

A SUCCESSFUL FIRST NIGHT

ENTERTAINMENTS of a popular kind are always very successful in Yeovil, although high-class concerts do not as a rule attract an overflowing house or provoke much enthusiasm, skilful though the performances frequently are. The idea of forming an Operatic Society among the amateur musicians of the town (of whom there are a large number) was one, therefore, which met with general approbation, and it is hoped that during the winter months a series of entertainments will be given by the newly-formed Society, which made a successful first bow to the public at the Assembly rooms on Wednesday evening. The large hall was well filled, although several seats that had been taken were empty on account of the tyrannical east wind which prevailed. It is right at the outset to state that the character of the performance was of such a varied and delightful character that it gave intense gratification to all who were present.

The stage was beautifully draped and fitted up, and was canopied with fairy lights and Chinese lanterns, the proscenium being ornamented with palms and plants, kindly lent by Mr Chas Dodge, of the Preston Nurseries. Every detail with regard to the furnishing of the stage had also been carefully studied, the furniture being kindly lent by Messrs White & Sons, of the Rink. Altogether

the stage had a very charming appearance, and helped to make the grouping of the performers most effective. Mr E Raymond was the stage carpenter, and Mr H Jesty arranged the lighting and illuminations.

The first part of the programme consisted mainly of numbers from popular operas, the opening item being "The Cigarette Chorus" (from "The Casino Girl"), by the members of the Society, about 40 vocalists taking part. This went with a delightful swing, and gave good augury of that which was to come. The second item on the programme, "The Toreador's Song", by Mr A B Lyle, with chorus, was very effective, and was loudly applauded. This was followed by an exceedingly humorous Scotch song, "Sandy McClaskley", by Mr Harrie White, which was well rendered, and provoked a great deal of mirth. A charming song "San Toy", entitled "The Moon", with chorus by the Society, was sung with great taste by Mrs Stanley Godfrey, and the grouping of the girls in the chorus, holding Chinese lanterns, was exceedingly pretty.

Then, by the introduction of what was called "The Indian Empire Band", who were announced to play a march from "Scipio", came a decided and most pleasing novelty. The members of the band, 33 in number, wore turbans, and

were otherwise dressed in Oriental costume, and their "instruments", so far as the audience were concerned, were mysteries in design. The sound, however, was an agreeable blending of harmonies produced by trebles, altos, tenors, and bass, and the march, as well as the familiar airs "Old Folks at Home", "March of the Men of Harlech", and "Home, Sweet Home" gave much delight. The costumes and instruments used by the band were Parisian, and were made expressly for a concert which recently took place in Sussex, the Committee having hired them from the owners.

A comic song entitled "Adverts" - an amusing "take-off" on the modern method of advertising patent medicines - caused such merriment, and Miss Margaret Price sang "The Language of Flowers" from "The Toreador" with excellent taste. A humorous song by Mr Horrex was followed by a very comical "Burlesque Council Meeting", at which the grave question was discussed as to the desirability of erecting a pump in the parish of Compton. The heated discussion of the councillors convulsed the house with laughter, and there were introduced into it several playful illusions to the neighbouring borough of "Blowville", with its "white-
elephant reservoir", and its free Corporation luncheons. The dramatis personae in this little

burlesque were:- Councillor Forrard, Mr Tom Parsons; Councillor Backard, Mr N Raynes; Councillor Pewrile, Mr Harrie White; Councillor Hornblower, Mr W J Horrex; Chairman, Mr C H Shinner. The song "Military Man", from Florodors, by Mr Fred C Hook brought the first part of the programme to a close.

The second part consisted of Gilbert and Sullivan's amusing operetta "Trial by Jury". It will, perhaps, be thought that to include this in their repertoire was somewhat ambitious on the part of the amateurs, but the really excellent manner in which the piece was rendered from beginning to finish proved that the Society were fully justified in their decision. Mr W J Horrex, as the learned judge, did his part as if he were "To the manner born". Mr A L Legg was entrusted with the difficult role of the defendant, and, although suffering from the disadvantage of a cold, performed his part excellently, and was frequently applauded. The Plaintiff (Miss Margaret Price) also proved herself to be possessed of true dramatic instinct, and acquitted herself admirably. In fact, the whole of the characters entered thoroughly into the spirit of the piece, and the comicalities of the "trial" were well developed.

The performance was repeated before a crowded house last evening.