



Every week . . . 48 pages of thrill-packed reading . . . A magazine crammed with tales that will hold you spellbound Grim, gripping adventures . . . enthralling, sensational detective fiction . . . Besides stories and graphic pictures of people who are in the world's news, the people you want to hear about . . . hobbies . . . humour . . . all sorts of interesting facts about all sorts of interesting things . . . mystery . . . drama . . . comedy tragedy.

DON'T MISS WORLD'S NEWS—GET YOUR COPY TO-DAY.
ALL NEWS AGENTS, 3D.

Curious Crimes. Strange Tales Of The South Seas. The Theft
Incredible—By Agatha Christie. Death Over Galapagos. Goldbeard.
The Shanty On The Rise.

"The Merchant"

Wellington Repertory Made
Shakespeare Popular

(Reviewed by G.H.M.)

THE Wellington Repertory Theatre's presentation of "The Merchant of Venice" last week met with the success it deserved. The night I went I had difficulty in getting a seat, and, even allowing for the loyalty of the members to Shakespeare, the society and "flesh-and-blood" in general, such full houses were a worthy tribute to the producer, W. S. Wauchop, and the cast. Such a play, with so many characters, must make heavy demands on any amateur society's acting strength; and there were, not unnaturally, some weaknesses in the minor parts—and in a few of the major ones, too. But for the most part, the production was remarkably even, and in some respects not far short of brilliant. The modern trend of Shakespearean production was exemplified in the simplicity of settings and the reduction of scene changes; but modesty in this direction was offset by the magnificence of the costuming, particularly that of the women.

If the women dominated the sartorial scene, they also, to my mind, dominated the acting. Perhaps this is natural, for "The Merchant of Venice" is, after all, a tale of feminine triumph. Sinclair Ronald's portrayal of Portia was rich but restrained, and she brought out most of the subtleties of her part. Leslie Jackson (Nerissa) and Rosalind Chadwick (Jessica) were no less capable, and their diction was particularly charming. L. J. Maule's Shylock was, in the traditional manner, full of contrast, but (as it should be) more likely to compel sympathy than repulsion. Strange, but I can never see the downfall of Shylock and hear the smug "Christian leniency" of the judgment against him without feeling rather ashamed of being Christian. Mr. Maule sustained the part excellently, especially the voice.

Arthur Heany's performance of Antonio was colourless. The horrible doom hanging over Antonio's head appeared to worry him very little. The audience may know all along that Antonio will be saved by Portia's pleading, but the actor playing the part should not give the impression that he knows too. John Roberts, as Bassanio, was a suitably romantic figure; but on the whole the men in the cast had more difficulty in giving the semblance of reality to Shakespeare's vast improbabilities than did the women.

We often hear the complaint that Shakespeare is not well enough known these days. I am inclined to the opinion that parts of him are too well known. They bring back memories of the school classroom that, in my own case at least, rather interfere with the dramatic effect. When Portia began her "Quality of mercy speech," for instance, I had the momentary feeling that the audience ought to join in and repeat it with her.

Still, as I began by saying, "The Merchant" was a worthwhile venture which put no strain upon the mercy of the audience.