

## REPERTORY PRIZE Play Is Staged.

"IN BEAUTY IT IS FINISHED."

FALLS SHORT OF SUCCESS.

"In Beauty It Is Finished," the prize play of the Brisbane Repertory Society, did not apparently achieve an outstanding success when produced by the society last Thursday night.

The "Daily Mail's" dramatic critic makes the following comments on the play:—

AS a lighthouse keeper David Edmonds has been content to spend his life. From one isolated station to another, on headland or island, he has taken with him his wife and two daughters. He is a self-centred, conscientious, gloomy man, who has dominated a meek wife, and considers he has done his duty to his daughters when he allows them each in turn to spend some years on the mainland. One returns from the city to enable the other to enjoy her respite from the solitude of the lighthouse. For the girl who has come back home the city has been a pitfall. She has returned disillusioned, hardened, besmirched. On the lighthouse island she is thrown into the companionship of a young fisherman. She discovers that he is a half-caste, draws back in horror, but by the harshness of her father is driven in desperation to leave the island with him.

FALLS SHORT OF SUCCESS.

That in very bald outline is the

theme of "In Beauty It Is Finished," with which Mr. George Landen Dann won the prize offered by the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society for an Australian play, and which was produced by the society last night.

There are the makings of a poignant tragedy in this plot and material, but Mr. Dann has fallen short of success in translating his conception into dramatic form.

He fails to win sympathy for any of his characters, which is essential if a tragedy is to achieve its chief purpose, that of quickening the emotions and touching the heart to pity. There is considerable power in the first scene of the third act. In the revelation to the father of all the misery that his blind egotism brought upon his daughter and on his wife, the authentic note of tragedy is felt, but a prentice hand has lacked the skill to convey a sense of the inevitable in the scenes that lead up to this situation. The action moves almost feebly through the first act, and it is difficult to discern what is significant. The dialogue also suffers from being too stilted, and this fault was not lessened in the speaking of it last night.

### BOLD EXPERIMENT.

With both a first play and a first production, the Repertory Society has ventured a bold experiment, but it was one well worth trying. No one after seeing the performance could reasonably complain that "In Beauty It Is Finished" is a sordid play. Its theme, for a play having an Australian setting, is a remote one, but it is a legitimate subject for tragedy, and Mr. Dann treats it with proper restraint.

The real defect of the work is that it does not reach the emotions. The fault for this may have lain partly with the performers last night. There

with the performers last night. There was too little acting and too much recital.

What should have been an intensely moving scene between Marion and the fishermen, when the disclosure was made of the man's parentage, was not convincing. Both Mr. Carson and Miss Dulcie Scott alternated between monotony and melodrama. Mr. Royston Marcus gave a quiet, but very competent study of the lighthouse keeper. He realised the eloquence of silent gestures. Mrs. P. J. Symes, as the mother, contributed much to the success of the last two scenes, when the play really lived, but before that she had introduced an element of almost chilling politeness in an altogether queer household.

Miss Edith Rowett had an exceedingly difficult task in the role of Annie, the aboriginal mother, to whom "the play in beauty finished." The author has given her some of the best dialogue in the piece, but in the early scenes Miss Rowett was inclined to make the character too grotesque.

Miss Hilda Hastie had a comparatively minor part, but gave much-needed vivacity to the opening scene.

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The average net selling price of coal at the pithead in Britain was 10s. 2d. a ton in 1913 and 13s. 7d. a ton in 1930.