

DRAMA

THE WHINE OF A BARNSTORMER—AND MANAGER PYPER'S OUTRAGED FEELINGS.

Theatre-goers who haven't forgotten the appearance at the Salt Lake Theatre a few weeks ago of Mr. Wright Lorimer, in "The Shepherd King," will scarcely need be reminded that it was because of the review of the play which appeared in GOODWIN'S WEEKLY, in which it was stated the play was worthless and tiresome and poorly presented, that Manager Pyper of the Theatre found himself unable to express his indignation in words forcible enough to relieve the pressure on his outraged feelings and therefore withdrew from this Journal the advertising patronage and courtesies of the Theatre.

At the time, Mr. Pyper stated "The Shepherd King" merited no such roast as it received in these columns and that the show was considered and should be treated as a high class attraction. While perfectly willing to let our judgment of the Shepherd thing stand for itself and by itself, it seems this Journal was hardly the first to pick the show as a ringer from the kerosene circuit which the K. & E. syndicate by dint of unlimited circus advertising was offering a good natured public at high class prices.

A week before his Salt Lake engagement, Mr. Lorimer appeared in San Francisco where, unlike Salt Lake, the dramatic reviewers of the leading daily papers are permitted by the advertising departments of their journals to print an honest criticism now and then. It was a chill, grey dawn for the Lorimer youngster and his show when he got hold of the San Francisco papers the morning after his opening night there and what he read so peeved the erstwhile shepherd that he couldn't resist a few remarks the last night of his engagement on the lack of appreciation of true art among Frisco playgoers, following which the editor of San Francisco Town Talk paid the spear bearer his respects in the following paragraph:

Another actor has discovered that San Francisco is a jay town. Wright Lorimer is his name. He is the pet of one-night stands from the heart of the Middle West to the sundown rim of this glorious continent. Mr. Lorimer came to San Francisco to introduce to us what he calls "a play with an uplift," a play entitled "The Shepherd King." This play was received with great enthusiasm everywhere within the circumference of the Chautauqua Circle, but here in San Francisco where there is not much of the sweetness and but faint flickers of the light that Matthew Arnold deemed essential to a high civilization, "The Shepherd King" excited not half the interest that has been excited from time to time by kings of the turf and kings of the opium ring and kings of the tenderloin and other monarchs indigenous to the home of democracy and popular at prices ranging from ten to fifty cents. Mr. Lorimer, I suspect, made the mistake of putting too high an appraisal on his royal puppet. "The Shepherd King" was not seen for less than a quarter and the highest priced seats were \$1.50. Theatre-goers balked, and Mr. Lorimer sulked and waxed indignant, and on the last night of the show, after disposing of the big Philistine, the actor, quitting the role of Shepherd King, appeared before the audience in his own propria persona and chided the people of San Francisco on their lack of taste and their abominable prejudice against plays that uplift. Now as I have never seen Mr. Lorimer's play I am not competent to judge whether the actor was justified in censuring us for failing to overflow the theatre and put money in his purse, but I will suggest that perhaps the reason of my failure to go to the show was the same that deterred others. My reason was that Mr. Lorimer placarded the town with bills which set forth the dictum of one Wil-

liam J. Bryan to the effect that "No greater play than 'The Shepherd King' had been written since 'Ben Hur.'" From these bills I drew two inferences; first, that Mr. Lorimer regarded Mr. Bryan as a competent dramatic critic; secondly, that he regarded "Ben Hur" as a great play. Everybody who knows anything about drama knows that "Ben Hur" was one of the worst pieces of claptrap that was ever put on the stage. Knowing something about the drama I concluded that Mr. Lorimer who believes that no higher praise could be given to his play than to compare it with "Ben Hur," was peddling through the country something that was hardly worth while. In all the circumstances of the matter it is intensely amusing to hear of this barnstormer setting himself up as an apostle of culture.

"THE ROUND UP."

By Mr. Edmund Day, who neglects the little matter of giving Harry Clay Blaney and Al Woods, "The Virginian," "Heir to the Hoorah," "Arizona," and "Whispering Smith" credit for stage effects, scenes, characters, and most of the lines of the play.

Not that we hold Mr. Day entirely responsible,



Fanny Usher at the Orpheum Next Week

however, for if former Manager Archie Cox of the Grand did not collaborate with him, the two must be among those who occasionally enjoy a set of soul dreams or open soul disclosures, with the result that one plagiarizes the thought waves of the other. For it was Archie Cox who, in the halcyon days of good old thrillers at the Grand, had a crew of twenty-two huskies with repeating Winchesters as the regular support of his stock companies. Day goes him fifty per cent better, however, in "The Round Up," and supports Mr. Arbuckle with a machine gun and all the repeaters and pistols he can find room for between the footlights and the back drop.

"The Round Up" could have been little more in the mind of its creative genius than a sad, sweet dream of dirt, dead things, alkali and the testing room of a gun manufacturing plant, when Mr. Arbuckle was picked for the characterization

of Slim Hoover, sheriff. In dexterity of movement, despite his embonpoint and his ability to roll a cigarette with one hand, Mr. Arbuckle's artistry is of the highest order. His support from the machine gun and four bucking bronchos is admirable, while several near cowmen and a dozen or two stage cowboys mingle as effectively as oil and water.

The story opens with Jack Payson, owner of the Sweetwater ranch, engaged to marry Echo Allen, whom the program vouches for as a girl of the southwest. You can tell by Echo's appearance when she first comes in, that cooking for papa's cowmen isn't the only tragedy in her life by a long shot, and already you have guessed that Jack Payson is going to do somebody dirt before the night's over. The store clothes he wears show you right away what a low-down pup he can be when he sets his course for it. As soon as Echo lets go the information that she was engaged to marry Dick Lane a couple of years before and that nobody has heard from Dick since he went out into the desert to find a gold mine, it begins to look as though there might be trouble. The author seems to realize, however, that it is best to relieve the tension a little at this point and get some of the cowboys onto the stage who have been standing around blocking up the wings. You know they are cowboys, because all wear guns and chaps.

The boys yell and whoop around for a while and begin to get tanked up, while Jack and Echo do the repressed heavies over in a corner of the ranch yard.

It works around until late in the afternoon and the time of the wedding, when there shambles in a trappy-looking fellow with two months' growth of beard on his face, who walks up to Payson and says:

"Hello, Jack. Glad to see me, arn't you. Did you give that letter to Echo? Here's the three thousand dollars you loaned me, old man. Now you can pay off the mortgage on your ranch."

You have a pretty fair amount of respect for Dick up to this time, knowing that he's put in two years hot-footing it around a desert trying to find a gold mine and then laying up in a hospital with a splinter of his skull pressing on his brain in the wrong place; but when Jack hands out the talk about how the shock of Dick's coming will probably prove fatal to Echo, and that he had better keep out of sight for awhile, you'd think that instead of moping around in a corner of the garden waiting for Jack to do his missionary work, he'd quit acting like an onion and take a long chance on Echo dying of joy and scratching her face all up on that two months' growth of stubble by seeing her first himself. Meanwhile Jack is going a mile a minute. He gets Echo's papa out in the yard and tells him that daughter's happiness depends on his standing guard at the front door and letting no one pass until the sky pilot has fixed things for Echo and himself. Over in a corner of the garden Dick hears a wedding march twanged on the strings of a couple of guitars, and does the hurdles getting around to the front door, where papa lays his hand gently on the butt of his .44 and orders the stranger begone. "Don't you know me, Uncle Jim?" says Dick, through the stubble. "I don't," says Uncle Jim, "and I ain't your Uncle Jim."

"I'm Dick," says he of the stubby beard. "You're hell," says Uncle Jim. Dick damns everybody and everything and says he'll go back to the desert. It's really his tuning, but he isn't wise, for as soon as he's gone and Jack and Echo are settled, a couple of regular cutthroats insist on asking Jack where he got the three thousand dollars to pay off the mortgage on his ranch with, intimating that they'd like to know whether or not there is any connection between his sudden possession of that much money and the robbery and killing of a trader. Then