

"THE REBEL MAID" AT CHELMSFORD.

ANOTHER SUCCESS BY THE OPERATIC SOCIETY.

This week the Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society has presented "The Rebel Maid" at the Regent Theatre, Chelmsford. Commencing on Monday, six evening performances are being given, and there will also be a matinee to-morrow (Saturday). The present production is the eighth which the Society has placed before Chelmsford audiences. Formed in the autumn of 1920, the members first devoted their energies to the presentation of Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and two of these were put on in the season 1921-22. Four years ago new ground was broken by the decision to play "Miss Hook of Holland," and this was followed in succeeding seasons by "A Country Girl" and "The Toreador." "The Rebel Maid," which was written by Alexander M. Thompson, and set to

the Prince's men of danger. In order, however, to lure the invaders into the trap he has set, Sir Stephen orders Bunkle, the landlord of the inn, to change the red lamp for a green one. Derek and his men, therefore, land, confident of success. In the fight that ensues, Derek escapes and takes refuge in the inn, where he finds Lady Mary, and learns that she loves him. His joy is cut short when Sir Stephen enters, and by skilful questioning, makes Mary confess that it was she who set the signal. In spite of Derek's belief that she has betrayed him, Lady Mary contrives to assist him to escape through a secret passage.

The scene of the third act is the village green outside the inn. Derek, being anxious for Lady Mary's safety, comes once more to the inn, and learns that Lady Mary had contrived his escape. Just at the moment when Derek and Mary are explaining matters to each other Sir Stephen

vocalist. In the two trios in which she appears with Bunkle and Solomon, she introduces a lot of clever business. Mrs. Hobart is happily cast in the role of Lady Elizabeth Weston, Lady Mary's aunt, and she gives a very realistic interpretation of the part. Miss Doris Phillips and Miss Muriel Turner, in minor parts, both justify their selection, and the former sings well in a duet and quartette in the opening act.

Mr. Leonard Hayward, in the part of Derek, the commander of the rebel cutter, gives another of the clever impersonations which have made him a favourite. He has a great deal to do and does it well, and the various dramatic situations in which he is involved are exploited to the full. He has several musical numbers of which the most popular, of course, is the well-known "The Fishermen of England." Mr. Cecil Bocking, another stalwart of the Society, gives a fine rendering of the part of Lord Milverton. As Sir Stephen of Lord Milverton, Mr. Victor Spurgeon fills the role with ability and confidence. Of the new-comers among the male principals, Messrs. John Willes and Maurice Phillips. The former makes a hit as Septimus Bunkle, the inn-keeper, with his Yorkshire accent, his anxiety to gain the reward for capturing the rebel, and the astute way in which he contrives to "keep in" with both sides during the stirring episodes of which his inn is the centre. Mr. Phillips, as Solomon Hooker, Derek's servant, sends the audience into fits of laughter by his drolleries, being to outward appearance a simpleton and yet possessing a good deal of shrewdness in furthering his master's affairs. He creates quite a furore when he comes on in the final act, and sings "The knife-grinder's song," and his voice is equally well heard in several other musical numbers. He and Mr. Willes provide the humorous element in the piece, and do it well. Mr. Sidney Perrott, who in the second act is greatly to the fore in the riotous scenes in the inn, appears at the end as a stately Prince of Orange, a part that suits him admirably. He is certainly an acquisition to the Society.

The Chelmsford Society has a reputation for its good chorus work, and this week's performance is no exception to the rule. The concerted numbers are certainly more difficult to sing than was the case in the majority of the previous productions, but right from the first entry the chorus tackle their task with a determination to succeed, and the manner in which they acquit themselves is deserving of high praise.

The Committee is fortunate again to have Miss Madge Macklin as producer and stage manager. She is also responsible for arranging the dances. The fine reception which the opera is receiving from crowded audiences during the week bears testimony to the care and skill with which the rehearsals were carried out. The post of musical director is held by Mr. Ronald Biggs, who acted in a similar capacity when the Society produced what up to then was regarded as their most successful venture, "The Yeomen of the Guard." The orchestra, which both in numbers and quality is the strongest combination that has ever accompanied or



Mr. Leonard Hayward as Derek Lanscombe and Miss Rose Rowbotham as Lady Mary Trefusis.



1.—Mr. Leonard Hayward and Miss Rowbotham in a dramatic scene in the third act. 2.—Miss M. Spalding as Abigail, Miss Willes as Septimus Bunkle, and Mr. Maurice Phillips as Solomon Hooker. 3.—Miss Doris Phillips as Dorothy, and Miss Gozzett as Capt. Percy Jerome. 4.—A group of dancing girls, with Miss M. Spalding in the centre.

Photos: Spalding, C.

music by Montague F. Phillips, is in some respects the most ambitious play that the Society has yet undertaken. Classed as a romantic light opera, it is not without dramatic passages, while in the second and third acts there are delightful excerpts of musical comedy. This latter phase is one with which the members are quite familiar, and those who have admired them in the past never doubted their ability to interpret it. That they did so with marked success, and were equally happy in the earlier portions of the play where more dramatic talent was called for, not only speaks well for the keenness of the players, but indicates that the Society is making a distinct advance in the quality of its productions. With an interesting plot, a well-dressed company, and an efficient orchestra, the Society has without doubt put up a good show, and strengthened its already well-established position in the estimation of local playgoers.

STORY OF THE PLAY.

The story of "The Rebel Maid" belongs to the late part of the seventeenth century, the plot being founded on the revolution of 1688, and the landing of William of Orange. Afterwards William the Third of England. Act I. is laid in the grounds of Lord Milverton's house in Devonshire. There is a reception given by his Lordship in honour of his niece, Lady Mary Trefusis, who, as "The Rebel Maid" is secretly engaged in obtaining the support of the local fishermen in the plot to overthrow King James II. Lord Milverton, a staunch supporter of the Stuart cause, introduces his nephew, Sir Stephen Crespigny, as the Royal Commissioner appointed for the suppression of the plot, and the capture of the conspirators' mysterious leader. Derek Lanscombe, Lord Milverton's son, arrives home from abroad for the purpose of preparing for the landing of William, and meets his former inmate, Lady Mary.

The second act is set in "The Jolly Fishermen" inn, opposite Torbay. Lady Mary, who has previously received instructions to set a signal to guide the invaders, is at the inn with her aunt, Lady Elizabeth Weston. Sir Stephen, however, intercepted the letter, and has surrounded soldiers round the inn. Lady Mary accordingly sets a red signal to warn

appears with the soldiers, and orders Derek to be shot at once. The opportune arrival of Prince William, however, prevents the sentence from being carried into effect, and with a general pardon to all who lay down their arms, the opera is brought to a happy conclusion.

THE CAST

The cast was as follows—

Derek Lanscombe, Commander of rebel cutter, Curlew	Leonard Hayward
Lord Milverton, his father, Lord-Lieutenant for King James	Cecil Bocking
Sir Stephen Crespigny, Royal Commissioner for King James	Victor Spurgeon
Capt. Percy Jerome	Fred. Gozzett
Septimus Bunkle, an innkeeper	John Willes
Solomon Hooker, Derek's servant	Maurice Phillips
Sam and Roger, fishermen	Fred. Bearman and Arthur W. Ward
William, Prince of Orange	Sidney Perrott
Sergeant	Ralph Catt
Lady Elizabeth Weston	Lilian Hobart
Abigail, Lady Mary's maid	Marjorie Spalding
Dorothy	Doris Phillips
Maid	Muriel Turner
Lady Mary Trefusis, known as Snow	
Bunting, the Rebel Maid	Rose Rowbotham

Chorus of guests, courtiers, serving maids, villagers, soldiers, fishermen, etc.—Ladies: N. K. Archer, H. A. Alden, D. I. Bevan, D. Bocking, V. Cannon, O. Catt, A. E. Chisnell, D. Davis, L. Davies, E. Everett, P. Green, P. Hay, E. M. Her, R. Gannon, E. M. Phillips, D. G. Reed, M. Norrington, G. Barlow, J. C. Blooman, A. Gentlemen: G. Barlow, J. C. Blooman, A. Gentlemen: J. W. Hawkes, F. Hiner, J. Hobart, J. Myall, G. Newcombe, J. Noke, Marshall, J. Myall, G. Newcombe, J. Noke, J. L. Phillips, B. Pullen, H. Tomalin.

ABOUT THE PLAYERS.

Miss Rose Rowbotham, who has been playing with D'Oyley Carte Opera Company, impersonates Lady Mary Trefusis, otherwise the Rebel Maid, with conspicuous success. Her charm and skill as an actress are well known to Chelmsford audiences, and her singing is a delight. She makes the most of her part, and is especially good in the scenes towards the close. Perhaps her best musical numbers are "When a dream of love you cherish," in the first act, and "Sail my ships" in the last. Miss Marjorie Spalding, as Abigail, Lady Mary's maid, plays the part with vivacity. She has several opportunities to display her capabilities as a

of the Society's plays, is as follows:—

First Violins: Mr. R. B. Morley, Miss Irene Spurgeon, Mr. W. H. Miss Gladys Metcalfe. Second Mr. C. B. Oliver, Mr. V. Walder, Mr. A. Nifosi and Mr. H. M. Man Bass: Mr. C. Payne, Flute: Mr. Oboe: Mr. W. H. Taylor, Clarinet: W. Kealey, Bassoon: Mr. E. H. Mr. V. Waller, Trumpets: Mr. and Mr. E. Joyce, Trombone: Cumbers, Tympani: Mr. W. H. Harp: Miss Dorcen Jenkins.

Excellent arrangements in with the production were made. Executive Committee, of which Butchard is chairman and Mr. hon. secretary. Mr. Lawrence, accompanist and chorus master. Mr. Powley prompter; Mr. B. E. call boy; and Mr. E. G. Brophy, party master. Mr. R. Gerald, manager of the Regent Theatre staff have done all in their power for the Society.