

## REPERTORY SOCIETY

### Fine Exposition Of Comedy

The production of St. John Hankin's "The Return of the Prodigal," by the Brisbane Repertory Society last night, was justified in its comedy content and in the skillfully contrived playing of the cast. The Princess Theatre, Annerley Road, South Brisbane, may be somewhat off the beaten track for many playgoers, but the society has a large membership and devoted following, so this did not militate against a large attendance. The reception of the players' efforts was encouraging. After a homeless period, in which the active work of the society was impeded, it has reaped the reward of enterprise in the renewal of interest and support of its productions. It would seem from the standard of the presentation of St. John Hankin's play of bright lines and diverting situations that the time in which public performance was suspended has not been wasted.

The theme of "The Return of the Prodigal" may not be new, but it is treated from some new angles. The title rather suggests the story—ne'er-do-well son returns after five years' wandering, the £1000 he was given when sent to Australia is squandered, he finds his elder brother a partner in his father's prosperous and expanding manufactory, and his father standing for Parliament. Sympathy was to be more readily won, especially from his doting mother, if he returned as one broken in health by privation, and he is "found," apparently in a fainting condition, near the parental door. Father and brother are not going to keep him in idleness, but what can a failure do? There are all sorts of humorous and cleverly worked

out situations before he accepts £250 a year to live in London, and the family respectability is saved and consciences are salved. Of course, he has fallen in love with the daughter of the aristocracy the elder brother seeks to marry, but he is a good chap at heart, really, and will not make any more awkwardness for the distraught family.

Mr. Jim Felgate made a strikingly interesting figure of the prodigal—debonair, with a somewhat perverted philosophy of life not difficult to ap-

preciate, and keenly sensitive to personal interests, but ringing true when the call came. There was writing of quality and intent in the part, with much sparkle of phrase, and he created the right atmosphere. Mr. Ludovick Gordon, as the father, gave a clear-cut portrait, and brought to the part a strong personality, which held attention. Miss Rhoda Felgate was charmingly sympathetic with the role of the devoted and gullible mother. Mr. Walter Blake's representation of the family doctor was well thought out, and had many skillful touches. Miss Marjorie Mant's conventional reticence as the sister of the prodigal, devoting her life to her mother, was in vivid contrast with her revelation to the brother of a thwarted and hopeless existence. Other parts were well conveyed. The society's orchestra, conducted by Mr. Erich John, gave delightful entr'acte music. Mr. Jim Pendleton was the producer.