

SNIPPETS FROM RECENT TALKS.

The Eyes of The World on N.Z.

When the West Coast Goldfields Drew Thousands of Men From Every Corner of the Earth—Picking Up Gold in the Streets of Hokitika—"Faust" in Old Prague.

MR. E. IVEAGH LORD (3YA).

MY story to-night, "Bankers and Bushrangers," features outstanding incidents which occurred on the Nelson and West Coast goldfields in 1865 and 1866, when 60,000 diggers, drawn from the four quarters of the earth, turned that howling wilderness into a busy haunt of men, and incidentally won 400 tons of gold—valued at 3½ million pounds—from the creeks, rivers and beaches of that famous El Dorado. It is interesting to note that the gold won in those two years would to-day be worth not 3½ but over 7 million pounds.

ALTHOUGH many tons of gold were won in Westland in the mid-sixties, still it was not a common thing to find the metal royal in large quantities in the streets of its towns, yet this actually occurred in the streets of Hokitika, and the "West Coast Times," reporting this particular incident, states: "Heavy gold has been discovered in the street opposite the Prince of Wales Hotel, on the outskirts of the town, and women and children are picking it up in handfuls. It would seem that no richer patch has ever been struck in Westland. The lead is about 50 feet in length and no width to speak of—an old lady residing close by has squatted in the centre of the lead and loudly proclaims to all concerned that she has pegged out against all comers. The find realised 108 ozs. in a few minutes—many washing an ounce to the dish."

IT is stated that the Kelly gang committed no less than 30 murders on the New Zealand goldfields. They worked on the principle that "dead men tell no tales"—and killed everyone they "stuck up." Sullivan confessed that they carried with them a bottle containing strychnine, having resolved that if any party they encountered was too strong for them, they would make friends and while drinking with them administer the poison and later rob them.

TO-DAY visitors to Greymouth by rail will see on the south bank of the river, some five miles from that town, a massive concrete slab, mounted on

four pillars of the same material—This simple monument, erected by the Canterbury Provincial Government, marks the spot where the murder of George Dobson was committed by the Kelly gang. George Dobson's remains do not lie beneath that monument—they were removed to the Greymouth cemetery, and there interred with all due respect, the Bishop of Christchurch conducting the burial service.

MISS PHYLLIS HOLLON (3YA).

PRAGUE, the old capital of Bohemia and present capital of the post-war republic of Czecho-Slovakia, is an extremely beautiful city. I visited it during the late autumn of 1931. On approaching the broad river, the Vltava, on which it is built, I was struck by its resemblance to the part of London that borders the Thames. There were the same array of bridges, the same mist clinging to the horizon, the same type of sky-line broken by spires and domes, and I had my first pang of homesickness for England after many months of wandering in foreign places.

OLD Prague is the part that clusters about the river, and stretches up on to the low hills on one side crowned by the lovely cathedral of St. Vitus and the castle which dominates the

whole city from its green, wooden eminence above the river.

THE castle is chiefly remarkable for the reception rooms, the German and Spanish Halls. The latter is so called because of its dimensions. It is 12 by 24 by 48 metres. It is decorated in white and gold and the huge chandeliers are of gilded wood. A metal would be too heavy for the flat unsupported ceiling. I believe this hall is considered the largest in the world unsupported by any sort of pillars in the middle. Once the reception hall for German and Austrian Kings and Emperors it was last used for the celebrations of President Masaryk's 80th birthday (about five years ago).

ONE evening I attended a performance of Gounod's "Faust" or "Faust a Markita" as it is called in Czech—at the Opera House—a fitting close to my first day in Old Prague. The Opera House is very fine indeed, very large and very comfortable. The performance began at 7 p.m. and finished soon after 10. It was given in Czech and the programme was in Czech, so that I could not read it. However, it is such a well-known opera that that did not matter at all, and I just sat back and enjoyed myself.

THE next day, a Sunday, I did what I had vowed I would never do: I took an organised tour—round the whole of Old Prague. All the other passengers in this big open touring car were Germans who had their own interpreter. I was given an interpreter to myself, a young mining engineer, who had learned to speak English on the diamond fields of Kimberley in South Africa.

A London paper, commenting recently on the engagement of Billy Milton to appear in musical comedy under the J. C. Williamson Ltd. management in Australia, said: "The departure of Billy Milton, the clever young dancer and light comedian, will be regretted by playgoers. He has achieved widespread popularity, and is altogether a delightful young artist." Billy Milton has dark eyes and hair, and one of his most charming assets is his smile.

