

DAILY TIMES. WEDNESDAY. JAN

"YEOMAN OF THE GUARD" AT CHELMSFORD

AMATEUR SOCIETY'S FINE PERFORMANCE.

The Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, since its inauguration in November, 1920, has confined its operations to performances of Gilbert and Sullivan's well-known operas. In its first season it gave "H.M.S. Pinafore," and in 1921-22 "The Gondoliers" and "Iolanthe." The selection for the present season was more or less left to popular choice. The claims of the "Yeoman of the Guard" and the "Mikado" were found to be about equally balanced, the former was eventually decided upon, and this week, at the County Theatre, Chelmsford, commencing on Tuesday, the Society is giving a performance of it every evening, and any proceeds, after paying expenses, are to go to the Chelmsford Hospital.

pany, is a charming Phoebe Meryll, of whom she gives a very acceptable rendering, and plays with wonderful confidence, especially seeing that she is quite new to this kind of venture. Miss Peggy Green, a great favourite at Chelmsford, has not quite so much to do as usual this time in sustaining the person of Dame Carruthers, housekeeper to the Tower, but what she has to do, whether in song or speech, is cleverly accomplished, and she succeeds in giving point and personality to the character. Zeal and competence mark the work of Mr. R. J. Shoobridge as head gaoler, his duet with the gaoler, where he offers to teach the latter the arts of his occupation, is exceedingly well done. Mr. C. L. Bocking is a capital sergeant of the yeomen, and makes the most



The cast is as follows:—

Sir Richard Cholmondeley (Lieutenant of the Tower) Mr. R. K. Gamble.
Col. Fairfax Mr. L. C. Hayward.
Sergt. Meryll Mr. L. C. Bocking.
Leonard Meryll Mr. C. H. Smith.
Jack Point Mr. E. T. Parfitt.
Wilfred Shadbolt Mr. R. J. Shoobridge.
The Headman Mr. E. W. Alston.
First Yeoman Mr. V. C. Spurgeon.
Second Yeoman Mr. J. B. Myall.
Elsie Maynard Mrs. L. C. Bocking.
Phoebe Meryll Miss R. G. Rowbotham.
Dame Carruthers Miss Peggy Green.
Kate (her niece) Miss I. H. Fisher.

The story of the "Yeoman of the Guard," with its sub-title of "The Merryman and his Maid," is so well known as to need no repetition. A good piece of fortune for the Society lies in the fact that *to date*, with one or two exceptions, it has been able to retain the same cast and gentlemen for the leading roles, a

of his opportunities. Other characters are well portrayed by Miss I. H. Fisher, Mr. C. H. Smith, Mr. E. W. Alston, Mr. V. C. Spurgeon, Mr. B. J. Myall, Mr. H. Underhill, and Mr. N. Knight. The quartettes are well sung, a good balance of tone being shown.

There is no mistake about the earnestness, determination, and enthusiasm of the chorus work, the fresh quality of the voices being particularly noticeable, and it is abundantly evident that every pains have been taken to bring the company up to a fine standard, and to retain the reputation already earned. The orchestra, skilfully led by Miss Grace Powell, is well up to its work, and the pianoforte accompaniments are played by Mr. Lawrence Hay.

Since the season started the Society were placed in the difficult position of having to find a fresh musical director, but, thanks to the kindly offices of Mr. Armstrong Gibbs, the services of Mr. Ronald Biggs, music master at Radley College, were obtained. He took up



Left: Miss Peggy Green as "Dame Carruthers."
Right: Mr. R. J. Shoobridge as "Wilfred Shadbolt."

situation which helps to inspire confidence. As the story of the opera revolves mainly round the fortunes of Jack Point, the jester, and Elsie Maynard, the strolling singer, one may perhaps deal with these first. Mr. E. T. Parfitt is an able exponent of the part of the jester; he has a clear enunciation, a serviceable voice, and a good sense of the dramatic. Mrs. C. L. Bocking gives the impression that her voice has improved in power and effect, she acts with humour and vivacity, and altogether interprets Elsie Maynard with good understanding. Mr. L. C. Hayward is a painstaking and earnest artist, who capably undertakes the part of Col. Fairfax. Mr. R. K. Gamble, a new comer, was a dignified Lieutenant of the Tower, and Miss R. G. Rowbotham, another acquisition to the com-

his duties with whole-hearted energy. The Society was also happily situated in having as producer and stage manager Mr. Frederick Hobbs, who, for about eighteen years, was a principal of the leading D'Oyly Carte Company; he has been invaluable as a coach.

Much good voluntary work has been done in various ways for the Society, and mention should be made of Mr. E. G. Brown, who is the honorary assistant stage and scenery manager, and who has devoted a lot of attention to various details, which all help to smooth running; Mr. P. Butcher, the Chairman of the Committee, and Mr. R. J. Shoobridge, who carries out the arduous task of hon. secretary. The old spinning wheel used in the first act is being lent by the Mayor (Alderman Frothingham).

energy. I in having Mr. Frothingham, an actor, who has been in the society, and G. Brown, who is a lot of help in all help in the task of the old spinning wheel used in the Maynard family (Spalding).



Mr. E. T. Parhitt as "Jack Point" and Mrs. L. C. Bocking as "Elsie Maynard."