

## THEATRICAL CRITIQUE.

Our theatrical review of the last three weeks opens with the patriotic play of William Tell.

The heroic struggles of Switzerland, to assert and maintain its independence of foreign powers, and the growth of their little, though rock-like confederacy, command the admiration of the civilized world. Those struggles, extending over a period of two centuries, had something like their birth in the soul of the patriot Tell, named by his countrymen the hero of Switzerland. The sentiments and heroic action of the play in honor of this champion of liberty, enter directly into the sympathies of Americans, who have in sacred remembrance the more recent efforts of their patriotic fathers in the same great cause. More strongly still must the daring struggles of that hardy mountain race of Switzerland, whose experience is so much our own, appeal to our sympathies; for they illustrate how invincible is even a small band of patriots, when battling against a numerous host of tyranny and wrong. Such were our feelings, called up by the play of William Tell.

Mr. T. A. Lyne appeared as the hero of Switzerland. The character was well performed; but, we should judge, it was not the most striking of his role of parts. As Gesler, Mr. D. McKenzie made another hit. The next principal part was Verner, taken by Mr. J. R. Clawson. We think this gentleman did not make the character so decided and marked as he might have done, though it was possible. In the play of Pizarro, his very striking personation of the old Peruvian, whose simple barbarian instincts and fearless answers abashed and enraged Pizarro and his chiefs, was worthy of special praise. This was his most successful part and admirably executed; but we left it for special notice, until we could find fault with him. Mr. J. R. Clawson does not always play with that care, and liking of his part, necessary for excellence, but when he does, the difference is marked with effect.

Actors in general, as well as those who would be excellent in any line, whether on or off the stage, must always devote a great amount of care and labour to their task, and show no slovenliness in their work. Indeed, they must enter into their parts with that amount of spirit and liking, without which even great talent cannot reach effectiveness and success. There is another fact which public men should observe, whether on the mimic stage or on the stage of life: it is this—a second sphere well filled is better than a first that leads to failure.

Mr. Parker made quite a taking little part, in representing the young gentleman who was too much a patriot to bow to Gesler's cap, but who had no fastidious scruples against doing homage to his lady's head-dress. The rest of the actors did their duty in their several parts; but, of course, to detail every character is not desirable. We aim to notice all in their most representative personations of character.

Mrs. M. Bowring appeared as Tell's wife and was quite satisfactory, and Mrs. A. Clawson took the part of their son Albert. In the character of the patriot boy, the lady was very interesting in appearance and winning in her manner, so much that several times the audience could not withhold their "helping hands" in hearty applause. Miss M. Thomas delighted the "house" with a telling song of "the Labors of the Sisyphians." It was a unique little musical gem, composed by her brother, and the novel echo in it was quite as nicely executed by the singer as it was conceived by the composer.

Dunbar's comic songs—"Lady's Tongues" and "Who'd be Without a Wife" followed William Tell; the "house" was convulsed with laughter and the singer encored. Afterwards came a repetition of Naval Engagements, which concluded the evening's entertainment of Wednesday, March 18th.

On Saturday, the 21st, William Tell was repeated, followed by a Highland ding, in characteristic costume, by Mr. W. Poulter, and Dunbar's comic songs, "Lady's Tongues" and "Who'd be Without a Wife." The evening's performance concluded with a telling farce, entitled "Binks, the Bagman." Mr. H. Maiben appeared as the very characteristic Binks, one of the personations of the celebrated English comedian Wright. The part suited Mr. Maiben; but though in filling it he was not wrong, it would be too much to expect that he was Wright! The house was uproarious, and, as on this occasion, the bear instead of the elephant was exhibited, the company arose to their feet to see him. The principals of the farce were Messrs. Maiben, Dunbar and Poulter, and two favorite comedienne—Mrs. M. G. Clawson and Miss M. Thomas. Of course Binks was a hero with such a staff.

On Wednesday, the 25th and on Saturday, the 28th, Kotzebue's play entitled "The Stranger," was brought out. The principal attraction of both evenings was found in the debut of Mrs. Stenhouse in the character of Mrs. Haller. There is ever a particular interest attached to the first appearance of either an actor or an actress on the boards, and the sympathies of the people are, on such occasions, "bespoke" for the candidate for public favor.

In her debut, Mrs. Stenhouse enlisted much of this public sympathy, and won for herself considerable interest. The part of Mrs. Haller requires the lady and the woman of sentiment, and in these essentials Mrs. S. was happy. Whether or not she will, in future efforts, make a decided mark as an actress, remains to be seen. We hope she will; and till then, we leave a further notice of this lady by stating what in fact is considerable—that her Mrs. Haller was not a failure.

Mr. T. A. Lyne as "the Stranger" showed himself what he certainly is—an accomplished artist; but in this gave less satisfaction than in any part which he has yet taken. We know that he is great in Damon; we think he is a so great in such characters as Richard, Othello, Sir Giles Overreach, Richelieu, and the one in which he will appear in the coming week—namely Shylock; but we do not think him so well suited for either Hamlet or the Stranger.

Mr. J. T. Caine was very satisfactory as Baron Steinfort, and looked so much like Claude Melotte that we felt desirous to see him attempt the princely peasant. Mr. P. Margetts made an excellent Peter in the play.

The non-reconciliation scene disappointed the majority of the audience and, although one or two made an effort—a very feeble effort by the by, to get up an applause, the public somewhat ill-naturally withheld their "helping hands." How could the people give a hearty expression of satisfaction and pleasure after such a cruel ending, which would make the whole play one of wanton torture of two unhappy beings to no purpose? Why bring them on the stage merely to "pile the agony" upon them and then leave them more wretched than before? Why bring the woman before us that the wife and mother may be at last cast away by the husband upon the public stage for society to witness and to be asked to applaud? Why force the unhappy misanthrope a moment from his seclusion merely to find, and then to tear himself away from the wife whom he still loves and for whom he yearns most strongly, and afterwards to banish him from all civilized society a more wretched misanthrope and a severer recluse than before? If they cannot find a happy issue after passing through the fiery ordeal of suffering, then for mercy's sake bring them not before a feeling people to be publicly con demned and their lives reduced to ashes.

The circumstances of the play stand thus: An erring creature is brought before us as a self-reproaching penitent, bowed down with the consciousness of her sin and the weight of her offence against her injured husband. We are made sensible of her natural goodness, purity of mind and tender heartedness, and acquainted with the fact, that the wife had been caught in the meshes of a villain's net, but not until blinded and maddened by the supposed infidelity of her lord. Could not the audience strongly imagine, prior to her fall, the tortures of a woman's jealousy at every thought of a supposed rival, beloved while she was forsaken? Did they not know that to every genuine woman the husband of her love is her world, which if she lose, she often loses herself as well? Had they not seen or heard of Othello, whom the "green-eyed monster" poisoned to madness, leading to the murder of his innocent Desdemona, not because she was false, but that a subtle villain led him to believe her such? Yet, like the betrayed wife which in his deception he slew, and whom, when undeceived, he avenged by adding self-murder to his former horrid act—like her, does not humanity forgive him, and pity rather than condemn a noble wreck "more sinned against than sinning?" Could the public then be less merciful and forgiving to a woman? Did not the audience see the Stranger tear into pieces and trample under foot the proffered power of divorce from his wife? Did they not hear him declare to her that she still lived in his heart and that none but Adelaide could ever live there, and bear his lament—"O villain, of what a woman you have robbed me?" Was not Baron Steinfort introduced by the author on purpose to fall in love with her, that he might be her advocate and plead her cause? As the friend of the misanthrope, whose life he saved, he was a fitting instrument to bring about a reconciliation scene; and as he was an "uncommon man"—a man whose sense of honor and character were as unquestionable as his friend's, Steinfort becomes a guarantee for the propriety of the reconciliation finale; and for the consummation of this end he plots. They are about to part forever—the Stranger with feelings of agony at his loss in this life, mixed with hope of a reunion with this same wife in a better world—Mrs. Haller bowed down with grief and remorse, feeling that she would give the world to be restored, but thinking restoration impossible. Just at this crisis, Steinfort leads in the children to bring about precisely what the author designed—the reunion on earth before it took place in heaven! It was a nice point; but Steinfort calculated as the author had done—that the introduction of their children at such a crisis would surprise the father and mother into a re-union. After this, a non-reconciliation close is most unnatural and constrained. When the mother, rising from the embrace of their son to face the father rising from the embrace of their daughter, holds out her arms to that father and he rushes off the stage exclaiming, "Never, never, though it should pluck my heart out," the audience was taken by surprise. It was an unauthorized addendum to the original. The author neither wrote it nor intended such a conclusion. In fact he designed a finale the very opposite, and many of those who witnessed this innovation had seen it represented according to the original.

Just criticism cannot allow all the predictions and objects of the play to be falsified by such an end; nor do we see how an actor can consistently expect the hearty applause of willing hands, given to the father who refused

to return the instinctive impulse of the mother's heart, in its yearning towards him whose children was also her children.

The silence with which the conclusion of the play was received, was significant natural criticism, and we think it just to insist that it was no mark of non-appreciation of Mr. Lyne as a successful actor. With its legitimate termination, the actor would have received a token of respect, readily given by willing hands.

We do not believe in making precedents to excuse the faithlessness of a wife to her husband, but while we would not have the public sense of morality outraged by such precedents, neither would we have the common feelings of humanity pained by witnessing the husband, as well as the guilty penitent wife tortured for several hours, and at last the father and mother torn asunder. Such an end is worse than tragic; for both, with such a consummation, would be doomed to a fate from which death would be a happy release. But if the play must be brought upon the stage, let a happy issue at least be implied—not to the effect that the Stranger will again enter society with his runaway wife on his arm; but, as he is about to fly from Europe and altogether shun society instead of returning to it, let it be at least supposed that the mother will accompany the father and her children.

It is but just, however, here to observe that Mr. Lyne is not responsible for the non-reconciliation scene of this play, seeing that there is a division in the theatrical world upon the point.

On the second evening of the performance of The Stranger, comic songs from Mr. Dunbar followed "the laughter provoking new farce," entitled "Marriage at any Price."

Wednesday, April 1st, Mr. Lyne appeared as Virginius; in which character Mr. Snow appeared this season. Mr. Lyne suits this part; but we understand he has not played it until now for some six years. As usual, he showed the accomplished and experienced artist, and in some parts was more effective than Mr. Snow, but on the whole, we do not think the talented amateur lost any reputation by comparison with the talented professional.

Mr. Simmons as Appius, in his death struggle in the last act, quite surprised us and won applause from the audience. Mr. McKenzie was happier in Iulius than on the former occasion, being more youthfully dressed; and Mr. J. R. Clawson was a good and characteristic Dentatus, though not as good and characteristic as he can be. We have considerable faith in this gentleman, providing he has faith in his parts—throwing his soul into them and playing with care.

Mrs. A. Clawson, in the first scenes of Virginia, shows the loving daughter, and her appearance, as we have already stated, is always interesting; but she is not heavy enough for tragedy. She is too much like a sunbeam to represent the tragic element. Mrs. Bowring deserves favorable notice as Servia.

The afterpiece of Virginius was "Marriage at any Price," sustained by three favorites, Messrs. H. B. Clawson and Bowring and Miss Thomas. It was quite a treat to the lovers of fun; and, although when at its close the audience were asked for their hands, and did not give them, they gave their voices in loud cheers.

On Saturday, April 4th, the public had a rich variety evening.

In the first piece, as Sampson Burr, Mr. H. B. Clawson won fresh fame. There was great improvement upon the performance of last year. The somewhat stiff appearance of age then seen was on Saturday last changed for a very natural appearance of the old porter. He is so admirable and unconstrained in his pathetic parts, and shows such genuine touches of feeling, that we much prefer him as a graphic personator of those types of character which Dickens often describes, than as a mere funmaker. Mr. H. K. Whitney in the first act was admirable; but in the beginning of the second was somewhat forgetful. Mr. Simmons, though he gave promise of touches of feeling, was subject to criticism. "Smirk" was excellently rendered by Mr. McKenzie.

Mrs. Cook, as Mrs. Burr, had one of her best parts, and Mrs. A. Clawson might very well have been the Alice she personated.

The second piece was the Artful Dodge. In this Mr. P. Margetts had a real Phil-er. As the dodging Dodge, the Mock Duke, Jeremiah Clipp, Valentine Verdict, General Bombastes and such characteristic characters, Mr. Margetts is hard to be beaten on any stage. Miss Thomas also had a good part in this.

Then came an extravagant extravaganza—Bombastes Furioso. Of course it was a teller; and who can be more extravagantly telling than Margetts, Bowring and Dunbar? or what better Destaffina would any King Artoxinomous and any General Bombastes make fools of themselves for than for our Destaffina?

LOST, on or about the 18th of March a large brass key, belonging to one of the doors of the Theatre, with a small block of wood attached and M D marked on it with black ink. The finder will please leave it with Wm. Clayton, at the Ticket Office, Theatre.

NEW POST OFFICE.—The Postmaster General has established a Post Office at South Weber, Davis County, and appointed Eli Smith, Postmaster.

## SUMMARY PUNISHMENT FOR ADULTERY.

It was the law of the Hebrews, given to them from God through Moses, that the adulterer and the adulteress should be put to death and every breach of the "seventh commandment," whatever the degree of guilt, was severely punished by the provisions of the Mosaic code. To this day, among the descendants of Jacob who follow the old rule without modification, the death penalty in such cases is very generally inflicted, with this difference in the mode, the less enlightened often execute the law in a summary manner, the injured party inflicting the penalty without observing the formalities of arraigning the accused before a regularly constituted tribunal, introducing witnesses to prove the offense alleged, and then in the event of conviction and condemnation, enforcing the judgment of the court in way and manner prescribed. Such is the case among many tribes of the Lamanites, an instance of which, as we have been credibly informed, recently occurred in Box Elder county, the circumstances of which, as related by an individual who witnessed the tragic scene, were as follows:

An Indian, named John, who is represented to have been residing in Cache Valley, more or less for some time past, and speaks English somewhat fluently, having two wives, perhaps in violation of the late law of Congress, spent the winter with his spouses, at or near a herding camp, west of Bear River, near the Lake, assisting the herdsmen and acting as an interpreter for them occasionally. Some time since, he went back to Cache Valley, and as he intended to return soon he took only one of his squaws with him, leaving the other, the younger, at some Indian camp or lodge not far from Brigham city, till he should go back to the herd ground. On his return from Cache, he ascertained that his young spouse had been seduced by and gone off with another Indian. Fired with wrath and thirsting for vengeance, he sought diligently for the offenders, and soon got upon their track, which he followed assiduously till he found the erring couple, who were at the time sitting by a camp fire early in the morning, where they had slept over night on the bank of the river. Being armed with a revolver, the injured husband first shot the seducer and then his faithless wife, killing them both there and then, after which, he returned immediately to Cache, and made report to his first wife and others, in due Lamanite form of his doings in the premises; and for her our informant said not.

## FURTHER INDIAN ATTACKS.

The eastern bound mail stage coach was attacked and fired at by Indians, a short distance east of Shell creek station on Thursday night last, as reported. Two guns only were heard by the driver and passengers. The driver immediately increased the speed of his horses in order to escape the attacking party, but had only proceeded about a mile when one of his horses fell dead on the road and, upon examination, it was found that the animal had been shot through the body. One of the other horses, also, was wounded, but not fatally. One of the lead horses was taken to supply the place of the dead one as quickly as possible, and they drove on to the next station without further molestation.

On Monday about noon, a party of six Indians made a demonstration at Faust's station, in Rush Valley, and tried to obtain possession of the stock there but were driven off by the men at the station.

It seems strange that the Overland Mail cannot be protected against these repeated Indian attacks. Where are the soldiers who were sent for that purpose?

## A CARD.

The petition which was presented to his Excellency the Governor for the pardon of the persons convicted for the murder of Mr. Jared Smith, one of the men belonging to the Marshal's posse, who were summoned to serve the writ of habeas corpus issued by Chief Justice Kinney, in June last, for the release of certain persons at South Weber, contains the name of "JAMES A. THOMPSON." As that is my name, and as I know of no other JAMES A. THOMPSON in this Territory, I hereby declare that I never signed said petition, and believe that some designing man or swill said petition has signed my name. I pronounce said signature a forgery, and the man who placed my name to said petition, a base forger.

If there is any other man who bears my name, I would be pleased to see him at the "Deseret News Office," and hope he will give me a fac simile of his autograph.

JAMES A. THOMPSON.