

FINAL PERFORMANCE OF "H.M.S. PINAFORE."

The concluding performance of "H.M.S. Pinafore" at the Empire Theatre, Chelmsford, by the members of the Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society on Saturday night was marked by scenes of great enthusiasm. The famous comic opera had been presented highly during the week with unqualified success, and it was estimated that altogether over 3,000 people witnessed the performances. Indeed, the results far exceeded expectations, and proved that the Society has firmly established a place in popular favour. The sum to be handed over to the Chelmsford and Essex Hospital will be a substantial one. The large audience on Saturday was highly enthusiastic, and many of the songs had to be repeated two or three times.

After the performance, which was brought to a close to the accompaniment of great and sustained applause, the curtain went up again, and bouquets and baskets of flowers in great abundance were presented to the principal performers. Some gifts to the gentlemen were of a comic character and caused great fun. Miss Florence K. Patten, the pianist, was also given a beautiful bouquet, and in addition was the recipient of a gold pendant, the gift of some members of the company. The ladies in the chorus and the midshipmen were presented with boxes of chocolates, and as these were being handed up members of the audience threw paper streamers on the stage. These fell among the players standing in groups, and the orchestra, and added greatly to the gaiety of the scene. Four bouquets were presented to the four leading ladies by Lieutenant-Colonel W. P. N. Ridley, one of the vice-presidents of the Society, on behalf of the House Committee of the Hospital, of which also he is a member. The inscription on each was as follows:—"With many thanks for your fine performance and help to the Hospital.—W. Percy N. Ridley, on behalf of the House Committee."

Mr. G. E. Bower, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M., the popular musical director of the Society, in response to insistent calls for a speech, said the two essentials for the success which they had achieved were a sympathetic audience and an enthusiastic society, and they could congratulate themselves on having secured both those qualities.

society, and they could congratulate themselves on having secured both those qualities. He thanked the audience for their appreciation, and also the members of the orchestra and the Society for the excellent way in which they had helped him.—Performers and spectators joined in singing "For he's a jolly good fellow," and a delightful evening closed with the National Anthem.

After the fall of the curtain the company and some friends assembled on the stage, and Mr. Munday expressed the Society's appreciation of the services rendered by Mr. H. A. Cooper, of Gidea Park, as professional coach, and that gentleman was shouldered and heartily cheered. He also thanked the hon. secretary, Mr. R. J. Shoobridge, and Mr. E. G. Brown, a member of the Executive Committee, who in addition to a large amount of work in arranging the play, was responsible for the building of the bridge which was such a conspicuous feature of the scenery. Mr. Munday further thanked the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. P. G. Cheverton; Mr. Tutt for his work in regard to the booking arrangements; those who had taken part in the performances, and all who had in any way helped to make the event such a success.—Mr. Shoobridge, amid much applause, expressed the members' gratitude to Mr. Munday for all his work.

Many spontaneous tributes have been paid to the excellence of the Society's work. One noteworthy instance is that of a farmer who, after witnessing Saturday evening's performance, handed £1 to the Society in recognition of "the most enjoyable evening he had spent for forty years."—Four of the bouquets and the two cornical ones were made by Messrs. Fulcher and Son, Duke-st., Chelmsford.

The Committee of the Chelmsford and Essex Hospital desire publicly to express their hearty thanks to all those who so kindly assisted in the excellent production of "H.M.S. Pinafore" last week. All who witnessed the performance agreed that it was a great success, and the crowded attendance every night testified to its popularity. The House Committee of the Chelmsford Hospital, to which Institution the proceeds are to be generously given, wish to convey most grateful thanks to all who assisted in the production of the play, particularly the leading artistes and chorus, and the conductor and members of the orchestra, whose enthusiastic efforts ensured the notable success that was undoubtedly achieved.