



## THE MENACE OF THE MOVIES

At Two Leading Toronto Film Houses in the Same Week

ONE SHEWED { *A Maniac Murdering a Human Gorilla as Revenge for the Death By Mania of an Outraged Sister.*

{ *A Young Woman Untrue to Her Wedded Husband Because of Awakened Memories of the Man She Married First.*

THE OTHER

By Theatricus

**B**EFORE this first examination of the movie menace goes any further, let it be clearly understood that we believe in fair play on the stage. As long as nine out of ten grand operas are built upon illegitimate love, movies have an equal right to portray the underworld. But there is a difference. Opera seduces only those who have the price. Movies, in so far as they are a menace, get in their deadly work on millions who are thrown back on vaudeville which is all right and burlesque which is usually rotten. This indictment of the movie is made because this paper circulates in a territory containing thousands of movie houses attracting nightly hundreds of thousands.

No Committee of Forty has inspired this protest against the menace of the movies. The slight sketch herewith is a suggestion in pen and ink of the culminating scene in *When a Man Sees Red*. It shows the human gorilla who had outraged a girl in San Francisco literally broken to pieces alive by the brother of the girl who is a raving maniac among the South Sea Islanders. That finale was the result of hundreds of visual impressions, most of which were connected with scenes of violence, lust, drunkenness, intrigue, and brutality.

Before I retrace the story of this masterpiece, remember that in the same row of seats there happened to be a five-year-old girl.

Larry, the hero, a young seaman of 'Frisco, is expected home any day now by his aged mother and young sister. On shipboard he is a great favorite, but addicted to the Bible given him by his sister and containing her portrait. Somehow or other the young sister finds herself suddenly in a cabaret, invited to drink and smoke by a lewd young tough and surrounded by painted ladies of vice, squanderers of wealth and common drunks. She is frightened and leaves the table. Her partner goes after her. He is intercepted by a burly hard-looking skipper who snatches the girl from him and under pretence of taking her home orders a taxi. Scenes in the taxi. The gorilla tries to embrace the girl. She resists him. There is a struggle.

(The five-year-old child in the same row of seats suddenly got behind the chair-backs and wept aloud).

The gorilla drags the unconscious girl from the taxi. The next seen of her she lies on the street-side. Up comes a limousine; occupants, the "Painted Lady" just out of the cabaret and a drunken millionaire. They pick her up and take her home. She comes to her mother a raving maniac, and dies.

Larry comes on shore, happy as a lark. Swinging up from the docks with his pack he stops at a flower-stall to buy an armful of white carnations for his mother and sister. He arrives—to learn the news.

Sutton, the gorilla, prepares to sail again in the Albatross. He has trouble getting a crew because of his horrible brutality. Larry, anxious to go to sea again to forget everything, signs on as first mate to Sutton. The two men become enemies at sea. Larry is too popular and too fond of his Bible, which the captain flings to the deck and orders him to stop reading. Larry knocks him down.

Meanwhile a yacht sails away from Frisco to the South Seas in the wake of the Albatross, on board a crew of drunken pleasure-seekers, including the Painted Lady and the dissolute millionaire.

The Albatross and the yacht land at the same island, Lania. At a cabaret here not far from the black islanders, Larry meets the Painted Lady and



Scene in *When a Man Sees Red*, starring Wm. Farnum.

—Drawn by One Who Saw It.

through a flirtation engineered by herself falls in love with her. She declares she cannot marry him because she is a fallen woman. She sails away, apparently not having told him that she knows who is the betrayer and murderer of his sister. The Albatross sails, leaving behind Sutton's baboon "underdog," who knows the secret, and Larry, who has left the ship. A terrible storm strikes. The Albatross makes for shelter. The yacht is beached on the rocks. Dissolute young millionaire in his underclothes and Painted Lady are marooned on a rock. Signals of distress. A boat from the Albatross comes to the rescue. Millionaire vanishes somewhere. Painted Lady is taken on deck to the cabin of the gorilla. Scene. Knife encounter. Sutton

**M**OVIES in their best form are a revelation, capable of glorifying nature, enlarging the vision of art and enlightening humanity. In their worst form they are a revival of the worst melodrama we ever had; infinitely multiplied in variety and speed, exaggerated in size and intensified by powerful lighting effects. Where a melodrama had but five complete changes of scene in one play the movie has five hundred. With no voices to engage the ear the eye is left free to concentrate on the screen. The attention of an audience at a movie is greater than at any but the most powerful plays done by the greatest of actors. A gripping movie is a succession of climaxes leading up to other climaxes. The brain and the eye and the nerves get no chance to rest. The result is a terrific stimulus to the nerves followed by a reaction. There are no stage limitations. The movie has little or nothing to do with the stage. The most colossal stage spectacle ever produced could never equal the prodigious scenic investiture of even the commonest film. The movie has become a menace because its power is subject to no human check and because real censorship of movies has never yet been invented. The redemption of the movies will never come about until the production of films is taken away from inartistic scene butchers, social scavengers and experts in burlesque.

makes a horrible threat, which he executes when he orders a boat and himself rows the lady to shore.

Here on an island Larry has been living for weeks among the natives, still brooding over his sister and mother, he has become a maniac. Here, also, Sutton, with his captive, discovers a pow-wow of dusky islanders, to whom he offers the Painted Lady to the highest bidder, body and soul and all. He drags her by the hair and shakes her as a dog does a rat. Just as the scene is at its most horrible height, Larry comes rushing over the sand. He has learned from the underdog of Sutton that the murderer of his sister is the beast who is maltreating the woman.

Then follows the worse than brute fight between the maniac and the gorilla; with the result that the maniac crushes the life out of his enemy and lets him fall on the sand and rises with his clothes almost torn from him, leering, panting, devilish.

(Five-year-old on the seat beside me claps her hands and crows in exultation. She has got the story.)

**R**OSE of the World, featuring Elsie Ferguson, is a far less repulsive and much gentler story. In its own way it is quite as immoral.

Rosamond, girl wife of an English officer in India, confesses in bed to her husband that she does not understand the meaning of love. He passionately vows that he will teach her and rides away with his regiment up to the hills, where the hill tribes are making war. His regiment is besieged in a fortress. He writes to his young wife. His letters are fyled away, with no awakening of love in her. The siege gets worse. The gallant garrison, starving and thirsty, are cut to pieces and hurled over the cliffs. Those escaping confirm the news of Capt. English's death. Rosamond marries again; this time to an elderly officer who becomes Lieutenant-Governor of Northern India. He is a nice old husband but she does not love him. Living with him only makes her gradually conscious that she really does love—the man whom she first married. Brooding over his loss she is entreated by a surviving officer, junior to English, to permit him to write her first husband's life from his memoirs in her possession. She consents. Arrives at the palace a native secretary to the Governor. Rosamond is advised by her doctor to return to England. She goes and visits the old home of her first husband. Here she sees all the reliques of him, some of the clothes he wore, the room he slept in, his portrait in oil on the wall. Everything conspires to bring him back to her. Her recurring love is almost hysterical. Meanwhile her husband arrives from India accompanied by his native secretary. Rosamond at first refuses to see him; finally consents to come down; is taken violently ill at the table and retires upstairs to have a seance with the portrait of her first husband. The Governor comes up. She commands him to take his "horrible hands" away and asks him what right he has to be there at all. He leaves her. She has a violent seance with the portrait; implores her native attendant, who has some black magic of the hills to invoke by incantations the spirit of her first husband. The witch holds an orgy over a pot. In the steam and the smoke and the turmoil—you guess the denouement: the native secretary of the Governor dashes off his whiskers and his turban and rushes to the scene. His portrait is seen to move from the wall. It is—himself! The Governor can do nothing. Love has conquered marriage.