradora." He has toured South America and Africa in big singing parts with Home companies, and is admirably equipped to keep a show together.

"Miss Fane is not a hundred years old, even if she is one of the old Troubadours," Mr. Mannering volunteered impressively. And the vivacious little artiste in question, remembering she was only a girl in teens at that time, could afford to smile understandingly even if attacked on that invulnerable feminine point! Miss Fane has fulfilled the prophecies of her numerous admirers of bygone days. Her voice is richer, stronger and sweeter, and she lends an elusive charm to her numbers that proves irresistible. If she were not a comedienne she would shine conspicuously as a straight out singer. If she were not a singer she could command a big place as comedienne. Being both, Miss Fane is indispensable to the Court Cards.

Another point in the Court Cards' favour is the bid they make for originality. So much of their concerted work is their own property. Mr. War-

Monday. Another top-line attraction was the Soho Trio (lately on Rickards circuit) who make a specialty of song and dance. An interval of popular airs pleasingly sung was followed by an effective exposition of the latest dances, and the agile trio had to take a spirited encore. Mr Phil Smith and Miss Jessie Barlee gave another of their musical comedy trifles, introducing humour and melody. Miss Barlee sings charmingly and assists the well-remembered comedian in his jocularity. Clinton and Beatrice again commanded strong interest with their shooting exhibition, while Dangar, the mile-a-minute cyclist, added another dash of sensation to the bill. Mr Carlton Chase scored heavily in his song and the three Starrs again had nothing to complain of in the matter of reception. A popular re-appearance was made by the "Magpie's" Company introducing once more the famous Lyrical Four (Mr Kennedy Black, Miss Iris Edgar and the O'Keefes), Miss Pearl Livingstone (the vivacious soubrette), Lou Vernon and Billy Maloney.

"The Ever Open Door" opens at His Majesty's, Auckland, on February 6, under the George Willoughby, Ltd., direction.