

## A New Movie House

ONE of the liveliest moving pictures ever made was quite missed last week in what is now regarded as headquarters for motion drama de luxe in this country. The new Regent Theatre in Toronto was opened to an invitation audience on Friday evening; to the public on Saturday. On Friday afternoon there was an inspection tour to which newspaper people were invited. That was at four o'clock. The invitees went. They found themselves in a pandemonium of confusion and a bedlam of noise. A hundred workmen were still busy on the premises. The only part of the new theatre that seemed to be absolutely finished at four p.m. was the ceiling. The stage was heaped with unlocated properties. The seats were not yet all placed; half of them without backs and men were busy boring holes in the backs for the screws. The floors were not quite dry. The walls were not finished painting. All the Corinthian pillars were not yet secure in the mezzanine floor gallery at the front. Men were busy hustling out mortarboards. Palms for the stage were massed up at the front amid lumber and all sorts of odds and ends. The entrance was a mass of scaffolding and a mess of one thing and another. Even the exits at the sides were beleaguered by heaps of mortar and what not.

The whole thing was a conglomerated confusion of this, that and the other, odds and ends and what-nots, the rag end of a rushing summer work when the old Majestic, home of melodrama in the beginning, afterwards of cheap vaudeville, was transformed into a palace of film drama. How such a cheerful chaos ever could resolve itself into a playhouse for an audience by eight o'clock in the evening was precisely the moving picture that the proprietors missed. That they did it is a tribute to the executive ability of the contractors, the optimism of the men behind, and the cheerful enthusiasm of the workers themselves, who seemed not at all to swear if some loafing newspaperman came down the aisle just as a man with a pile of lumber on his back wanted to go up.

As a home of modern theatrical presentations by means of films, the Regent is a work of art. Being one gallery lower than the old Majestic, which it replaced, it seats a smaller audience. But the balcony is of great depth and the view from any angle is perfect. The old-style two gallery theatre was never any good for movies. The "gods," who used to get a fine focus on an ordinary play saw nothing but a shimmer and a blur on the movie screen. Modern architectural art with theatre experience brings every part of the new building into full view of the screen. The lighting scheme in the domed ceiling is beautifully carried out in soft effects. The seating is comfort itself. The wall decorations are chaste and beautiful. There is an esthetic pleasure in the whole design of the theatre which contrasts sharply with the kind of thing the average movie enthusiast encounters in the average downtown movie theatre transformed from a vacant store. Even the ventilation is a detail carefully worked out in a scientific way. There is a measure of pleasing illusion in the theatre itself to say nothing of the shows that are scheduled to go on at popular prices; an evident intention to make the presentation of film dramas a matter of art in accessories and to make the theatre a home.



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