

# THE DESERT SONG

CROWDED AND ENTHUSIASTIC HOUSES AT REDHILL.

CONCLUDING SPARKLING PERFORMANCE.

The East Surrey Operatic Society, with a long list of notable successes to its credit, has delighted audiences at the Market Hall, Redhill, from its inception in 1906, by the sparkling performances it has given, but it is doubtful if any of its productions have won for it greater popularity than that achieved by *The Desert Song*. At the concluding performance on Saturday evening there was a crowded and highly appreciative audience. Many factors doubtless contributed to this success: the instant appeal which this old-established Society makes to lovers of light opera, the known histrionic ability of many of those to whom roles were assigned, and the undoubted popularity of Sigmond Romberg's spectacular musical play. Another was the happily conceived innovation of placing it on the boards in the early days of the New Year, with its more than satisfactory bookings, which probably supply a pointer to the Society in selecting the date of future productions. There were crowded audiences at the four evening performances and at the Saturday matinee. On more than one evening there were numbers who were unable to gain admission to the hall. Those fortunate enough to secure seats were loud in their praises of the high standard of excellence by principals, dancers and chorus alike.

The concluding performance on Saturday evening went with a fine verve throughout. The principals again excelled, and the audience were generous in their applause, but not one whit less generous than the skilful portrayal of their parts merited. The dancing was particularly good, and the choruses were sustained with admirable rhythm throughout. The chorus, under the skilful baton of Mr. C. Ogle, acquitted itself with distinction and lost nothing in effect by a fine application of the values of tone and harmony.

There were scenes of enthusiasm at the close, of the performance. The leading ladies were called to the front of the stage and presented with flowers, and during this impromptu ceremony the plaudits were hearty and sustained. The cheers were renewed when the clever producer, Mrs. Elsie Rendell, and the Hon. Secretary, Miss Malcomson, to whom the Society owes so much for her untiring and willing labour, received similar tokens of regard and appreciation. But prior to this there was a diverting interlude which greatly amused the large audience present. Contrary to usual practice, the stalwart members of the Borough Police Force, who had worthily sustained their part in the play and, incidentally, seemed to enjoy every moment they were on the stage, were first brought in front of the massed performers, and a great shout of laughter went up when it was seen that their leader was being presented with a huge Belisha Beacon. Thus concluded, amid laughter and generous applause, a production in which the Society may justly claim to have added distinctly to its past laurels.

Later in the evening the whole company repaired to the Small Market Hall, where they were the guests of Mr. D. Pym (President of the Society), and thoroughly enjoyed the social gathering which followed. Opportunity was taken of the occasion to further manifest in tangible form appreciation of the valuable services rendered by the producer and Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Rendell being presented with a handsome handbag and Miss Malcomson with a beautifully ornamented cigarette case - expressions of the affection and regard in which they are held by the whole of the cast.

A good many people worked hard behind the scenes to secure the success achieved. Some of these were enumerated in our last issue. The Society is indebted to Mrs. W. Thrift for her untiring work at the box office to Miss Brockwen, who was in charge of the programme sellers, Miss Jones superintended the sale of chocolates, and Mr. Goodman, in charge of the ushers. A special word of praise is due to Mr. Willie Castle, who gave freely of his time and talent in playing the accompaniments throughout the rehearsals.