

CHELMSFORD AMATEUR OPERATIC AND DRAMATIC SOCIETY.

GOOD PERFORMANCE OF "THE TOREADOR."



Mr. H. E. White as Moreno, and Miss C. G. Marks as Donna Teresa.

The impression created by the first night's performance of "The Toreador" by the Chelmsford Amateur Operatic Society was that it was well up to the high standard attained by this enterprising organisation. This musical comedy is being staged all the week at the spacious Regent Theatre, Chelmsford, and, as the nett proceeds, as in previous years, go to the Chelmsford Hospital, it will be a great pity if the Society do not receive the patronage they so thoroughly deserve. The Society has had to face a few difficulties since last season, but it has surmounted these, and there is no reason why it should not go on and prosper. The Chelmsford public are not given many opportunities of hearing good musical comedies, and the Society is to be congratulated on catering for the wants of those who take delight in this class of entertainment.

There were one or two minor hitches on Monday evening, which are incidental to a first-night performance, but, on the whole, and bearing in mind that at the very last moment the Society had to find a substitute for one of the most important characters, a highly meritorious interpretation was given, and the audience had three hours of real enjoyment and merriment. The company entered into the spirit of the work, the singing was good, the dancing very pretty and effective, and the costumes were charming. There was an attention to detail, and a balance of tone in the chorus singing, that were very pleasing. There were two or three familiar names missing from the programme, but capable successors to these were found.

Allusion has already been made to the fact that a substitute had to be found at the eleventh hour, but Mr. A. J. Walker, who came into the cast in this fashion, and took the rôle of Sammy Gigg, the "tiger," proved a very valuable addition to the company, and was a great success. He was screamingly funny, and caused no end of amusement, his feigned horror, after impersonating the Toreador, when faced with the prospect of going into the arena, being productive of great hilarity. Miss Peggy

Green, who has taken a leading part in the Society's function since it commenced operations, found a rôle eminently suited to her capability in that of Mrs. Malton Hoppings, the rich widow, who was at first in love with the Toreador, but, finding him faithless, transferred her affections to Mr. Pettifer, a dealer in wild animals. Miss Green sang and acted with the vivacity characteristic of her, and altogether was a great success, and increased her popularity. Mr. B. J. Myall, as Carajolo, a Toreador, found full scope for his ability here and succeeded in making a good impression. Mr. C. L. Bocking admirably portrayed Mr. Pettifer, and won deserved applause for his singing and clever dancing. Mr. L. Hayward was very much at home as the rather foppish guardsman, Sir Archibald Stackett, and carried out a none too easy task with a great measure of success.

Miss C. G. Marks, as Donna Teresa, the Spanish sweetheart of the Toreador, gave an appreciative interpretation of her part. Mr. J. Nokes, as the pompous Governor of Villaya, did uncommonly well; and Mrs. C. L. Bocking was a charming Susan, the proprietress of the Magasin des Fleurs, where the scene of the first act was laid. Miss M. F. Spalding sang and acted very nicely, and was a rather captivating young man when, for a time, she masqueraded as Mr. Robinson, the husband of her friend, Nancy Staunton, a part ably taken by Miss B. Baker. Mrs. L. Hobart, as La Belle Bolero, gave a particularly firm rendering of the song "My Toreador," one of the best vocal efforts of the evening; and the other characters were well sustained by Mr. J. C. Blooman (Augustus Traill, of the British Consulate), Mr. V. C. Spurgeon (Rinaldo, a Carlist), Mr. H. Tomalin (bandmaster), Mr. B. E. Howes (Mr. Probitt, a solicitor), Mr. A. M. Waller (commissionaire), Mrs. Catt (Cora Bellamy, principal bridesmaid), and Miss O. E. Pedley (Ethel Marshall).

Miss Madge Macklin was responsible for the production of the comedy and for the arranging of the dances, and Mr. C. Kennet Dryden was the musical director, and the Society were singularly fortunate in possessing the services of these two. The work of the orchestra was not one of the least pleasing features of the evening's entertainment, and a word of praise is due to Mr. Lawrence Hey, the honorary accompanist and chorus master.



Miss P. Green as Mrs. Malton Hoppings, and Mr. B. J. Myall as Carajolo, with bevy of bridesmaids.