EVENING LEDGER-PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1915.

NEXT WEEK : "WHAT HAPPENED" AT THE ADELPHI; "SUMURUN" AT KEITRY

PHILADELPHIA TAKES A LOOK AT THE HEIGHTS OF THE PHOTOPLAY ART

The Dramatic Season, Abdicating to King Movie, Gives Us "Cabiria" and "The Birth of Nation"

to Compare

By the DRAMATIC EDITOR

Grail.

the Chestnut Street Opera House make it almost impossible for that dual personality, the dramatic and photoplay editor, to tell when he is which. And with feature films promised at, the Metropolitan Opera House next Saturday, he is inclined to let the music editor in for a little of the trouble

All the same, this plethora of movies has its decided advantages. It makes for comparisons. A wide-awake person can get a sort of notion of where the art is going. By the enterprize of Manager Jacobs, of the Imperial, four large audiences got a chance to compare the art of Europe at its best-"Cabiria"-with the best specimen of American photoplay so far produced-"The Birth of a Nation."

"Cabiria" is old now, particularly if you judge time by the lightning development of the movies. Its film is scratched with "rain." Yet how much it can still show America. How much it has already shown, can be judged by all the departures of "Cabiria," which have now become the commonplace of filmdom. Many a photoplay has borrowed shamelessiy and profitably from the Itala film. Even

and profitably from the Itala film. Even Griffith's apotheoses-in "The Avenging Conscience," for example-might be traced back to that far superior close of "Cabiria." the circling maldens. Comparison of "Cabiria" and the Grif-fith picce are a little difficult; the period and spirit are so different. "Cabiria" is romantic melodrama: "The Birth of a Nation" comes close to modern reality. The producer of the Italian film could so The producer of the Italian film could go to bizarre lengths in scenery and cos-tumes; while Griffith had to duplicate an almost familiar reality and to depend on sheer dramatic drive and spectacular bat-

sheer dramatic drive and spectacular bat-ties for his effect. Old as "Cabiria" is, it excels "The Birth of a Nation" on a number of technical points, notably the lighting. Griffith achieves wonders of gradations and con-trasts in out-of-door light; no American excels him in that field. But no Ameri-can has yet realized how much can be accomplished with a single centre of il-bumination. They are still following that lumination. They are still following that foolish old habit of the stage-bathing a room in a blaze of light from every diroom in a blaze of light from every di-rection. They have not realized that, even more effectively than in the theatre, they can use the play of deep shadow and high lights as a dramatic element, as well as a matter of sheer beauty. "Peer Gynt," at the Stanley, proved in-ferior to expectations, but in the scene in the slaver's cabin, it showed what wonderful results a single source of light can give. In "Cabiria" almost every in-terior goes to prove the same thing. This concentration of light is particular-ly necessary in fire scenes. On the whole, those in "Cabiria" hardiy equal Griffith's, for they are spolled with some mani-

for they are spolled with some mani festly artificial flames flapping in from of the lense. But, barring those "close up" tongues of light, the Italian con-flagrations achieve a finer effect by conflagrations achieve a finer effect by con-centrating their light and bringing it out from the spot where the fire is supposed to rage. Thus only natural glares and shadows are thrown upon the surround-ings, and, when tinted red, the film shows in high light just those spots that would ablue in results.

in high light just those spots that would shine in reality. On another technical point—and just as vital a one—"Cabiria" is inferior. It is not a good photoplay from the point of view of action. It has scenes of catastrophe-earthquake, fire, battle-that are quite as good as anything in .he Birth any of the

By the by the story can be built into a streaming, accumulating interest. Half the story runs con-monopoly of the new senson. "The Birth of a Nation" and the Triangle plans for to follow, instead of inevitable. There is no great moment of spectacular or dramatic action. There is none of that exciting use of "cut backs" which makes

the Ku Klux rides so engrossing. Within the limits of Griffith's story, he achieves much more than the Italian pro-ducer in his. But what a far more won-derful field the man has who goes back to picturesque antiquity for his spectacies! The costumes and even the elaborate and curious temples, towers and towns built for "Cabiria," can be far excelled in novelty and beauty by a stage artist of the modern school. Such beautiful visions as Hannibal crossing the Alps, war ele-phants and camels sludging along, can all be equaled in whatever period chosen. The one necessity is a unifying intelliscenerio-writer, scenio designer and actors, and then to fuse all the elements

News of Local Theatres

An all-star revival of "Trilby" will be one of the fall attractions at the Lyric Theatre. It is booked to open there No-vember 8. On the same date "A Full House," a most successful farce by the suthor of "A Pair of Sixos," will open an concernment at the Adelphi an engagement at the Adelphi.

with the fire of beauty and excitement

Griffith will do it yet. Wait for his "Holy

C. G. Wanamaker will continue as bus-mess manager of the Garrick when it reopens September 37 with "Potash and Perlmutter.

The department of dramtle art of the University Extension Society announces the folloing plays to be given as a regular



The beautiful procession scene of "Sumurun," as Gertrude Hoffman will present the famous pantomime at Keith's next week.

PHILADELPHIA, and all America with her, got too short a glimpše of Max Reinhardt's masterly stagecraft, when Winthrop Ames brought the pantomime. "Sumurun," to America for a limited tour three years aback. It is, therefore, following no wiles of press agentry to say that the playgoer owes much to Gertrude Hoffman-who first showed America a Russian ensemble ballet-for reviving the tale of the Arabian Nights week. Philadelphia will see "Sumurun" in the alightly condensed form in which it was first presented to London, retain-ing all its beauties and excellences.

feature of its season's work: "His House in Order," by Sir Arthur Wing Pinero; "The Bishop's Candiesticks," by Norman McKinnel; "The Land of Heart's Desire." by William Butler Yeats; "The House Next Door," by J. Hartley Manners:

There are two things to be said about | who produced "Sumurun" for Miss Hoff-"Sumurun" as a guide to prospective playgoers. One is on the scenic zide. There we shall see no finicky, sxirava-gant, befrilled. "einborate production." The essence of Max Reinbardt's art as producer, the things all his artists strive for in their stars dealars, is simulicity for in their stage dealgns, is simplicity and suggestion. Beautiful lines and colors, but all in a simple, easy, striking treatment. The picture reproduced above shows how admirably a mere silhouette of wall, house and sky may make the most beautiful picture in the pantomime. The other explanation is due on the question of speech-or lack of it. question of speech-or lack of it. Richard don't they speak?' does not arise in Ordynski, a lieutenant of Reinhardt's, 'Sumurun.'" Richard

mann, has this to say about it: "Rein-hardt conceived the idea of producing in his theatre a play without words, because he wished acting pure and simple to have full sway-to provide a wider field for the artists' personality. He took from the actor his chief means of expression and confined them to the art of mimicry and resture and at the same time he freed him from the often hampering shackles of the text. In the old Italian pantomine one felt that the actors were obliged to use gestures because they could not speak, but the disconcerting question, 'Why

movement. The absence hitherto of the firm of Sabloskey & McGurk, managers of the Globe and Cross Keys Thea-tres in this city, and a number of others throughout Pennsylvania, New York and Delaware. They will open the American on Monday afternoon, September **T**, and will offer vaudeville and short photo-plays. There will be daily matiness and evening performances starting at 7 and 9 o'clock. The universal matinee price will be 10 cents and the evening prices 10, 15 and 20 cents.

> The Philadelphia committee of the Woman's Suffrage party of Pennsylvania will occupy boxes in the Grand on Mon-day night when "War Brides" will be presented. The playlet carries the in-dorsement of the National Order of Suf-frage, and is conceded to be the strong-est ergument for the suffrage cause Hopest argument for the suffrage cause upon

Monday will mark another anniversary in the history of the William Penn Thea-tre, hinder the able direction of William W. Miller.

THEATRICAL BAEDEKER

ADELPHI-(Beginning Thursday) "What Happened," with Alma Belwin, W. maine and Frank Woods. The first production of a play by Guy F. Jirse is said to induige in some novel twists of dramaturgy, such as beginning shooting and erecting thereon an edifice of comedy. At any rate, a trial promised in which a young man is acquitted of a murder he never committee the discovery that no such event took place. Shubert management.

CONTINUING

Painter and Alexander Clark. A mu-sical comedy by Victor Herbert, with a characteristic and effective score. The performance is admirably adapted ; the book, ordinary. Last week. DRREST-"The Birds

FORREST.—"The Birth of a Nation," with Henry B Walthal, Mae Marsh and Spatiswoode Atidn. D. W. Griffith's mammoth photoplay of the Civil War and Reconstruction, founded in part on Thomas Dixon's "Clansman." A marvelous entertain

RETURNING

PEOPLE'S.—"Happy Heins," with Ben Holmes, Leona Fox, Emily Curtis, Pauline Crell, Oscar Nys, L. H. Wein-rich and John L. Park. A musical comedy built around the American adventures of a wooden-shoed German im migrant boy.

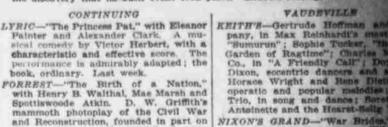
STOCK

KNICKERBOCKER-"Within the Law, With Eva Marsh, Richard La Salle and the Knickerbocker Players. The first stock production of Bayard Veiller's ex-citing melodrama of the shop girl who turns crook after a false conviction for theft.

theft. WALNUT-"The Sign of the Cross," with Richard Buhler and the Walnut Players. The hero of "Ben-Hur" in another play of Christian martyrdom. Second week of the local run.



To be seen at the Adelphia Thurs-Happened."



mova's vehicle last season ; W Aubrey, burleague wrestlers; and Broderick, entertainers ; Bernie; Harry and Augusta " "The Girl in the Bank"; B nerial artist, and movie,

PORTS

aerial artist, and movia. ALLEGHENY-Emmet Weich and Jolly Minstrel Men; Kenny and Hui in "The Freshman's Initiation" | Iold and Harror, comedians: Dumst a Tonge, in "A Story in Song"; Gallan clay modeler; Love and Wilbur, con photoplays, and for the last three d of each weak, "Neal of the Navy"; is the Wurlitzer organ. WILLIAM PENN-Anniversary we "The Cabaret Girl," by Bart MoHus with La Forgere, Arthur Geary, Har Anger and Ida Cialre; Crossman's Eer Entertainers and Original Banjo Fians Frank Lyons and Harold Bland, songs and dances; Beeman and Ande son, skating novelty, and Simpson az Dean, and Harry Krans, Philadelphis singer.

Dean, and Harry Krans, Philadelp singer. GLOBE—"From Coney Island to North Pole" in three scenes; Joe I tis, popular Philadelphia actor, in Nights in a Barroom"; Billy De blackface comedian; Moscroys Sig comedicanes; Jack Symonds, " monologist; Edney Brothers, ents ers; Smith and Farmer, singing talking comedians; "The Golden 3 ding," presented by Gwynn and sette; Camile Personi & Co., Jaf scenic and musical number; "The dess" and "Neal of the Navy." CROSS KEYS—First half of preset: Widow," a musical comede "Myons Culum; Sommers and Aller, comedi "The Claim Agent"; Excentior T comedy and songs; Freddle James, Worst Juggler in the World, and " Goddess"

comedy and songs; Freddle James, Worst Juggler in the World, and " Goddess." For Thursday, Friday i Saturday, "The Widow." Mma Obs and her Dancing Giris; Ethel V comedienne; Nelson and Morris, s ers; Franklin and Franklin, in s and dances; Rolland and Holland" "Canned"; "Neal of the Navy."

BURLESQUE

NATIONAL—Sam Rice's "Daffydil Girli in a musical and burlesque offerin Wedensday and Saturday nights, am teur boxing for prizes of diamond rh and gold watch.

and gold watch. DUMONT'S—Dumont's Minstrels in a new sketch by Gibson and Malone, "Prepar-ing for the Primaries"; Charlie Chapility and Marie Pickford movie akis as: "Capturing Mexican Bandits" continue COMING

SEPTEMBER 27: GARRICK-"Potash and Perlmutter" . WALNUT — "Rebecca of Sunnybr Farm," with Edith Taliaferro.

BROAD and SANSOM STREETS OW TWICE FORREST Evenings 8:15. Matinees 2:15 SAMUEL F. NIXON, Managing THOMAS M. LOVE. Business Manager PRICES EVENINGS AND SATURDAY MATINEES, 25c TO \$2.00 ALL OTHER MATINEES, 25c TO \$1.00 of the Greatest Sensation 4th BIG WEEK of This Generation WEEK D. W. GRIFFITH'S 18,000 3000 PEOPLE HORSES



to sacrilege. Even the figures of lesser men, like Grant and Lee, they expected to find repellent in a motion picture entertainment. These men were too big. They lived in the memory; bringing them back in the flesh seemed a tawdry, cheapening business. Yet it is just these people who have

Birth of a Nation" in its reconstruction of the country's great men. Though Lincoln, Grant, Lee and Sumner are only incidental figures to the story of the Stonemans and the Camerons, they are handled with such admirable fidelity and restraint that the effect is only dignified and fitting.

Lincoln is the best example of Ar. Griffith's tact in this matter. The Pread-dent's signing of the call for volunteers carries a moment of sorrow that hu-manizes the great man, but does not de-scend to the banal. The intercession of Mrs. Cameron for the life of her son is just as skilfully handled. It makes Lin-coln a part of the story only as a great Just as skilled in andred. At makes the second second a part of the story only as a great figure that is drawn in for a moment to play an objective part. As for the assassination at Ford's, it is simple history. It speaks as the event itself.

MAKING LINCOLN LIVE AGAIN When word first came that Lincoln was to figure in a photoplay there were plenty of people who thought it something close

found one of the greatest charms of "The

Lincoln is the best example of Mr.

scenery and curtain has to a degree hampered the work of production, and the setting of scenes in full view of the undience has frequently produced an at-mosphere inimical to the best work of the players. The latter feature will be abolshed entirely, and scenic artists are being consulted with a view to painting portable drops and wings, which will, in a large degree, remedy the defects of a stage not constructed for dramatic per-

formances The American Theatre, Franklin street and Girard avenue, long the home of stock productions, has been leased by

guerite Skervin.

by being truly dramatic as well as truly poetic-R. Farquharson Sharp.

The principal trouble with pri-vate theatricals is that they are generally given in public.--Marthe stage. The poetic drama can live only

day in the premiere of "What

