

SCHOOL SOCIETIES AND ENTERTAINMENTS

CHARTERHOUSE THEATRICALS

On Saturday, March 25th, and Wednesday, March 29th, the Charterhouse Dramatic Club presented Shakespeare's 'As You Like It,' with the following cast:—

Duke, living in banishment, J. A. Simmons; Frederick, his brother, usurper of his dominions, G. F. Priestland; Amiens and Jacques, Lords in attendance on the banished Duke, A. M. Cranstoun and J. R. E. Waddell; Le Beau, a courtier, M. B. Mavroleon; First Lord, B. S. C. G. Randall; Second Lord, S. A. N. Raven; Charles, wrestler to Frederick, P. C. D. Moy; Oliver, Jaques, Orlando, sons of Sir Rowland de Boys, C. Wigram, P. J. Darvall, and D. A. Raeburn; Adam and Dennis, servants to Oliver, W. S. C. Chevis and J. F. Beck; Touchstone, a clown, C. Kemball; Sir Oliver Martext, a vicar, C. W. Raeburn; Corin and Silvius, shepherds, F. A. Hill and B. S. Russell; William, a country-fellow in love with Audrey, N. F. Mavroleon; Rosalind, daughter to the banished Duke, R. M. Wackerbarth; Celia, daughter to Frederick, N. R. Burt; Phebe, a shepherdess, R. M. S. Eyre; Audrey, a country wench, D. E. Aylmer-Jones; Lords, Pages, Attendants, etc., P. R. Whitcroft, D. M. G. Bird, P. E. Rhodes, A. C. J. Berg, M. Heymann, W. P. Faulkner, A. P. Cohen, R. S. B. Rogers, J. A. Lies, A. R. Helme, T. T. Carson.

The play produced by Brandon Laight; Assistant Producers, J. G. Orr and P. J. Darvall. Musical settings arranged and directed by Dr T. P. Fielden; settings designed by P. J. Darvall; costumes designed and executed by Mrs Holmes, Mrs Edwards and Mrs Le Mesurier; scenery and lighting designed and created by members of Greenroom.

'As You Like It' is not an easy play to produce. The swift changes of scene and of mood make great demands on the performers not only on the stage but also behind, above and below it. For the C.D.C., however, no difficulties are insurmountable, and it can safely be said that in their latest production they have set up a record that is likely to prove long-lived. It is indeed a fitting climax to the long partnership of Mr Laight and P. J. Darvall, to whom Charterhouse theatricals owe so large a debt.

On the technical side the production was virtually flawless. The settings were simple but effective, the lighting admirable, and the woodland scenes were among the most beautiful that have ever been seen on the Charterhouse stage. Gay costumes and well-planned grouping made up some charming tableaux, and in the spirited and graceful dancing even the rustics caught something of the elegance of the quality. But the chief honours go to the actors, in particular to Wackerbarth, Waddell ma., Kemball and Mavroleon ma. It is no disparagement to the personators of Rosalind, Jaques, Touchstone and Le Beau to say that in competent hands these parts almost play themselves. Not every producer is as lucky as Mr Laight in having at his disposal four actors whom they fitted like a glove. The supercilious cynic, the whimsical fool, the courtly gallant, the determined yet modest damsel pursuing a husband, could scarcely have been bettered. Viewed only as a feat of memory Wackerbarth's performance would have been remarkable: his elocution, his vivacity and the perfection of his voice-control made it into an artistic triumph, and his appearance before the curtain to speak the epilogue was the signal for a storm of richly deserved applause.

Raeburn ma. gave a satisfactory rendering of the equally exacting and much less grateful part of Orlando, but we have seen him more happily cast. The smaller parts were well filled. Chevis ma. made a dignified and pathetic Adam, and Raeburn mi.'s mere appearance on the stage evoked a peal of merriment. Priestland as the usurping duke was, we thought, cast in too sinister a mould, appropriate rather to an Oriental sultan than to a Western European princeling,

and this impression was strengthened by his make-up and his costume. We were glad for once to see Darvall on the stage, arrayed in unaccustomed splendour. Burt as Celia fulfilled creditably the thankless task of playing up to Rosalind, but might with advantage have spoken his lines more slowly and with more variety of gesture and modulation. Cranstoun sang with rare artistry. Recorders, however, or strings would have provided a more suitable accompaniment than a piano.

A notable feature of the play was the beauty of the dresses. By far the greater part of them were made or adapted by Mrs Holmes and Mrs Le Mesurier, who once again most generously gave their time and talent to the service of the C.D.C. Only a very few of the costumes were manifestly not supplied by Nathans. The make-up also of all the characters was excellent; if the hands of the actors had received as much attention as their faces, it would have been perfect. These, however, are details which do little or nothing to detract from the merit of a combined effort of which all who took part in it may be justly proud. The producers have sung us a memorable swan-song. They will be much missed and long remembered. *Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus?* A.W.T.

GREENROOM PRESENTS . . .

On Saturday, June 17th, Greenroom presented a light hearted variety entertainment, largely though not entirely topical, somewhat cryptically entitled 'Laeti Laudate Da.'

A neat and original musical number opened the programme, followed by an amusing farce 'If Men Played Cards As Women Do,' in which the two Mavroleons, Aylmer Jones and Chevis all acquitted themselves with a confident gusto, being content to get their laughs from broad burlesque rather than from subtleties of mannerism or speech. 'The Robbery,' an indifferent sketch rather indifferently played by Wackerbarth as Lady Maughan and Kemble as The Detective, was the least successful feature of the programme. By contrast the solo clowning of 'Maestro' Mavroleon which followed was diverting, clever and original. The appetite of the audience thus whetted, there came one of the two tit-bits of the evening—'Absurgery'—in which J. R. E. Waddell as Dr Sawbones performed a peculiar and peculiarly Carthusian appendectomy in silhouette before a vastly entertained audience. Waddell has a polished diction and a clear and plaintive enunciation which he uses to send home, with perfect timing, shaft after shaft of devastating topical allusion.

'As You Loathe It,' a skit on the C.D.C. Long Quarter Play, was a sketch of considerable possibilities not sufficiently exploited, and was chiefly notable for a brilliant if merciless piece of burlesquing of the Banished Duke by D. A. Raeburn. 'Black Magic,' a humorous turn by Richard Goolden, was greatly enjoyed by all, in particular the singular manipulative difficulties in which his would-be sleight of hand involved him.

The second half opened with a very topical sketch—'Our Domus—Government Controlled.' It marked the return of two old favourites, John and Mary (Waddell and Wackerbarth), the former the first Public School miner returning after twenty years' underground to enter his son Robert (Kemble) into a Charterhouse run by a post-war bureaucracy. The situation offered immense possibilities for wit, but the dialogue lacked point, and there was too much concentration on a rather obvious burlesquing of local personalities. Moy as an obtrusive School Sergeant equipped with the inevitable Minute Book, was the most successful, whilst C. C. Vyvyan Robinson and C. W. Raeburn received a boisterous reception as Housemasters. John and Mary had little opportunity to shine, and what would have been an effective curtain was marred by the inaudibility of the broadcast. Lest this comment appear unduly critical, let it be added that the audience as a whole gave every evidence of whole-hearted approval.