

'A Second Moses' is a Great Play

G. L. Dann's Finest Work to Date

..... picture having relation to the times is etched. The play is not gloomy or morose or introspective in treatment. There are many flashes of real humour, which being moulded into the warp and woof of the play's texture, make an admirable blend.

THE CAST.

Mrs. Jones (the mother of Caroline) Clare Clarke
 Major Draker D. Kelleff Cameron
 Caroline Daphne Roermann
 Lieutenant (later Captain) Archibald Chisholm Peter Buchanan
 Susan, a maid Muriel Burton
 His Excellency, Sir George Gipps, Governor of N.S.W. Robt. E. Kelly
 Lady Gipps Mary Gibson
 A Secretary to Sir George Gipps Graham Webster
 Miss Halvin Jean Whitfield
 A Girl Joyce Armstrong
 Rector of Windsor, N.S.W. Rev. Henry Styles
 McLachlan W. Williams
 Finza Anderson Ludovick Gordon
 Peter, a ticket-of-leave man Betty Ross
 Thomas O'Connor Mervyn Eadie
 Lady O'Connell Barbara Bancroft
 Miss E. Chambers Leonore Francis
 Lady Dowling Jean Jarrott
 Mrs. Roger Sherry Lorna Wall
 Mrs. W. Mackenzie Joan Barry
 (Members of Caroline Chisholm's Committee)
 Mr. William Bradley, M.L.A. Ernest Busch
 The Satisfied Lady Joy Hawken
 A Girl Ruth Feapell
 Mrs. Faulkner Maibry Wragge
 Mary Betty Brown
 John Baldwin Ley Outridge
 The Grand Lady Mavis Busch
 First Irish Girl Merle Dinning

Second Irish Girl Beryl Rickard
 Third Irish Girl Rosemary Stevenson

IT was with a feeling of gratitude to the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society, and a feeling of pride that a Queenslander, George L. Dann, had written such a play, that we left the Princess Theatre last night, after the performance of his "A Second Moses." It is by far the best play Mr. Dann has yet written.

Its theme is one that should be near to the hearts of Australians, for its central character, who is not fictitious, but whose existence is based securely on historical data, is a woman who is to Australia what "The Lady with the Lamp" and other women have been to England.

Mrs. Caroline Chisholm was one of Australia's greatest and noblest women and in her Mr. Dann has found an admirable vehicle for his undoubted talents. But one character does not make a play. Built round the story of her work in Sydney in one of the most trying and difficult periods of early colonisation is a long list of characters, all of whom ring absolutely true.

FINE CRAFTSMANSHIP.

But even more impressive and noteworthy is the admirable craftsmanship displayed in this play. Mr. Dann has a firm hold of his theme in the very first scene, and he never loses touch with realities, dramatic or otherwise, until the final curtain, when Caroline Chisholm makes that last magnificent speech which rings as true to-day as it did in the days of 1846.

It would be an insult to suggest that this is mere melodrama. It is drama of the purest and richest kind, for right through the play there is the real atmosphere of Australian life and feeling, and the real clash and interclash of human character.

There is an astonishing amount of character drawing in each of every one of a large and difficult cast. No matter how small a part, a definite clear-cut picture having relation to the times is etched. The play is not gloomy

FINE PRODUCTION.

It is to be recorded that Miss Barbara Sisley, to whom the play is gratefully dedicated, did a magnificent job of production in the face of very grave difficulties. A big cast, many changes of scene and costume, and many parts needing careful handling make the production a monumental one for Miss Sisley. It was one of her finest achievements. It is also noteworthy that short waits between scenes enabled it to finish at a reasonable hour.

A PERFECT CAROLINE.

In Miss Daphne Roermann Miss Sisley found her ideal Caroline. The part is alone a great feat of memory, for she is in every scene. The second scene in act 2 of the original script contains many long speeches which might have spelled disaster. But they were carefully pruned in rehearsal to avoid any suggestion of tiresomeness. Miss Roermann never once lost touch with the real Caroline, never even missed a cue. Indeed, save for one rather unfortunate miss in one of the play's most delightfully etched characters, prompting was entirely negligible.

There were many characters which gave opportunities for little cameos of characterisation, almost too numerous to mention in detail.

Notable among them, were the delightful little remnant of Flora

(Betty Ross) and Thomas O'Connor (Mervyn Eadie), Ludo Gordon's McLachlan, a true Scot, as true indeed as Mervyn Eadie's Irishman, Maibry Wragge's Mrs. Faulkner (who could raise her voice to more audible levels at times), and the third Irish girl (Rosemary Stevenson).

Finally there was Captain Chisholm himself, played by Peter Buchanan with a quietness and restraint which perhaps were too unaggressive. Here indeed is a fine character study of the "understanding" husband. Yet Peter Buchanan was never overshadowed by his wife. Perhaps those splendid uniforms and that grand moustache helped.

Altogether the play was a triumph for Miss Sisley, and the author, to say nothing of the host of other people who did such excellent work.

We have every right to feel proud of this play and its author. It is by far his best work, a play which may in time come to be regarded as one of the greatest plays in Australian literature. Its grandness of conception and deftness in execution brand Mr. Dann as a playwright of no mean powers.

The play will be repeated this evening.

A.H.T.