

REPERTORY SOCIETY PLAY

Miss Bulcock's Fine Character Study

Commercialisation of the mob complex of crime-curiosity, with reactions on a character susceptible through discontent, is the dominant theme of "The Crime at Blossoms," a play in three acts by Mordaunt Sharp, presented by the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society in the Princess Theatre last night.

"Blossoms" was a delightful Elizabethan cottage set in a village. Christopher Merriman (Mr. Clem Christesen) and Valerie, his wife (Miss Mary Bulcock) were "desperately hard up." Merryman loathed work, and what to do was the problem besetting Valerie, who wanted more of life. Here began the study of disintegration of the finer elements in a charming character that gave distinction to Miss Bulcock's playing.

There had been a double murder while the cottage was let. Mrs. Woodman (Miss Nancy Fowles), the daily help, unconsciously sowed the seeds of a scheme that was to bring retribution. She graphically described the scene when she found the bodies. "Nosey Parkers" had troubled her in the Merrimans' absence. Why not, thought Valerie, turn them to account in their financial straits? The horrible blood stain on the steps became an asset. A "ghoulish exhibition" was devised, but, Valerie reminded her husband, you "can't look a gift murderer in the mouth." The char-a-banc trade boomed.

Each sinister development was traced with skilful, consistent touches by Miss Bulcock, but it was in the dramatic speech of reconstruction of the crime to the many sight-seeing parties daily that she advanced to one of the most powerful and convincing performances yet seen on the Brisbane amateur stage. The return of the wronged husband, who was the murderer (Mr. William Williams), to the scene of the crime, and his confession, brought to Valerie a sense of the ghoulishness of the scheme. Her dramatic strength in the development was subtly-balanced with the poise of the early scenes.

Mr. Christesen played effectively with a natural ease. Miss Fowles' fine character study was well maintained, especially as the coadjutor of Valerie's plan. Mr. Robert Kelly was satisfying as the Rev. Charles Stern.

In general effect and detail the production by Miss Barbara Sisley was admirably worked out. The society's orchestra, conducted by Mr. Erich John, was heard acceptably.