

AT THE THEATRES

"The Red Knight."

The Neills put on a play at the Grand last night that is destined to be heard from in the big cities sooner or later. It is the new comedy by George H. Broadhurst, entitled "The Red Knight," and no one who remembers that Broadhurst wrote "What Happened to Jones" and "Why Smith Left Home" would have thought him capable of turning out a work which by comparison is a classic.

"The Red Knight," however, would not stand metropolitan presentation in its present shape. The writing as it is well done, but some one should have collaborated with Broadhurst in its putting together. In the first act eight characters are kept standing awkwardly about the stage while a fifteen-minute dialogue is explaining big slices of the plot to be. A skillful dramatist like William Gillette would contrive to throw this bunch of language away and let the plot explain itself as it moves along.

However, anyone with half an eye can see that the material is here for another "Prisoner of Zenda" success. It must be so, for as it stands the piece drew triple curtain calls after each act last night. The comedy is rich and abundant and the climaxes are all in the best of shape.

The ideas upon which the author has based his plot are not entirely original. His scenario must have been worked out shortly after he had seen Mansfield's "Beaucaire." He has patterned the idea of a disguised nobleman, a supposed criminal, who compels his lady to love him despite his faults and lowly station. The holding up of the stage coach, a very strong scene, counterfeits a similar episode in "Ellen Gwyn of the King's Playhouse," while the setting of the entire play in the fanciful country of Rodoland favors strongly of the Ruritania dramas. Broadhurst has nevertheless treated all of these incidents in such a highly original manner that all bear the aspect of novelty.

Except in the previously mentioned redundancy of the first act, where the dialogue runs away with the interest, "The Red Knight" is diverting from cover to cover. The scenery is marvelously pretty. Every setting last night provoked spontaneous applause. Especially in the fancy dress ball scene, the costumes are very rich. The two last acts display some rare old furniture and tapestries.

The Neill company acts "The Red Knight" delightfully. Another stock company of such general capability as this one has not been seen in Seattle since the Frohman, Empire and Lyceum companies ceased to visit this city years ago. The honors of last evening belong very properly to Miss Edythe Chapman. The role of the Queen of Rodoland, into which Broadhurst has put his very best work, affords this most capable actress the best opportunity for work that she has had since she enacted leading roles with Warde and James. In the ordinary run of society dramas Miss Chapman does not have a chance. She has a rare emotional temperament that can find proper expression only in roles that are worth while, roles that are long and exacting. This present part is not any too ambitious, but it is better suited to Miss Chapman than any other stock part in which she has been seen here. Mr. Neill is very happy in the quiet comedy with