

ENTERTAINMENTS

"Yellow Sands"

REPERTORY THEATRE SOCIETY'S
PLAY.

THE CAST.

Richard Varwell Jim Pendleton
Emma Major Darley Cooper
Arthur Varwell Jim Felgate
Joe Varwell Leo Guyatt
Thomas Major Norton Stabile
Lydia Blake Clare Clarke
Mary Varwell Christina Wilson
Jennifer Varwell Barbara Sisley
Minnie Masters Hilda Hastie
Nelly Masters Gwen Harrison
Mr. Baslow Frank O'Sullivan

"Yellow Sands," the three act comedy by Eden and Adelaide Phillipotts, which was produced at His Majesty's Theatre last night by the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society, fulfils all the qualifications of a good repertory play. It is instinct with life and colour and although called a comedy is worthy of a better classification. "Yellow Sands" takes the audience to an English seaside village. It shows them the Varwell family, somewhat depleted in its ranks but nevertheless a very humane and simple collection of people, which the skill of the writers has vitalised into vividly drawn characters.

It is the characterisation, more than the action, or even the comedy, which makes the play interesting and all the more difficult in performance from a repertory standpoint. But one need make no excuses for the players on the score of their amateur status. The mounting and the acting throughout shows that the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society has developed into a reliable and worth-while organisation.

But for the fanatic socialism of Joe Varwell and his reference to the million unemployed and Moscow, the play might have been dated at any time late in the nineteenth century. He is filled with concern for the "under dog" and in his queer way resents Lydia Blake's propinquity because he happened to fall in love with her. As the play moves on his ideals crumble until in the final scene he finds himself the sole residual legatee of sweet old Jennifer Varwell. He is a "bloated capitalist" with socialistic ideas to be lived down. The part was played with considerable skill by Mr. Leo Guyatt, who "ranted" to some purpose throughout and yet never allowed his characterisation to get out of proportion. It was a clear cut and decisive reading of the part.

In the first act the play hung fire for a time, probably because of the rather haphazard manner in which this little community is introduced. In the second act, however, the play blossoms forth unexpectedly. Special commendation must be given to those responsible for the stage properties in this scene. Every stick of furniture, down to the old "what-not" in the corner, breathed the spirit of dear old Jennifer. Still, more credit was due to the producer that the animation and life of the scene was kept intact. One felt that one was peeping through a window rather than over the footlights. Mr. Jim Pendleton sang two songs composed for the occasion by Mr. Archie Day. They were both appropriately short and to the point.

From Jennifer herself down to the twittering twins (perhaps overdrawn but nevertheless types to be seen to be believed) the acting was good and the movement natural and unforced.

In the third act Jennifer has gone, and the mourners troop in to hear the will read. It is a chance of which the dramatists have made the most. Slowly but surely the true natures of these people are unveiled. In some a genuine love for old Jennifer transcends every other emotion; in others an inordinate greed is brought to light by the prospects of easily acquired wealth. Miss Christina Clarke's work in this scene had but one blemish. She spoke somewhat indistinctly in some of the most important passages.

Miss Barbara Sisley showed herself a true artist in her delineation of Jennifer, a radiant lovable character, in which the years have not stilled a ready wit. If there were weaknesses in some of the minor characters they did not interfere with the thorough enjoyment of a play which has been well worthy of the society's attentions. All credit is due to Mr. Jim Pendleton (producer) and Dr. J. V. Duhig (stage manager).

The society this year has reverted to the custom of music in the intervals. Last night it was supplied by the Collings' Orchestra, a band of juvenile performers worthy of encouragement.

The play will be repeated to-night.