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*Goes to
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ANSWERING a recent critic of the Canadian Courier, a western subscriber says:

Edmonton, Alta., May 25, 1917.

Editor, Canadian Courier:

I am interested in, and appreciate your efforts to build up a strong National Weekly, but as an ex-citizen of the United States, it is my desire that you give no heed to suggestions such as the one put forth by a correspondent from Montreal, mentioned in the issue of May 19th, that you "cut out the U. S. A. business," but continue to give us the best articles you can secure on topics of general interest concerning not only Canada, but the United States and other countries as well.

I am convinced such a course will meet the approval of the great majority of your Canadian readers.

The Man Without a Make-up

By THE EDITOR

NONE of us knew what he would do, said the old actor in the play, Government by the People. He was a dark horse. Our company had been doing a good business, everything legitimate, a long run for the piece—our version of it—considerably longer than we expected when we opened up in His Majesty's Theatre. But we all of us knew the piece had big possibilities. Always had. Of course it's an old-timer. Considerably older than Hamlet or any of those classics, and I should say more popular than any of 'em, except when put on by a down-in-the-heels, one-night-stand crowd. You simply can't kill that piece with poor acting. The people want it. They must have it.

And we started out to give it to 'em right. We had a good cast. Principals maybe not so distingue as some you've known in that same theatre; in fact, the legitimate headliner was always a shy sort of man, never wanting the calcium on him, and quite willing to let some of the rest of us take it whenever we wanted it.

Well, what I wanted to say was that we all went in for lots of make-up. Only way we knew, somehow, to get that piece across as it had to be. And the crowd liked it. Any time one of the company got out, the new man went in strong for make-up and new stage business. I guess maybe one reason was that none of us felt quite up to the possibilities of the piece without making up for our parts in the regular way.

That's all right. We didn't go in for any of the Gordon Craig stunts, flat scenery and symbolisms and all that kind. No, we crammed the old stage full of props and let the back curtain take a big part of the setting. Ever hear me speak about that back drop? No, well it was a great bit of work; an old-timer that used to send the crowd's fancy roving back into the dim and distant ages, among the cloud-capt towers and gorgeous palaces and all that. We never wanted to part with that old back drop. No, sir, our predecessors had it—and in their day it was more sumptuous and regal than it ever was before. It was a pageant; a pageant of Empire—and whenever any of us got a little doubtful about Government by the People as a piece—because so many seemed to think the thing was playing out—we just got that back drop renovated.

Along about three years ago things began to

happen to that curtain. Yes, it got clouded over somehow. Some kind of a grim, gaunt shadow crept over it—a sort of phantasmagoria with a spiked helmet. I guess we got busy on it then and painted it up again. We splashed in more of the pomp and pageantry. Simply had to. Tough going to send the piece over after a while, too. Things didn't happen quite like they used to on that kind of occasion. We simply couldn't keep that back drop up to standard.

And that made it all the more necessary to play on the make-up. I know how we worked at that stunt. It was fierce. I was about as apt at make-up as anybody—considering my chances. In my barnstorming days out west I never had much use for grease-paint and wigs. Down at His Majesty's I figured they were prime essentials. But at that I never equalled one of our legitimate head-liners, an absolutely new man in the business, too; and I never could do the heavy-hero, big-boat business of another man in the company—whom I won't mention by name.

In spite of it all our piece dragged. It didn't get the big hands any more. The critics roasted us in wide columns, front page and inside. They did. But we put on more accessories and weathered the storm with dwindling houses—till just the other day. Now, to tell you what happened won't take much time. It wasn't so much what happened, either, as—Who Happened. The manager got rid of some of us—not mentioning who. He told 'em their usefulness had expired. So it had. The piece had to be jacked up. It was the only hope of the company. To put it over meant to organize a bigger and a better company.

So in they came. Most of the new talent—well, they didn't overpower me with admiration. I had met up with just as good men in other roles more than once. But there was one man that was an absolute new variety to me, and I've seen a few. Yes, sir, that new note on our stage made me sit back and mentally take off my hat. So far as we could find out, he had no old-line experience on stage. Always had been a quiet, back-country sort, successful, hard-working, honest as a rip-saw, right down to brass tacks on whatever he undertook, but never figuring in the head lines, except once in a while in his home town paper.

But he had some sagacity, believe me, on the piece, Government by the People—because he had always been a man of the people; because he had never done a mortal thing in his business that wasn't for the good of the people. Efficient? Do you ask me that? Well, now, is a siege-gun efficient? I guess yes. That's answered.

That man walked in to rehearsal, and the very first crack out o' the box what does he do? Jams his make-up into the silk lid that he was supposed to wear and blandly but efficiently kicks the whole outfit right over the foot-lights into the orchestra. He squares back his big shoulders, lets a pucker shoot across his searchlights and he says in a voice as natural as a north wind:

"Gentlemen, I propose that in this play, Government by the People, we go on stage without those trumped-up togs. What we want is to get this old piece over in the vernacular and the make-up of The People. That's all."

THERE was a dead silence, clear up to the roof. Then the manager asks one question:

"What about the back drop?"

Mr. New-Man looks at it once and I observe one o' these rare lights that never were on sea or land come over his face.

"Yes," he says. "The back drop's O. K. But we've got to play up to it on this end by being Ourselves in the name of the People."

I don't expect ever to forget that. At first I didn't quite know what he meant, or whether he wasn't just another of those merely moral reformers who come on the job to put things right side up and end with going upside down themselves. I've always figured that any man with that kind of message to our company was sure to get a crimp put in him by events over which he naturally had no control. I'm wondering now if this particular stage reformer doesn't intend to control the events. If he does he will have to discover a few things about the piece, Government by the People, that we've never found out yet. And I'm entitled to take off my hat to him if he does it.

Don't expect me to do any knocking in the meantime. I'm too old at the game now to be jealous. I've been long enough on stage to know that the star actor is important only to the extent that he helps to put the play across in the biggest way it can go. And I reckon there's a possibility or two in this piece yet that none of us have ever worked out. And that's saying a good deal for the piece.

