

- THE TWELVE POUND LOOK
- THE BOY COMES HOME
- TWELFTH NIGHT

1927

AMATEUR DRAMATIC CIRCLE.

New Venture to Produce Shakespeare for Schools.

Because facilities for the furtherance of the education of Teddington elementary school children—represented by the study of Shakespeare—have been somewhat restricted in the past, necessitating their travelling long journeys to see performances, active efforts are now being made to remedy the defect, and the aim of the newly-formed Teddington and District Amateur Dramatic Circle is to play the "Merchant of Venice" to the children in the local schools next March. To raise funds for this a performance of two short modern plays was given to an appreciative audience at the Parish Hall, Elleray-road, Teddington, on Wednesday evening. In addition to giving a creditable rendering of J. M. Barrie's well-known one-act play, "The Twelve Pound Look," and A. A. Milne's gem, "The Boy Comes Home," they gave a foretaste of their capability of placing the beauty of Shakespeare before young audiences by an able performance of two familiar and favourite scenes from "Twelfth Night." Though a performance of this triple bill had been given, with success, at the Camp School, Bushy Park, the preceding evening, it was in the nature of a dress rehearsal, so that on Wednesday they made their first public appearance. The Circle realised its desire to make the evening a success from an artistic point of view, and it is to be hoped that they were equally successful financially.

"Twelfth Night."

The two scenes from Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night"—act I., scene V., and act II., scene V.—were well presented, and disclosed the versatility of the members of the circle in no small degree. An outstanding feature of the first scene was the splendid portrayal of the messenger Viola by Miss Marjory Payne. Mr. Cyril Mulley, as the conceited Malvolio, and Miss Irene Randolph, as the beautiful Olivia, were admirably cast, whilst the drunken Sir Toby Belch was appropriately interpreted by Mr. Robert Fraser. Others in the cast were Miss Ethel Kent (Teste), Miss Evelyn Harrison (Maria), and the Misses Vera Leaver and Marjorie Gurney (ladies-in-waiting). The second scene was no less successful, the change from the poetry to the humour of Shakespeare being fully appreciated. The trick played on Malvolio by Sir Toby Belch and his associates in the garden of Olivia's house was played with consummate artistry, and evoked the deserved applause of the audience. Miss M. Payne was the producer.

The performance was for the funds of the circle to enable them to play Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice" to the local schools next March.

"The Boy Comes Home."

Following this, "The Boy Comes Home," a play in one-act, by A. A. Milne, was presented, and proved to be the most successful performance of the evening. For this achievement Mr. S. J. House, a master of Hampton Grammar School, and Mr. W. R. Hazell, the enterprising hon. secretary of the circle, were largely responsible. The action of the play is in the cosy study of Uncle James, a war profiteer and the owner of a flourishing jam factory, who tries to exercise his exalted position over Philip, a young nephew just home from the war and in search of lucrative employment. Mr. Hazell, as the uncle, played with fervour and expression. Equally accomplished was the performance of Mr. House, as the nephew who refuses to be bullied into employment and subsequently brings his uncle to his own desires, after a series of amusing situations. The supporting cast entered into the spirit of the play, and included bright performances by Miss Margaret E. Bradbury (Mary), Miss Edith Sturt (Aunt Emily), and Miss Betty H. Chandler (Mrs. Higgins). The play was produced by Mr. Reginald Higdon.