

Repertory Society

Last Night's Performance

The Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society closed its first year with the presentation of four short plays at the Theatre Royal last night, when the standard of the acting was the highest yet attained. "The Dover Road," in which the society made its first public bow earlier in the year, justified the committee's confidence in a successful future, but the choice of Barrie's "Alice Sit-by-the-Fire," and an inadequate cast for such a difficult play to interpret, precluded the possibility of any great artistic advance in the second production. It seemed last night, however, that the best wine had been kept for the final session of the year, and on the evidence offered in at least three of the four plays he would be difficult to please who would not predict that in a very few years Brisbane will have a society of amateur players of which any city might be proud. The works produced have thrown a definite light on the ability of members, and when the process of sifting has been carried still further a strong cast should be available for the most exacting drama. "Barbara's Wedding," in which the fancy of Barrie weaves itself delightfully through a strangely fascinating dialogue, was the most successful of last night's offering. Mr. George Eaton, as the old Colonel whose dreams reflect the tragedy of war, gave an admirable study of the character, and thoroughly preserved the Barrie touch from beginning to end. The actor used his voice with excellent judgment, his gestures were restrained and significant, and the whole of his work showed a surprising maturity. Mr. Eaton is to be congratulated on a very clever performance. Miss Jean Trundle, happily cast as Barbara the tomboy, contributed greatly to the success of the play. There was little of the amateur in her free movement about the stage and her speaking, and her voice carried very clearly. Miss Rhoda Felgate (Ellen) and Mr. Leo Guyatt (Derring) were sound, while Mr. Kenneth Trotter (Billy) and Mr. Thomas Stephens (Kail) did fairly well in smaller parts. "Barbara's Wedding" absorbed the attention of the audience, which ex-

pressed its appreciation in rounds of hearty applause. On the same level of merit as Mr. Eaton's acting was that of Miss Barbara Sisley in "Followers," the little play with the Cranford atmosphere, written by Harold Brighouse. Miss Sisley has impressed Brisbane audiences with her acting in Greek, Shakespearean, and other plays, but it is doubtful if she has ever given a cleverer reading of a part than she did last night. It certainly was not her fault that the Cranford pattern was not uniform. As the charming old maid, Lucinda Baines, who, with "yes" in her heart, had said "no" to her soldier lover and lived 25 years in a house closed to masculine callers; Miss Sisley acted with a sure grace and a satisfying appreciation of values. And always, of course, there is her full, rounded voice, and perfect intonation. Mr. W. Alan Devereux was made up well as Colonel Redfern, but his performance was uneven. There seemed to be too awkward a break between his expression of soldierly emotion or indignation and the more tender phrases of the lover. Fortunately Mr. Devereux is keenly alive to the benefits of experience, and his Mutiny hero should be more convincing to-night. Miss Irma Dearden (Susan), as in "Alice Sit-By-The-Fire," proved herself a very capable maker of comedy, and put her points with effect. Miss Beres Corrie showed promise in the role of Helen Masters. Gilbert Cannan's dream play, "Everybody's Husband," is, in the manner of most dreams, a little disjointed, but through it runs a strong thread of satire, which, unless it be as broad as a ditch, requires clever acting in the presentation. Happily there was plenty of talent among the persons in the play, and all come through with credit. Miss Grizel Gibson was the modern girl, who, on the eve of her wedding day, has a very illuminating interview with her mother (Miss Elisabeth Carew Smythe), her grandmother (Mrs. P. J. Symes), and her great-grandmother (Miss Jeanette Fullerton). Miss Gibson did well in a somewhat difficult role, and judging on her acting last night, she will be at her best when cast in a strongly emotional part. Mrs. Symes pleased very much, and Miss Fullerton and Miss Smythe gave good support, while Miss Barbara McLennan (a maid), and Mr. R. Cooper (a domino) handled small parts with success. The concluding play of the programme was "Thirty Minutes in a Street," a farce by Beatrice Mayor. There were laughs in it, but perhaps the main justification for its performance was that

in it, but perhaps the main justification for its performance was that it gave stage experience to twenty-three members of the society. "Followers," "Barbara's Wedding," and "Everybody's Husband," which were produced by Dr. J. V. Duhig, Miss Rhoda Felgate, and Miss Barbara Sisley, respectively, provide a delightful evening's entertainment, and there should be a crowded theatre when they are performed again to-night.