

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS

ABBAY THEATRE.

Mr. J. M. Synge's new comedy, "The Playboy of the Western World," was produced in the Abbey Theatre on Saturday night by the National Theatre Society. The theatre was crowded with an audience the majority of whom were prepared to give a friendly reception to the latest work of a playwright who had already proved himself possessed of ability to present an effective stage representation of Irish people. On those who visited the Abbey Theatre on Saturday night for the first time, however, the performance must have produced a strange impression. The majority of theatre-goers are not accustomed to "remorseless truth" in characterisation, and after witnessing "The Playboy" they will be rather strengthened than otherwise in their preference for the conventional form of stage representation. Mr. Synge set himself the task of introducing his audience to a realistic picture of peasant life in the far West of Ireland, and he succeeded in accomplishing his purpose with a remarkable degree of success. The roadside publichouse, in which the action of the play takes place, and the peasants who come upon the scene, are true to life; the atmosphere of "the West" is all around, and the dialogue full and free. There is much to commend in Mr. Synge's work, but it is open to serious question whether he has been well advised in regard to some of the dialogue. While there is not a word or a turn of expression in the play that is not in common use amongst peasants, it is quite another matter to reproduce some of the expressions on a public stage in a large city. People here will not publicly approve of the indiscriminate use of the Holy Name on every possible occasion, nor will they quietly submit to the reproduction of expressions which, to say the least, are offensive to good taste, however true they may be to actual life. A large section of Saturday night's audience very properly resented these indiscretions on the part of the author, and brought what, in other respects, was a brilliant success to an inglorious conclusion. Mr. Synge, we are afraid, must to some extent sacrifice the "remorseless truth" if his play is to be made acceptable to healthy public opinion. As to the acting of the piece, it was worthy of the highest commendation. Mr. W. G. Fay took the principal part of Christopher Mahon, and gave an admirable representation of the part, and Miss Maire O'Neill was also excellent as Margaret Flaherty. Mr. F. J. Fay was very good as Shawn Keogh, the rival of Christy Mahon, and the other parts were well filled by Mr. A. Power, Mr. Arthur Sinclair, Mr. J. A. O'Rourke, Mr. J. M. Kerrigan, Mr. U. Wright, Mr. Harry Young, Miss Sara Allgood, Miss Brigit O'Dempsey, Miss Alice O'Sullivan, and Miss Mary Craig. "The Playboy" will be repeated each evening during this week.