

THE STAGE

OPERA HOUSE.

Many were turned away at the Opera House on Monday night when all-vaudeville had to halve the programme with revue. Mr. Walter George's Sunshine Players are easily the most popular combination in the revue line, and their return was most welcome. "The Bandits" was the title of the new playlet, the script of which had been elaborated by Mr. J. Youlin Birch, and there was an abundance of laughable lines to which comedian George Storey gave full value, while musical numbers were freely interpolated. Mr. Storey was a scream almost before he appeared, and the rally he got proved the part he holds in the show. As a tourist captured by bandits he had every opportunity of making rich comedy points. Miss Hylda Shannon's pleasing voice was heard to excellent effect in "Hush-Bye-Baby" and in "Carmena" with Miss May Geary. Miss Georgie Martin, as another tourist, gave an amusing sketch on burlesque lines, and built up a most laughable scene with Mr. Storey. Mr. Barry Hitchings sang "The Bandalero" in good style. Mr. Walter George as the Cocoa King and Mr. Reg. Hawthorne as Pedro kept the interest well sustained, and had catchy singing numbers that were supplemented by chorus. An outstanding feature was the ballet "Naila," in which Miss Polly McLaren as soloist danced with charming grace. Miss Dulcie Milner gave characteristic piquancy to the song, "Who Taught You All Those Things," and with Mr. Frank Haining sang "Give Me a Cosy Corner." The



THE REV. FRANK GORMAN, singer and raconteur, who is scoring heavily with audiences at the Auckland Opera House.

vaudeville section was headed by the Rev. Frank Gorman who added to his success of the previous week in a fresh budget of ballads and stories. "Till We Meet Again," "Let the Rest of the World Go By," "The House at the End of the Lane" were amongst his items, and though his was the concluding turn of the first half of a long programme, he kept the audience close to their seats demanding more and more. As a third recall he responded with a tenderly humorous handling of a simple little verse "You Know and I Know." Mr. Leonard Nelson was in high favour as is customary during his interlude, and his recitations were as popular as his songs. Messrs. Lawrie and Rossie, the "Harmonious Diggers," introduced themselves acceptably in several songs which they treated expressively. Miss Nora Burke sang pleasingly a couple of musical comedy hits. Hall and Menzies in their burlesque, "I

Can't Get a Word in Edgeways," created roars of laughter, the lady of the party again showing her facility for low comedy work. Le Mounier aroused special interest in his turn by arranging a weight-lifting competition for local men. The winners of each heat will compete in the final on Saturday evening, the man who lifts a 100lb. bar bell above the head the greatest number of times to be the winner.

Miss Bathie Stuart's genius as an interpreter of Maori songs revealed itself to Auckland audiences in the four nights' season of this versatile entertainer at the Concert Chamber. Her gift is unique and her artistry rare. In expressing the rhythm of the Maori music she so completely absorbs the atmosphere that she visualises as well the traditional temperament and mood of the native race. A Maori recruiting song written by the Hon. A. T. Ngata, a lament given her by a Maori prin-



MR. FRASER GANGE, "the world's greatest baritone," who, in conjunction with Miss Amy Evans, the famous Welsh soprano, will open a season in the Town Hall, Auckland, on Saturday, August 7.

cess, a love ditty entitled "Pokarekare," and two styles of hakas were comprised in her offerings, the audience each night showing their recognition in storms of applause and demands for more. It was a new vista of entertainment that Miss Stuart opened up, and, knowing the Maori, they were quick to appreciate the remarkable fidelity of the impersonations. Close study and application of New Zealand folk-lore inspired her to give it public expression, and an inherent sense of mimicry made it an easy task. During her local season Miss Stuart was assisted by Miss Clarice Wood, whose accompanying was faultless. Miss Dorothy Baker, violinist, Miss Ilma Page, soprano, and Miss Liane Le Fevre, classical dancer, added to the interest of the entertainment. A note of pleasing variety was struck by the inclusion of the Hawaiian trio. Mr. George Greig was vociferously encored for his guitar solo, rendered with exceeding taste and feeling, and he made a material difference to the ensemble work in this section. At the final performance on Saturday amongst the many tributes sent up to Miss Stuart was a Maori patu, carved and inlaid with kawa shell, from "The Vagabonds."

With his tour of the Cesaroni Concert Party, Mr. John Hopkins puts another notch in the list of high-class musical combinations with which his name has been associated for so many years. A musician of no small calibre himself, he has an unerring sense of the quality that constitutes an artist in this direction, and consequently the public take with faith his attractions and know it is something out of the ordinary rut when he comes along. The company were at Rotorua for the week-end.

John McCormack, the great tenor, who has just given his first concert in Sydney to an immense and enthusiastic audience, under the J. and N. Tait management, is now commencing a world tour which will keep him away from America until the end of 1921. After Australia and New Zealand he goes to London, where he will establish a remarkable precedent by giving a series of song recitals at the classic home of opera, Covent Garden.

A PARSON IN VAUDEVILLE.

REV. FRANK GORMAN'S PURPOSE IN LIFE.

To reach the people either in church or theatre the missionary and entertainer in his respective sphere must needs be a magnetic personality, otherwise he falls short of his objective. It is exceptional to come across a man who combines the two callings. The Rev. Frank Gorman, known widely through America as "the Singing Parson," is a case in point. An engagement on the Fuller vaudeville circuit brings him into local touch. A few moments' chat with him and you feel that he's a man of vigour, sincerity of purpose, and with a direct view of life—a man who will get his goal. Add to this a sense of comedy, a gift of narration, and vocal talent, and you understand why he makes a hit.

Mr. Gorman was born at Devonport, England, in 1884, and graduated at Cliff College, Sheffield. He made a study of sociological conditions in the slum areas of London, and after a period of mission work went to America, where he was ordained in the Episcopal Church in 1910. Later he joined the Congregational denomination and was called to the Atkinson Memorial Church, Portland, Oregon. During his three and a-half years there he became moderator of the local Association of Churches. His singing powers were in frequent demand at festivals and men's meetings. Madame Schumann-Heink happened to be present at one of his popular concerts, and her commendation of his voice helped him to be more widely known. Then he tells you how he came to enter the profession. "I was always organising concerts and entertainments, and I had often said I wished I could raise money for myself. At last the opportunity came. A big theatre was opened in Portland (Oregon) where my church was. At the last moment, they were disappointed by their star turn, and friends recommended me. The theatre people came and offered me 500 dollars if I would sing for them for a week just to fill the gap. I was receiving 150 dollars a month, and was overdrawn at the bank. The difficulty lay in the fact that I should have to sing on Sunday—they don't close there. At the Sunday morning service I told my congregation what I thought of doing, and that it meant singing that afternoon in the theatre. No one objected, and in the evening I preached again. Later on I took vaudeville up altogether, and for the past five years have been fulfilling engagements.

"There is nothing inconsistent in my religious convictions and my association with the stage," he emphasises. "The church didn't pay a living wage. I went into vaudeville because I needed money. But I look on it as a stepping stone to reach my aspirations and permit me to run my church without outside interference. I have not left the church, and I hope to be able to return to my calling as soon as I can see my way clear to keep above water. Apart from my theatrical engagements I intend to do a good deal of Sunday preaching. I am out on a crusade for the attainment of a better knowledge of social conditions, because I believe that the church has more to do than save the soul. The body also must be saved. Now that I am being paid a salary by the large theatrical combine which enables me to live comfortably, I can preach and be independent of every other person. A parson should meet all people. If vaudeville patrons won't go to see the parson in church, the parson must go to see the vaudeville patrons in the music halls. The act I present is to please and amuse, but I hope that after vaudeville people have seen me on the stage they will come and hear me in the pulpit.

"My sermons are just plain heart-spoken messages to the soul of the listener with a punch in it to send it home. If people come to listen to me who are afraid of home truths they had better stay away. I go in for no hair-raising stunts, likely to scare some of the older folk. There is nothing rude, crude, vulgar or slangy in anything I say. But I promise all the same there will be a 'punch' in it!"

"Bran Pie" is having a successful run at the Tivoli, Sydney.

In the June issue of the Sydney "Green Room" appears a facsimile of a cable received from Dorothy Brunton: "Please contradict marriage."

Mr. Hubert Carter has received an engagement with the Auckland Choral Society to sing the tenor solos in their presentation of "The Martyr of Antioch" on August 19. The Gisborne Orpheus Society have also secured his services for "The Songs of Trafalgar" and programmed items as well on August 26.

The Rev. Frank Gorman, the "singing parson," will preach at the Pitt Street Methodist Church next Sunday. "What is Christianity?" will be his subject.

Mdlle. Irma Caron, a daughter of M. Leon Caron, who was conductor of the J. C. Williamson Royal Comic Opera Company for a number of years, is to visit New Zealand shortly, giving an entertainment that will embrace excerpts from grand, light, and comic opera in costume.