

LUBIN FORECASTS FUTURE OF MOTION PICTURES

Pioneer Photoplay Producer Predicts Perfection in the Art—Declares Home Cinematography Is at Hand. What His Company Expects to Accomplish.

By SIEGMUND LUBIN

NO INDUSTRY in the world has, within such a comparatively short time, expanded as rapidly as the making of motion pictures. Marvelous things have been accomplished in the past, but this will be as nothing to what will be achieved in the future. We, of the Lubin Company, are working with one end in sight—perfection in motion pictures, and I think we may say, with due modesty, that we are accomplishing better results all the time, not alone in the production of plays, but in the experimental and inventive work we are carrying on constantly in our laboratories.

In the old days pictures were crude, few players had good acting ability, our mechanical apparatus was poor and the theatre-loving people—at least the big majority of them—passed by without the slightest interest our little "shows." Compare those conditions with what is being done today. Over in New York they are showing "The Sporting Duchess," one of my feature pictures, which cost me thousands and thousands of dollars to produce, in Madison Square Garden, with a seating capacity of 12,000.

Today we are combing the world for the greatest writers, the greatest players and the greatest plays, and to secure them and get a production that will appeal to the big picture-loving public we never hesitate a minute over the cost. Never before has the Lubin Company been making more pictures than it is today. At our factory in Betzwood we are printing more than a million and a half feet of film each week, and our studios, situated in different parts of the country, are working six days in the week producing not only dramas, comedies and farces, but various kinds of educational, industrial and medical pictures. My payroll includes more than 2000 people at present and this does not include the army of extra people we use.

I am continually asked what the future of the motion picture will be. I answer, it will be marvelous. There will be many readjustments and revolutions, naturally, but all will be for the betterment of pictures. For instance I predicted some time ago that the average person would soon be able to go to his photographer and instead of a still picture of himself or his family would have motion pictures made and would show them at home himself to his relatives and friends.

Home Movies Coming

After many years of experimenting I have completed a little house apparatus through which regular film can be shown. No electricity is needed to run it, and pictures can be shown in either day or artificial light. This machine weighs less than five pounds, can be placed on a chair or table, and is very simple to run. The cost of it, when put on the market, will probably be between \$12 and \$15, which will enable almost any one to be his own exhibitor.

I have also perfected a new motion

picture camera for the use of portrait photographers. It will not be very long before every photographer will be equipped with one of these cameras, and then every one can have motion pictures made of themselves, developed, and shown at home through my little house apparatus. How much better it will be to see our relatives and friends in motion pictures than by looking at them in still pictures or oil paintings.

We are rapidly approaching the time when exhibitors will specialize in the type of pictures they show. One theatre will show nothing but big feature productions, another will devote his program exclusively to comedies and farces, others to travel, industrial and educational pictures and so on. There will also be theatres devoted entirely to little folks, where fairy stories and all the wonderful tales we were told when we were children will be shown on the screen.

In co-operation with a number of distinguished specialists we are doing splendid work at present with medical and surgical moving pictures. Unusual phases of medical and surgical work are photographed, and these films are shown in hospitals and medical colleges all over the world, and one can readily understand how valuable these pictures are to the profession. In the splendid work being done today by the medical world in preventing disease, we are doing all we can to assist.

The Educational Field

The time is rapidly approaching when motion pictures will be used in every school and college in the land. All over the country at the present time schools are using pictures as an aid to instruction and getting splendid results. Educators are coming to realize that the sense of sight is a most important factor to deal with and that impressions gathered through sight are always more lasting.

The motion picture is revolutionizing the business world, too. The modern drummer no longer travels with a lot of big, heavy trunks. He takes a few samples of his goods with him in a small case and demonstrates what he has to sell with motion pictures. The man who sells clothing, shoes, hats and various other lines does not have to take a lot of goods with him now for the films demonstrate everything in detail. To the manufacturer of heavy machines and other big goods, the motion picture has been a great aid, for agents can travel all over the world with a few reels of film and demonstrate every phase of his products from the time it is assembled until it is doing the work for which it was designed.

Along dramatic and comedy lines the Lubin Company has big things planned ahead, and I have engaged some of the best-known artists and actresses in the world to appear in our productions.

THE PHOTOPLAY OF THE DAYS YET TO COME

A New Art and a New Audience in the Making—Coming Co-operation of the Drama and the Photoplay. Popular Amusement Must Not Be Expensive.

By KENNETH MACGOWAN

Dramatic Editor of the Evening Ledger

WHEN you see the words "Shubert Feature," "Oliver Morosco Photoplay Company" or "William A. Brady Picture Plays Inc.," when you read of Lawrence D'Orsay and Frank Keenan with the Universal or of William Faversham's work with the Metro; when you see for yourself David Belasco's share in some of the Lasky productions, it means another blow for that foolish old notion that the drama and the photoplay are natural antagonists.

The movies have caused a good deal of trouble for the theatres. But the losses are the sort that come with any new extension of mechanical or artistic ingenuity. They are disastrous to the average American manager only because his business is conducted on such unsound economic principles that he can't make the necessary readjustments.

The future is going to be different. The photoplay and the drama will go forward side by side, co-operating financially and technically, and even collaborating artistically.

Undoubtedly the managers and producers whose talents are better suited to photoplay or acted drama will cling pretty close to his best field. But there will nevertheless be a very large co-operation on the producing and financial sides. There will, of course, be a very much larger interchange of help via the actors.

Signs of artistic collaboration, of the creation of a new art-form wedding photoplay and drama, are already in sight. The forerunner of a new sort of theatrical entertainment was "The Battle Cry," the play Augustus Thomas staged, in which episodes of the drama were connected by films of incidents happening in between. New York has just seen, in "The Alien," an entertainment in which George Beban appears both on the screen and in the flesh. In the alliance of film and play there is a large field for artistic exploration.

Of course, the photoplay itself is going forward toward the goal of a very beautiful and moving art. The really notable film productions, from "The Inferno" through "Quo Vadis" and "Cabiria" to "The Birth of a Nation," show what the trend seems certain to be. The photoplay is going to develop the spectacular, the picturesque, the plastic and the purely beautiful to an extent that the stage can never equal.

The theatre has always had two tendencies, the realistic or critical, and the poetic or spectacular. The photoplay can never touch the first of these to any extent until the synchronization of mechanical speech is perfected, and until that day it will never render the poetic drama as the theatre can by means of dialogue. But, meantime, it can far outdistance the stage in the production of scenes of beauty, romance and adventure. It can do this so splendidly that, even though speech is added to the films, the

photoplay will still find its richest field in the spectacular. There it can do with its scenery everything in the way of novel and beautifully designed backgrounds that the "new stagecraft" of Germany and Russia has made possible in the theatre. But it can add to this a whole world of wonderful settings that the theatre must forego. All the most spectacular and lovely of nature's beauties are at the command only of the camera—snowy mountains, wind-swept cliffs and pounding sea, water caverns, great forests and winding valleys. Into this superb setting the human may be thrown in endlessly dramatic and significant ways. Ships and marching armies, wide-ranging battles and the tremendous excitement of the cross-country chase, the loneliness of far peaks, are all familiar to the patrons of the photoplay.

Add to this the endless opportunities for beautiful and miraculous camera work—the tricks of the trade which leave nothing human or superhuman impossible—and the future of the photoplay art is hard to limit.

The theatre is going to learn something from all this; and it is going to devote its energies more closely to the fields where it may be truly great—psychological and social drama, critical comedy and the poetic play—eschewing more and more the melodrama and spectacle in which the photoplay excels.

But it is going to profit even more by the audience which the photoplay is educating. Frankly, the modern theatre is not democratic. The theatre is not a popular amusement. Its art has left millions untouched, the big mass of mankind. The photoplay has brought a form of art into lives that have gone without.

The picture house is not only drawing audiences the theatre has never touched. It is drawing these people and the casual playgoer with them, night after night, playing steadily on their artistic sensibilities. The photoplay audiences are achieving the basic fact in artistic development, experience, at a most gratifying rate. The more contact a man has with any art, the sooner the cheap pall, the sooner he must have something better. Already the progress of this educative factor in the films is evident enough.

Out of the photoplay theatre of the future will come a really democratic audience of trained lovers of their art, demanding a finer type of film. And which is the most important thing to the man whose chief interest may be in the spoken drama—this audience will turn naturally to the sister art of the photoplay for a form of theatrical entertainment that the films don't quite give. The photoplay is going to do something for the drama that the aristocratic theatre of our day is impotent to achieve. But it is going to do far more for the people who patronize it.

THEN AND NOW!

