

"THE DOVER ROAD."

"If the repertory movement in Australia is to flourish and become a great and joyous power for the enlarging of the communal mind of the nation, then there must be no haphazard production; there must be no enthusiastic but misguided rushing of fine plays on to the boards. That way lies the damnation of the Australian repertory movement." This dictum, which was laid down by Mr. Gregan M'Mahon, father of the repertory movement in Australia, was followed scrupulously by the Repertory Society of Brisbane at its first performance at the Theatre Royal last night. Nothing was left to chance. The cast was admirably chosen, and the large audience—a most encouraging start off for the society—was held by the splendid acting for two hours and three-quarters. There is something out of the ordinary in a body of amateurs who can do that, and the thanks of the theatre-loving people of Brisbane are due to Miss Barbara Sisley for the excellent workmanship she got out of her clever band of actors. "The Dover Road" was a happy choice for the society's initial performance. In this

comedy A. A. Milne gives his actors plenty of scope for the display of individuality. Mr. Latimer (Mr. Devereux), the wealthy owner of a house off the Dover-road, makes a hobby of way-laying eloping couples, and imprisoning them until they recover from their fever. Mr. Devereux acted with distinction the part of the quaint English gentleman who charmed his "prisoners" with his old-world hospitality and grace of manner. It would be difficult to imagine a more charming Anne than Miss Lockhart Gibson. This young lady acts as to the manner born; with youth on her side, and beauty, grace, personality, and a mellow voice—that "most excellent thing in woman"—she should reach a high place in the theatrical world. Dr. Nisbet's Dominic (the butler who always appeared at the opportune moment and who never

Domine (the butler who always appeared at the opportune moment, and who never fell on a man twice) was a clever piece of character acting. Mrs. Robinson, as Eustasia, who killed her husband—a real live lord—with kindness, and then eloped with Nicholas (Mr. Macgregor) also did splendid work. Mr. Harding, as Leonard, husband of Eustasia, who ran away with Anne, was wooden in parts; he will improve with stage experience. Mr. Macgregor made an ideal Nicholas. As Mr. Latimer's staff, Miss Clarke and Miss M'Cowan, and Mr. Mocatta and Mr. Johnstone, performed their duties faithfully. The players, one and all, rose to the occasion, and satisfied the sceptics that the repertory movement in Brisbane has come to stay; it will grow from strength to strength; it will "enlarge the communal mind," and prove a "great and joyous power" in our cultural life. Through the earnest labours of this society, the small band of people who look upon the theatre as more than a mere place of amusement will have an opportunity of hearing some excellent plays—certain "box office failures"—which would otherwise remain in oblivion.