

Dunedin And The Bard

(Continued from page 12.)

possibly he was never better than in the role of Richard III.

Whether or not due to that influence the fact remains that from 1890 the club did not look back. In 1893 the advisability of restricting the number of members was debated, this just three years after the dissolution of the club had been seriously contemplated.

In 1909 the scope of the club widened, and Mrs. Wakefield Holmes, to-day well known on the amateur stage in Dunedin, was cast as Isobel in "Henry V." In 1911 she scored an outstanding success as Lady Macbeth.

IN 1912 yet another milestone was passed. The club up to this time had performed in the Choral Hall or in Burns Hall, but it was now found that these halls were too small to accommodate audiences. So that year "Richard II," with Mr. Hanlon as Richard, was read in His Majesty's Theatre.

The war naturally affected the club a little: there were few organisations unaffected in those days, but most of the members were elderly and the effect was not so pronounced as on many kindred societies.

IN 1922 Mr. Hanlon was appointed president, retaining the honour until 1927, when Mr. J. C. Stephens was appointed. The club was very strong at this time, and leading lights in the amateur theatrical world were active members. To-day, the club is as strong as ever, the reading of "As You Like It" given in the Concert Chamber only a week or two ago attracting satisfactory attention. Shakespeare can still hold his own against the combined onslaughts of radio, pictures, literature, and theatre!

THREE readings a year are given, have been given for many years. While the plays are as expertly put across as they are at present the club should last for many years. Mr. S. H. Osborn, the existing president (he has been active since 1906), must be a proud man. It is something to be president of a literary-reading club that last year celebrated its diamond jubilee.

THE secretary, Mr. J. W. Hayward, told me that the club had been responsible for much good in the charitable sense. During the war it gave varying sums to patriotic funds and various other funds that had the welfare of the soldiers at heart. It has often assisted other charities. It mooted the suggestion that a Shakespeare garden be laid out in a corner of the Botanical Gardens, only plants mentioned in Shakespeare's works to be grown. The city council supported the suggestion and accepted the club's donation to the work.

And has this reading of Shakespeare any value, apart from that of entertainment? Turn back and read what Hanlon, K.O., has to say on the first page of this article.

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