

gers, carresses his mustache, and who has very bad and most unattractive manners. Playwrights really construct very poor villains. Men who deliberately seek to fascinate other men's wives in real life do not wear so plain a sign of villainy.

The villain should be allowed some attractions that appeal to a lady rather than to a barmaid, otherwise the yielding heroine is not justified of her temptation and has no claim upon our sympathy. In Arizona the young wife of a grizzled Colonel, a man of distinguished, impressive presence, yields to the fascinations of a captain whose career in the army is clouded by stories of cheating at cards, the seduction of servant girls, and cowardly bullying of subordinates. The playwright is at no pains to conceal his sordid spirit and allows him no finesse whatever so that when he comes upon the stage the gallery hisses. It is doubtless necessary, first of all to convince the gallery. If it were not so the cat calls, whistles and hisses, might be badly aimed and hit the heroine.

If Mr. Augustus Thomas had left the villain in Arizona any graces at all, so that the tempted wife might have some justification for her taste the play would take better with the people on the ground floor. No human being who is not an idiot unless it is the stage villain is absolutely loathsome. Then when the heroine finds him charming, the audience loses respect for her and enjoys her sufferings, which is not what the author intended.

Saving this point Arizona is an excellent play written for a whole company and not for a star. The whole company accomplishes together the effects. The plot is an old one which is not discreditable, as there is nothing new, but the ranchman is vigorously western and apparently built to satisfy a New Yorker's ideal of what a ranchman in Arizona is. Mr. Theo. Roberts, as the ranchman, was very well dressed and made up for the part, but he read his lines unintelligibly. The only moderately successful actor can easily be distinguished by his rapid, thick, careless elocution. No one has to wonder what it was old Joe Jefferson said, every word Frank Mayo said was understood. Blanche Bates, Olga Nethersole, and more than all Mme. Eleonora Duse, take their time. Eleanor Robson as Bonita Canby was understood. She spoke English and spoke it well and with more deliberation than the average young lady who is the object of the attentions of cavalry officers.

Arizona is an interesting play although it is apparent that it was written by a man who learned all about ranch and army life from the stage and from novels. The climax in the third act is unexpected and electrifying, the atmosphere is breezy and the action is rapid. There is no clown, no Jewish, Irish, or American parody, though the gallery is amused. It has the variety of life and stimulates the *ennuyee*.

Postal Reform.

The postal system does not pay. If it were not for the money paid in to the treasury by men and corporations who run their business at a profit instead of at a loss the postal system would be revised. The postal system is the favorite example adduced by reformers who favor government ownership of railroads, express and telegraph companies and municipal ownership of almost everything else. The franking privilege is abused. Whole sets of furniture have been franked through the mails by saving officials. A curtailment of this privi-

lege would reduce if not destroy the deficit. The government reports too, though value to students and specialists are sent to people who do not use them. They are large, heavy books and they cumber the mails more than country newspapers or the paper covered books against which the bill discriminates.

There is also no reason why country newspapers should pay no postage at all in the county in which they are published. In this respect the Loud bill is admirable but in its other aspects of opposition to the smaller newspapers it is unjust, and almost all country editors are using what influence they have to prevent its passage. The bill prohibits second class or pound rates to special editions of newspapers, and to sample copies. Such a bill prohibits the establishment of new magazines and newspapers. This may not be considered an unmitigated calamity, considering the number and quality of the publications of all sorts now registered. But in the last ten years many valuable if not indispensable publications were first issued and there is no reason to believe that in the next decade any fewer will be started. Then the advertisements and discussions carried on in the newspapers increase the volume of letters, postal orders and the sort of business that is most profitable to the department. An advertiser estimates that it costs him fifteen cents for each letter he obtains in reply to an ad, and that he sends five to six cents in postage on each name thus obtained. Mr. Loud says the talk of education in connection with newspapers makes him sick, yet the wisest statesmen in this country and age select and use newspapers as the most effective and quickest method of educating and informing the people. Considering the amount of capital invested in the newspaper business and the amount of energy and talent expended the profit is relatively small. On the whole and speaking in a large way and making full allowance for sensational journalism there is no other secular institution to which the people owe so much. The newspaper is the poor man's college and his oracle. It develops the intelligence of the youngsters who leave school forever at ten years. Any bill which threatens the growing newspaper circulation of this country is vicious and has, on this account, small chance of being enacted.

It is said that Mr. Loud has modeled his bill upon the system in use in monarchical countries which he visited in his investigation of postal systems last summer. In foreign countries the publishers have no privileges not extended to merchandise of all kinds. There are therefore a few publications of enormous circulation and practically no weekly papers like those of the United States which have made it the most intelligent country in the world. The second class postal laws of the United States today are not as favorable to the publishers as those in force in Canada and Mexico, and yet Mr. Loud proposes to take a step backward.

Morality and Sapho.

It was hinted by many editors when Miss Nethersole was arrested and brought before a New York police court like any other offender against decency that the arrest was instigated by her manager for advertising reasons. Publishers are besieged every day in the week by people who want to get advertising for nothing. They are, therefore, morbidly suspicious. If the attempt to suppress Sapho was for the purpose

of securing advertising it has succeeded, but fifty towns in the eastern states have cancelled the engagement with the Nethersole management after the New York engagement is over. Every place, to be sure, has a standard of morality, and tastes differ, but Miss Nethersole's acting in Sapho if transferred from the stage to the streets, even of New York would defy the laws governing the conduct of women in public places. Right and wrong are truly not absolute, but comparative standards, adjustable to climate, race, and stage of development. But if the conduct of Miss Nethersole's Sapho breaks the law, the common police court law of every city in this country, it is enough to condemn it and it should be suppressed. It is not suppressed just because of the decent people who go to see it. The vicious cannot support or make popular any enterprise. The curiosity of the decent people who wish to see if the play is as base as they say and who are fascinated by Miss Nethersole's talent go to the play by thousands and furnish her and her manager with the ammunition to fight the moral sentiment which would suppress a poisonous play. What would you do if Miss Nethersole came to Lincoln?

The Arbitrator.

The somewhat unreliable telegrams from Africa contain the information that Presidents Kruger and Steyn have cabled everyone of the great powers asking each one to arbitrate the differences between the South African Republics and Great Britain. Professional diplomacy in this country is a new and feeble plant. Not one of the other countries responded to the invitation, but the United States has briskly sent to Ambassador Choate the terms of Boer capitulation offered by Presidents Kruger and Steyn. The other powers are silent. Even France, who has unofficially insulted the aged Queen of England, makes no reply to the Boer invitation. France and the other powers understand the uncomfortable and thankless function of an arbitrator. Every other country realizes that it has troubles of its own. Why the United States should accept this invitation to stand between two armies and run the chance of incurring the hostility of both and of all the other countries more or less interested is puzzling. Arbitration is only advisable to an arbitrator who is able to whip both of the contestants in case of trouble. Henry Loomis Nelson who is opposed to the war in the Philippines says that its cost is \$64,617,267 in 1899. According to present day methods this war was necessary and the United States participation in it was unavoidable, but these arbitration invitations to trouble can be dodged. The Boers have been getting ready for this war for eight years. They have spent a large part of the taxes, (nine-tenths of which were contributed by the outlanders) for the latest and deadliest guns, for smokeless powder and for iron balls, and they have selected and trained military leaders of great ability. The Boers have used the public revenue derived from the English and their own time in order to keep what is Dutch for a most rigid autocracy, from becoming a republic. On the other hand, and facts show the justice of it, the English claim that where English residents contribute nine-tenths of the taxes and have developed the resources of the country a hundred per cent, the English residents have certain inalienable rights. The Dutch are seeking to gratify an hereditary prejudice against the Eng-

lish. Their victory can only postpone the establishment of a real republic in the Transvaal, yet they are willing to fight and expend their savings in the hope of victory. The English are undoubtedly correct in supposing that English triumph in the Transvaal will make of that country a more profitable place to do business in for England and for every other nation. According to both peoples, then, war is worth the lives and money it has and will cost, to the one who gains the day. But what has the United States to do with it? As an arbitrator, its representative must do justice to one or injustice to both. And for the arbitrator there is nothing but criticism from either the Dutch, Irish or English resident in this country, and dissatisfaction on the part of the Boers in Africa, the English in Africa, the Dutch in Holland, the Irish in Ireland, and all the ramifying and endless connections commercial and consanguineous, of both the parties involved.

Poetry.

A poet and his poetry are fertile subjects of discussion and disagreement. Edwin Markham and "The Man with the Hoe," were for some time regarded as a poet and a poem. Subsequent stanzas of Mr Markham's have been printed in a magazine that returned his M. S. attached to a printed slip informing him that the yard-and-a-half of poetry was returned to him with no intention of thereby signifying its poor quality, but because it was not suited to the peculiar requirements of the particular magazine, etc. etc. The poetry that the magazine has printed since the appearance of "The Man with the Hoe," has but confirmed the good judgment of the publisher who sent the printed regrets.

Mr. Housman's poetry, some of which was quoted in last week's issue of this paper, has the merit of simplicity and of feeling. The poet is acquainted with grief and on speaking terms with rural life and countrymen. His youth is unforgotten and he has temperament—the indispensable. Yet, if one were disposed to criticism in the poem on Narcissus, the use of the word "gazes" as a noun and modified by sad, is absurd and unworthy who rhymes as he walks:

With downcast eye and gazes sad,
Stands, amid the glancing showers,
A jonquil, not a Grecian lad.

National Delegates.

It is proposed to send Judge Reese and Mr. Billingsley as delegates to the national convention. Their loyal services to the republican party insures the faithful performance of any mission intrusted to them. A delegate to the national convention is one of many but it has frequently happened that the faithfulness of "one out of many" has secured a nomination or prevented one that seemed inevitable.

Mr. Thompson's Candidacy.

The struggle that Mr. Thompson has begun and carried on by himself since the time some four years ago when it was suspected that Mr. Thompson wanted to be United States senator, has a quality which is admirable and unusual. There are in Lincoln five and perhaps six men who might be elected by the legislature to the position of United States senator. Yet of them all Mr. Thompson is the only candidate who has not allowed his purpose to be affected by other plans and propositions. With his vision fixed on this one point he has steadily moved forward since last