

A MASTERLY PERFORMANCE.

Keene Shows His Unimpaired Powers in the Rendition of Hamlet.

The Hamlet of Thomas Keene at the Seattle theater last evening was a revelation to the Shakesperian student, and was listened to by an audience that sat apparently spell bound through the most thrilling passages of the great play. The conversational tone and manner free from rant and all superfluity of voice or gesture was the pleasing characteristic marking the entire interpretation, and at the telling points enabled the actor to throw a delicacy and depth of meaning into his lines that never before had been apparent. After the tragic climaxes the audience would pause for an instant to come back to a realization that after all it was only a play, and then would respond with most hearty demonstrations of applause. Mr. Keene was in excellent voice, giving the falsehood to the report sent out from Sacramento last week and even his lowest whispers were distinctly heard.

The departure from the old interpretation was perhaps most strongly marked in the famous soliloquy, which Mr. Keene delivers while reclining at the foot of the throne and in a voice verging close to a whisper, but every tone distinct and audible in the silence that reigned. The soliloquies, as rendered by Mr. Keene, have been termed perfect self-communions, the expression of what transpires between Hamlet and his moral sense, the effusion of silent meditation. The transformation of Hamlet from a grieving son into an instrument of revenge begins with the "very like, very like," in the first act, and becomes perfected in the exclamation "O, my prophetic soul," when the sad story of the father's taking off dawns upon the son; and from that moment is marked the growth of the determination to set the time aright. In the scene with Ophelia there is still an absence of empty declamation or raving, and every word, every movement, is full of meaning. During the strong dialogue between Hamlet and the queen the most vehement delivery of the lines took place, but after the appearance of the shade of the king the actor's voice softened, and the scene closed after a contrast of expression that marked an interpretation of wonderful strength.

Ophelia, by Miss Lawrence, was a masterly performance. She threw into the character all the perfection of her art, and, like Mr. Keene, embellished it with a wealth of critical knowledge of what the part requires. An unexpected touch was given when she sank helpless under the influence of her malady, and being lifted up by Laertes and the queen, she recoils from the latter as from a polluted creature and with a scream of horror throws herself into the arms of her brother.

Laertes was given by Mr. Arden, who used a fine voice to advantage in the impetuous passages, and was all that the part required of him. Gertrude, the queen, was assumed by Miss Beaman, whose mobile and classic features especially fitted her for that role, and whose acting was second only to Mr. Keene's. Horatio by Mr. Lowell was scholarly and finished, and the tiresome and voluble Polonius, By Mr. Arendt, was very acceptable. The ghost was given by Mr. Hennig, who rendered the passage beginning, "I am thy father's spirit," in a rich and melodious voice that seemed to echo from the galleries. Claudius, the king, was assigned to Mr. Eagle-son, and the players to Mr. Walpole, Mr. Roberts and Miss Downs. Mr. Walpole rendered his speech as to Hecuba so well that he was given an encore. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were represented respectively by Mr. Crawford and Mr. Garth, and the gravediggers by Mr. Arendt and Mr. Bennett.

Tonight the public will be given an opportunity to witness Mr. Keene's masterly portrayal of the cunning French King Louis XI.