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The Grotesques

(Continued from page 350)

Fate grants he shall have freedom, even beyond his wish. Sprite enters and reaches one hand toward Girl. He seizes her; he has her for himself forever, if there come no help. Fate pays no heed; Man does not help. A desperate silence brings the design to stagnation.

"What matter? Let the end be dexterous! Then to new canvas and a different theme Backgrounds are many as the stars themselves."

And stripping the canvas clear of moon and stars, Fate flings his beings once more into the void.

The verse staccato, cryptic, impressionistic is merely employed as an explanation to the movement of the characters themselves. Situations are visualized in action first and then embellished with words enough to make the motive clear. In the black and white conventionalized stage pictures the author admits the influence of Beardsley and Alastair. His philosophy, old as the world, seems new with a strange freshness in its ultra-modern setting.

The tragedy is written in one act of an hour's duration. In its presentation there is no curtain. The actors have no respite and when not engaged in revealing a design within the decoration must lie in limp and grotesque attitudes beyond the frame where Fate has dropped them, yet always within view of the gods. Nothing more interesting has ever been produced at this little theatre of lofty ideals and fine purpose.

What's Wrong With The Movies?

(Continued from page 357)

"movies," however, lacking endurance and quite unsocial, appeal not to the arts, but to the eye alone. All other faculties are left in abeyance. Shakespeare lies admittedly beyond the "movies." Could a more effective evidence of their futility be presented? Relying on mob psychology, they can affect thousands through scenes of degeneracy; but the intellectuality of "Hamlet," the glories of the Histories and the beauties of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" are beyond their scope.

The "movies" furnish a remarkable example of the efficacy of the camera, but, when all is said and done, a camera is only a camera, and a photograph is only a photograph.

New Columbia Records

Every music lover of every form of music will find somewhere in the Columbia June list of recordings some selection to give him pleasure. There is Kathleen Parlow's violin, singing the wail of Dvorak's "Indian Lament in G Minor," and Drigo's Serenade "Les Millions D'Arlequin." Leopold Godowsky gives two wonderful interpretations of Liszt's "Concert Etude No. 2 in D Flat," and Chopin's eternally loved "Nocturne in E Flat." His Majesty's Grenadier Guard Band—the organization that played at the famous ball and night before Waterloo—gives inspiring performances of Rossini's "Tancredi Overture" and Mendelssohn's "Ruy Blas Overture." The orchestra list includes Thomas' "Mignon Overture," four instrumental trios, "Saint Sæns "Serenade," Valensin's "Célèbre Menuet," "Come Back to Erin" and "Ever of Thee."

Louis Graveure, the phenomenal Belgian baritone, sings Lamberts' beautiful "She Is Far From the Land," and Hope Temple's "An Old Garden." Henri Scott, basso of the Metropolitan Opera Company adds Pinsuti's "I Fear No Foe" and Watson's "Thy Sentinel Am I" to his list of Columbia recordings. *Adv.*

"Movies" and Critics

(Continued from page 346)

made by certain managers, to the effect that criticism is mischievous.

The ludicrous situations, and the perfectly obvious incidents are utterly beyond the reach of criticism, and they need it no more than do certain vulgar and impossible plays on the real stage. Everything in a picture goes, and goes without argument. There is no discussion and no "pro and con."

In one of Miss Farrar's pictures the murdered man, just as he was about to die, wrote a note and left it by his side, saying "So-and-So killed me." In a play we should have laughed ourselves sick at the crudity and the falsity of the device. The pictures, however, are not supposed to mirror real life, but simply the preposterous and far-fetched life that is offered to the unthinking mob.

Nearly all the bad plays, those that have failed rapidly as drama, make excellent pictures. This is one of the curiosities of the business. The despair of the stage is the hope of the picture house. The store houses must be filled with material for successful films.

The real danger to the stage seemed to lie in the fact that the photo plays would be lifted towards the realms of art, and that the low appeal would gradually vanish in the perfection of the thing.

At one time, it looked very much as though the screens would touch the heights of psychology, and attempt flights that the stage itself is physically unable to undertake. This is not at all likely now. The "industry" is so purely speculative, so inordinately commercial, and so completely engrossed in the material side of life, that the "inner mind" is left untampered with. Nothing has arisen to compete with the beauty of the spoken word, the literary idea, and the spiritual interest of the drama.

The drama is impregnable safe—so safe that it can sit on its rock and laugh! It can survey the contortions of the photo play with serene satisfaction. It can afford to let its artists fill their pockets—at so much per minute—and then welcome them back with their swollen resources.

"When I have made enough money from the pictures to enable me to produce the plays that I want to produce, and not feel the loss that I may possibly incur, I shall have achieved my ambition," is the sort of speech that I have heard from those whom I looked upon at first as renegades. It is a sound point of view—a trifle unflattering to the films, and perhaps a trifle ungrateful.

Even this will pass, and the pictures will rely upon those who have made picture reputations for themselves. Some of these are so interesting that the ingratitude and greed of picture companies would seem to be very flagrant. Why should the artists of the legitimate be sought after when there are such satisfactory screen actors as Mary Pickford, Clara Kimball Young, and Norma Talmadge? The last named is the one screen artist, in my course of picture going that really handed me an impression. Miss Talmadge is so expressive, so legitimate, and so wonderfully picturesque, that the inanity of securing people from the spoken stage, for the sake of the popularity that they won there, seems to be—well, just the vagaries of profound commercialism.

The masses prefer Irving Berlin to Beethoven or Debussy, but the positions of Beethoven and Debussy have not been budged—nor will they ever be budged.

ALAN DALE.