

"MISS HOOK OF HOLLAND" AT CHELMSFORD.

EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE BY LOCAL AMATEURS.

The Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society are producing the musical comedy, "Miss Hook of Holland" at the Regent Theatre, Chelmsford, this week. Commencing on Monday, the play has been running nightly and has met with an enthusiastic reception from large audiences. It will be repeated to-night (Friday) and

great antipathy to soldiers, the gallant Captain is left out in the cold, and vents his spite on his more fortunate rival by forbidding him to go to the carnival at Amsterdam, to which they have all been invited.

The scene of the second act is in Mr. Hook's distillery at Amsterdam. The bandmaster arrives, in defiance of his captain's orders, disguised as a workman. The cap-

swing from start to finish, and throughout there was a determination to interpret the scenic effects in a manner true to life, and to make the most of the humorous incidents with which the play abounds. Miss Rowbotham, who took the title role, is an actress of grace and charm. To an effective stage presence she adds the incalculable advantage of a tuneful voice of great compass, and it was evident that high notes were no trouble to this accomplished young singer. Miss Rowbotham was equally at home in business discussions with her father and her love passages with the handsome Bandmaster. Her song, "Fly away, Kite," in the first act evoked thunderous applause, while later in her duet with the Bandmaster "The Sleepy Canal"—in which the chorus repeats the refrain in subdued tones behind the scenes—she and her partner were deservedly encored. This duet, by the way, is one of the prettiest musical numbers in the play, and Miss Rowbotham and Mr. Reg. Jackson did it full justice.

The part of Mr. Hook, the wealthy liqueur distiller, was capably undertaken by Mr. E. T. Parfitt, who has been cast for leading parts in several of the Society's previous productions. He had a lot to do, and did it well. He certainly exploited to the full the drolleries with which the part abounds, and was particularly good in the second act, when, after a somewhat prolonged visit to his cellar he reappeared on the stage through a trap-door in a hilarious condition. As a contrast in hard business and delightful foolery, stern prejudice and simple sentimentality, the part would be difficult to beat, and Mr. Parfitt stamped himself as an amateur actor of merit.

A CLEVER "LOAFER."

But the palm for the male members of the cast must be given to Mr. Gerald Debnam, as Simon Slinks. It was difficult to realise that this young man is not a Dutchman born and bred, so easily and naturally did he fit into the part. He is what might be termed the villain of the piece, and he revelled in it. Commencing as the leader of a set of disreputable looking loafers, by the exercise of his wits he rises to a position of comparative affluence and sets out to enjoy himself—and, so do the audience. The amusing attitudes he assumed, not less than his droll sayings kept the house on the opening night and subsequently in a ripple of laughter; while when encored for his song "Lazy Loafers" he added a topical verse that made a distinct hit.

Mr. V. C. Spurgeon, as Schnapps, the Distillery Foreman, is a lively young man who incidentally makes the pace with the ladies. There is a delightfully humorous scene in the second act when both Mina and Gretchen prefer their claims to him at the same time. Mr. Spurgeon did very well, especially when it is remembered that through illness he was absent from some of the final rehearsals. Mr. Jack Myall and Mr. J. W. Hawkes, as the Captain and Lieut. respectively, looked very fine in their war paint, as a couple of dashing officers.



IN THE TITLE ROLE.

Sally (otherwise "Miss Hook of Holland"), play by Miss