

PLAY OF WIT AND DRAMA

Repertory Society's Production

A play well worth the while of an organisation devoted to the literary drama was found by the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society, in "The Man with a Load of Mischief," which was presented in the Princess Theatre, South Brisbane, last night.

The comedy has a background of potent drama. Ashley Dukes, the author, conceived situations, and clothed them with dialogue, both piquant and moving. His wit is sharp and his philosophy deep. His style is incisive, shearing away the superfluities and redundancies with which a school of modern dramatic writers love to tinker. It leaves a clear-cut picture and tale of essential values. Dukes wrote with a keen sense of character and a rich gift of invention. While the substance of the piece is dramatic, it is the weaving of satire and humour, with neat fancy of phrase, that gives it a charming elegance. Possibly a phrase here or there is not of the utmost delicacy, as some might regard them, but the play is set in the Regency period, and, as the innkeeper's wife shrewdly remarked, "We have no call to meddle with the pleasures of the quality." The three acts are set in the inn.

WELL POISED HUMOUR

The innkeeper and his wife, represented by Mr. Tom Pollard and Miss Elsie Brooks, introduce the play happily with well-poised humour and naive outlook on romance. Mr. W. A. Blake, as a nobleman, and Miss Vera Tighe, as a lady, are effective in the riposte and parry of a duel of wits. Miss Tighe had the unusual acknowledgment of applause between curtains, for her scene of a "show down" with the provoking Mr. Blake. There was high drama in her exit on the words, "We both know how to value an enemy. Good night to you—my lord." It was one of a number of instances of Miss Tighe's skill in getting the ultimate meaning from her words with balanced cadence. The changing moods of her scenes with the

man of mystery, the philosopher, in the guise of the nobleman's servant (Mr. Leo Guyatt), were also keenly analytical. Mr. Guyatt had a very sound idea of the "leveller," a Socialist he would be to-day, who "observed mummeries for his own ends," could lend a hand in intrigue, and be the lover with ardour. He may realise to-night a better effect with reverie or soliloquy than with declamation in the scene at the window, after the exit of the maid he has puzzled by a personality unwonted in his station.

Mr. Blake proved again his capacity for character work, and his nobleman convinced, though a touch more of the cavalier in his designing and hypocritical wooing would have strengthened the rendering. Miss Marjorie Cullen read aright the winsome maid, ready in her wooing, and superficial, but rising to a sense of the deeper things in her lady's farewell. Miss Barbara Sisley produced the play with her keen instinct for stage effect. Mr. Erich John conducted the society's orchestra in entr'acte music.

The play will be repeated to-night.