

"THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD."

MORE DISTURBANCES AT THE ABBEY THEATRE.

There is one distinct advantage about the disturbances which have occurred during the last few nights at the Abbey Theatre. At each performance there has been a very crowded attendance, and the receipts at the booking office must in consequence have reached highly satisfactory proportions. Last night the attendance was one of the largest ever seen in the theatre, and so great was the crush in all parts that many were obliged to be content with mere standing room. The audience seemed to be composed very largely of persons who were anxious to hear and judge for themselves as to the merits of "The Playboy of the Western World," and their reasonable attitude, coupled with the presence of a number of police constables in the pit, had a somewhat restraining influence on a small group of interrupters who had assembled at the back of the theatre.

Mr. Synges first play, "Riders to the Sea," was received with hearty and prolonged applause. The first act of "The Playboy" also met with a fairly quiet reception. Some of the sentiments expressed by the characters evoked much groaning and hissing and stamping, but on the whole the noise was not so great as to render the voices of the players inaudible.

One passage in particular aroused strong dissent. Thereupon the general body of the audience called out for "fair play." The reply of the interrupters to this demand was "give us a decent play." Cheers and groans followed this remark, and after a time absolute order was restored.

The disorder, however, soon broke out again, and some of the passages that have caused so much resentment heretofore again met with cries of "That's not the West of Ireland," "Perhaps its Lancashire," and "Hurrah for Lynchehaun."

The passages showing the affection manifested by the female characters for the parricide were greeted with shouts of "That's Dublin" and "That's Belfast," but beyond these little ebullitions of feeling there was really no great disorder during the remainder of the act.

In the second act, the scene where "The Playboy" avows that he has killed his father, and is thereupon loaded with presents from admiring peasant women, aroused indignant protests amongst the hostile element. There were cries of "Rotten," "Go back to England," and "That's not Irish," and then cheers, groans, whistling, and the stamping of feet were indulged in with lusty vigour. Even the most harmless remarks of the characters where they could be heard were punctuated with sarcastic comments, while the majority of the audience loudly called for order.

After a time the noise ceased, only, however, to be renewed again in a few minutes.

At the close of the second act an exciting scene took place in the vestibule of the theatre. Two young fellows who took different views of the play entered into an argument, which ended in blows. A crowd soon gathered around the combatants, but before matters had attained serious proportions the police interfered, and promptly quelled the disturbance.

The rising of the curtain in the last act again directed attention to the stage, and while the act was being played comparatively good order prevailed. Groans, cheers, and hisses were, no doubt, frequently indulged in, and it became necessary ultimately to eject one persistent interrupter, but on the whole there was a marked improvement in the temper of the dissentients, and at no time during the evening did the hostile demonstrations reach the magnitude of those witnessed on the previous night. When the curtain fell on the last act the audience remained for some time cheering and groaning. In a few minutes, however, the police cleared the building.

A large crowd had waited outside the theatre during the performance in the expectation that some interesting developments would ensue, but in this respect they were disappointed. An unusually formidable body of police was on duty in the street, and thanks to their prudent efforts the crowd was quietly and quickly dispersed.