

CORRESPONDENCE.

RE "LOOK WHO'S HERE."

(To the Editor.)

Sir,—I have just seen a cutting from the "Sporting and Dramatic Review" dated 8/8/18, in which Mr. Jack Waller makes many statements, or shall I say mis-statements? It is not the first time Mr. Waller has "aired" the news that he went to England on behalf of the Austral Gardens Co., Adelaide, to engage my company and myself—a fact he seems very proud of—but here let it be understood that it was for the Austral Gardens Company, and not for Mr. Waller, that I decided to come out. Although I can truly state that in England I gave Mr. Waller his first start two or three years before this with his then newly-formed "Butterflies" Company, what on earth have these things to do with his rather pathetic monologue "Look Who's Here," as referred to above? It is very amusing to read Mr. Waller's statement: "I amalgamated the 'Royal Strollers' with my then 'Ideals of 1916.'" Here are the facts as briefly as I can put them, which I am prepared to prove. Mr. Waller tried to get the Palace Theatre in Sydney, but could not do so. At my suggestion—not his—we agreed to amalgamate and produce a show together, afterwards called "Look Who's Here"—a title adopted from a London revue, which took me some time to convince Mr. Waller was a good one. I personally booked the Palace Theatre, Sydney, from Mr. Harry Skinner, who would not let it to Mr. Waller. I designed the costumes with my own pen—these were made by Mr. Waller's sister-in-law, an exceedingly clever costumier, who may have slightly altered my designs. I sketched and made the models for the scenery, which was made and painted by my stage manager, Mr. Northcote. I did the sketches for the posters, with the exception of one, "Hundreds turned away nightly," which Mr. Waller had copied from Pellissier's Follies in London. For the rest, I leave it to the public to judge—further comment is unnecessary. I have never yet compared myself with Mr. Waller as a performer or producer (?)—modesty forbids. This, again, I am only too willing to leave in the public's hands; but I most emphatically protest against Mr. Waller's mis-statement, "At the conclusion of our Sydney season I purchased the properties of 'Look Who's Here.'" He certainly agreed to do so, but has never fulfilled his agreement. I challenge Mr. Waller to allow me to publish the facts in full. After a few more "dreams" we shall probably hear of Mr. Waller producing my "Royal Strollers," originating the "Passing Show" title, or producing my latest and greatest success, "Pierrot Pie." Mr. Waller is a very fortunate man in having so many excellent artistes in his company, and such a show as "Look Who's Here" with these artistes deserves every bit of the success it has achieved in New Zealand—a success I expected to see and was glad to hear of—and all the harm I wish them is continued success, but Mr. Waller simply hates anybody else to be successful. With apologies for trespassing on your valuable space. Believe me, yours truly,

SYDNEY JAMES.

Castlereagh Street, Sydney, August 24, 1918.



MR. GEORGE T. ADAMS, advance manager for the Scarlet Trubadours, now playing a season in the Dominion.

"Peg o' My Heart's" dates for the next few days are as follow: Feilding, Thursday, September 12; Hunterville, September 13; Taihape, September 14; Ohakune, September 16; Taumarunui, September 17; Te Kuiti, September 18; Te Awamutu, September 19; Otorohanga, September 20.

Fuller's vaudeville in Sydney is now housed in the big Grand Opera House, while the National Theatre is being constructed. The Opera House will be occupied until Christmas, when it will be given over to pantomime. By that time the National will be reconstructed, but the name will be changed to Fuller's Theatre. Two shows every day will be the policy of the new place.

Miss May Norell, of the Leywood and Norell combination at the Opera House, has a fine sense of dress value which she turns to good account in their act. Last week she was the envy of all women beholders in a lovely coat of white Manchurian fur bordered with wide bands of seal and set off with the cutest of tight-fitting hats. This week she is wearing an emerald green and gold frock that suits her admirably. In the course of her travels in the East she has acquired a magnificent collection of furs, and she tells of a unique experience she had after appearing before the King of Siam in his palace. She was wearing a tiger catskin coat which she had purchased in Rhodesia and which immediately attracted the King's fancy. Next day a royal emissary called on Miss Norell to see if she would sell the coat. She couldn't very well refuse and it changed hands at a very enticing figure. One of her treasures is a pendant representing the gold order of the Court of Siam, presented by the King. Mr. Leywood was manager in India and China for the late Chung Ling Soo, and he has many interesting reminiscences of that clever conjuror, who met with so untimely a fate in London. With his captivating partner he has travelled all parts of the world. They were in Australia a few years back under engagement to Rickards. Miss Norell (who is Mrs. Leywood in private life) is a granddaughter of that famous American actor, Joseph Jefferson.

Sitting on the doormat of an Australasian politician at the Savoy the other day (writes a London correspondent to the Sydney "Sun"), and brooding darkly on the ways and deeds of politicians in general, I suddenly became aware of an approaching vision of golden hair, radiant smiles, and fluffy silks and chiffons. Something tickled a memory-chord, and brought back an almost forgotten supper party on the stage of a certain theatre the night before I left Australia, four years ago. The vision laughed—a laugh as musical as the note of a magpie, from lips curved as Cupid's bow. Then my desolate doormat became a magic carpet, and upon it stood the good little Australian fairy Dot Brunton, gracious and entrancing as ever. "Oh, it's good to be here," she said; "I only got in from America yesterday, and already I've seen some real Australians. Do you know what it feels like when you are right away from home? But, of course, you do, for you've been through it! I was in America for—how many years, mother?" Mrs. Brunton, likewise beaming, had now arrived, and remarked that perhaps "months" would be nearer the mark, though it seemed ages. "Anyhow, it was long enough to make me thoroughly homesick," said Dorothy. "We were nearly all the time amongst total strangers, and oh! I did miss all my old pals. Here in London I know there are lots of people from home, and it is lovely to see all our soldier boys about the streets. My brother Jack is here at the military headquarters, too, and I am looking forward to a happy time."

Harold Neiman, who plays one of the amusing twins in "Samples," the Tivoli revue, has made a complete study of the American tramp. "In United States," he says, "they are known as hoboes, and the majority are fairly decent fellows, who only have one ambition in life. They just want to loaf their way through life with a place in the sun. Even if anybody took them up and offered them a good position they would not accept it. Many of them are college chaps, who find work a bore and want to forget mathematics. The hoboes have secret signs, which they leave on fences and gates so that those who follow in their footsteps may know a good or a bad thing when they strike it."

Dame Nellie Melba was an interested member of the audience at the first performance of "The Thirteenth Chair" at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne. Miss Margaret Wycherly, the wife of Bayard Veiller, the author of the play, who scored a triumph as Rosalie la Grange, the spiritualistic medium, paid a graceful compliment to the diva in the course of the speech she was compelled to make at the close of the performance. Miss Wycherly said that she had come out on the same boat from America as Dame Melba. She had heard her sing in New York, now she had the still greater honour of playing before her. "What greater inspiration and incentive to do one's best could there be than to have in the audience the world's greatest singer?" asked Miss Wycherly, amidst applause.

Miss Genevieve Ward, the famous tragedienne who recently celebrated her eightieth birthday in London, has produced a book of reminiscences under the title of "Both Sides of the Curtain," in collaboration with Richard Whiteing. She toured Australasia with W. H. Vernon in 1884-5. On the operatic stage Miss Ward had been known as Madame Guerrabella, an Italianised form of the name to which she was entitled as the wife of a Russian nobleman, Count Constantine de Guerbel. As a corrective to the many erroneous accounts that have been given of this marriage, Mr. Whiteing tells the story at length. It appears that while she was still a girl in her teens, travelling in Italy with her mother, Count Constantine wooed her and was accepted. As there was then no Russian Church either in Nice or in Turin, the young couple were married by civil contract at the American Consulate, on the understanding that the daughter should return to her mother's home until all the parties could go to Paris for the completion of the ceremony in the Russian Church there. Count Constantine, meanwhile, trusting to the fact that by Russian law the civil marriage was not binding without the religious ceremony, was arranging to marry an heiress, a daughter of the Russian Ambassador at Naples. Mrs. Ward, on learning of this, at once set out with her daughter for Petrograd, to lay the matter before the Czar. In the end Count Constantine, who was still wandering in France and Italy, was overtaken by an Imperial messenger, and ordered to report himself at Warsaw for the religious ceremony, which took place in due course; but the bride left the bridegroom at the church door never to see him again, although he followed her to France. Years later she heard of his death at the close of a sordid career. "She never sought a divorce," says Mr. Whiteing, "as she had no desire to marry again. She did not claim his estates. All that she took at his hands was all she wanted—the right to bear his name." The name, too, she dropped when her operatic career came to its premature end.

Cappelli will give two concerts in Auckland (September 14 and 16), after which he goes to Hamilton, September 17, 18; Rotorua, September 19; Gisborne, September 23, 24; Pahiatua, September 26; and Wellington, September 28, 30.

Hokus: "So he's in the diplomatic service, eh? Well, he is eminently fitted for it." Pokus: "How so?" "He used to be stage manager of an amateur dramatic club."

CAPPELLI.

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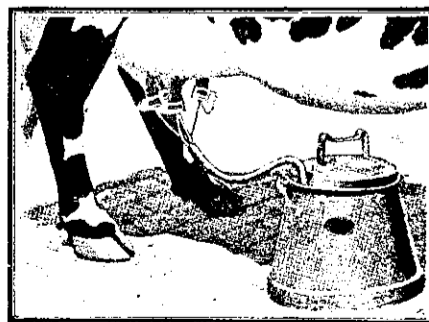
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