

"MAN WITH A LOAD OF MISCHIEF"

Questors' Latest Production

Probably because its small cast fitted in with war-time possibilities, the Questors chose Ashley Duke's "The Man With a Load of Mischief" for presentation in their theatre in Mattock-lane, Ealing, on Saturday and Monday evenings with a matinee on Sunday. The play, first produced at the Haymarket Theatre in June, 1925, is an essay in artistic artificiality and poetic prose, appealing almost exclusively to the literary and theatrical stylist. It was consequently to such among the audience that the production, for which Mr. Eric Voce was responsible, chiefly commended itself. It was beautifully dressed, smoothly, almost silkily, acted, and the society is to be congratulated upon a stage setting of a wayside inn just suited to the play.

Of the six characters in the cast, the laurels went to the three men. Mr. Francis W. Smith, who was Jonah, the prophet, in the Society's last production, could hardly have faced a greater change than as the nobleman roué in this. As the characterisation in each was equally satisfactory, this actor's versatility, as well as his stage worthiness, has been established. Mr. Alfred Emmet invested the part of Charles, the nobleman's valet, with an almost sinister significance, and Mr. Alan Bennett contributed a homely and pleasant minor study as the innkeeper. After a somewhat uncertain opening, Miss Betty Mercy progressively developed and strengthened her treatment of the role of the Lady, but she kept it throughout in a subdued key, an intimate study rather than a flamboyant one. Miss Betty Turner was vivid and vivacious as the maid, and Miss Eleanor Bishop showed conspicuous vivacity in the comedy and traditional role of the innkeeper's wife.

The period costumes were loaned by Mr. Cyril Nairne.