

"THE DOVER ROAD"

REPERTORY SOCIETY

BRILLIANT SUCCESS

"The Dover Road," by A. A. Milne, was staged at the Theatre Royal last night, before a large audience, which included his Excellency the Governor (Sir Matthew Nathan). It was the first production by the newly-formed Repertory Theatre Society, and the enthusiastic manner in which it was received gave every promise for the society's success. The amateur cast acquitted themselves admirably, and the performance in every way reflected great credit on the producer, Miss Barbara Sisley. The play itself was a wise choice. It gave splendid opportunities for acting, and with its sprightly wit and brilliant characterisation, gave entire satisfaction to the audience, which acclaimed it with great delight. The plot was extremely interesting.

Leonard and Anne decided to elope by motor car and took the Dover Road one night with the intention of joining the Channel boat at Dover, certain that they would find happiness together on the Continent. Leonard was married, but was not on the friendliest terms with his wife (Eustasia). In fact they had not seen each other for some time. When he and Anne were still miles from Dover, the car had a serious breakdown, and they were informed by the chauffeur that they could put up at a "sort of hotel" nearby. They entered the place, only to find that its owner, who introduced himself as plain Mr. Latimer, was determined to keep them there. One of the strange things about the place was a butler (Domine), who appeared mysteriously just as he was wanted. It was altogether a "rummy sort of hotel," as Leonard expressed it. He was furious at the treatment they received, but was restrained from any violence by the threatening appearance of Domine. The amazing thing was that Latimer knew all about Leonard and his relations with Anne. He informed them that the breakdown of the car was no accident, but part of a pre-arranged plan of his to entrap and keep them in his house. He even went so far as to ask Anne whether she thought she could be happily married to a man whose only recommendation was a failure in his first marriage. He lectured them both at great length in a witty and entertaining fashion and, though his words only stung Leonard to greater anger, they caused Anne to think. The next morning Leonard came to breakfast with a bad cold, and a worse temper, and revealed to Anne sides of his nature which

revealed to Anne sides of his nature which she had not seen before. Matters are further complicated by the appearance of Eustasia, who eloped a week before with a young man named Nicholas. They had had the same ideas as Leonard and Anne, and had met the same fate on the Dover-road. Nicholas had also caught a bad cold, and for a week had suffered the unremitting attention from Eustasia with the result that his love had begun to wane.

Milne extracts some rich humor from the struggles of the characters to get clear of the tangle, and till the last word spoken the story was followed with the keenest interest.

THE ACTING.

The acting was surprisingly good. The best work, at least in the first act, was done by Miss Lockhart Gibson in the part of Anne. She had gripped the inner meaning of the character and, for the most part, was indeed Anne. Mr. Devereux, as Latimer, was essaying a most difficult piece of work. The subtle flashes of wit needed very careful handling, but Mr. Devereux did excellently, and to him was due the largest share in the laughter-making. Mrs. Robinson did wonderfully well as Eustasia. As the fussing over-solicitous wife, she exploited every opportunity which the part offered and by her vigour did much to sustain the interest of the play. The part of Leonard was also a difficult one, Leonard being the type of dull husband which A. A. Milne so delights in depicting. Mr. Macgregor was well cast as Nicholas and was most effective when giving his opinions on women. Dr. Nisbet gave an excellent character study as the butler, Domine. The other members of the cast composed the staff of servants, who provided some excellent humour. They were played by Misses McCowan and Clarke, and Messrs. Mocatta and Johnstone.