

THE VALUE OF REPERTORY.

THE degree of artistic success achieved by the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society with Miss Barbara Sisley's admirable production of "Sheppey" serves to invite public attention not merely to the high quality of this particular performance but also to the value of the work which this body of amateur theatricals is doing in Brisbane for the maintenance of an intelligent interest in the dramatic art. Under the present conditions of the severe commercialisation of the theatre in Australia musical revues and grand opera have almost a monopoly of the professional stage, and cultural interests are largely thrown back upon the disinterested efforts of those who by the devotion of leisure to the study of acting and by the finding of the necessary ways and means are doing something to preserve the reputation which Britishers have enjoyed as admirers and upholders of the literary side of drama. Happily everywhere in Australia this movement which has taken to itself the name Repertory is vigorous, and in Sydney and Melbourne even exuberant.

Brisbane, with its more limited population and consequent smaller proportion of people of studious mind, owes all the more debt to its Repertory Society for its struggle to keep the dramatic lamp burning, and there are indications that the flame is steady, and that the heavy obligation undertaken in the securing of its own theatre will be justified. If it maintains a standard of performance equal to that manifested in the last two productions it will certainly deserve the permanence it is planning. Moreover there are other

smaller, including, or rather led by, the educational institutions, to see that such worthy ambition is nurtured by generous and consistent support.

It is an important consideration that there should be an active consciousness of a drama that is above mere entertainment, though embodying that quality, and it is increasingly obvious that it is the amateur field that must be relied upon for the fostering of this love of art for art's sake. There is evidence enough that much may be done very worthily through such a medium, but there must be generosity on the side of those who appreciate such effort, just as there is sacrifice on the part of those who devote themselves to the actual work. Some further awakening to the opportunity which presents itself may come from a project for the drawing together of Repertory bodies of Australia in co-operative understanding, a suggestion which has emanated from the south, and which may well be the prelude to the introduction of a national competition and festival which could be held in turn in the several capitals, as outlined in the columns of our Saturday issue. Developments such as these would be a potent influence for ensuring the bringing of the finest modern works to the stage here and for the cultivation of a continually improving understanding of the art of acting.

smaller but no less sincere bodies working in the city for the advancement of dramatic taste, and under such stimulus the outlook is distinctly encouraging. It should be the pride of the many cultural centres of activity in Brisbane, including, or rather led by, the educational institutions, to see