

Evening Ledger



PHOTOPLAY
DANCING

AMUSEMENT SECTION

THEATRES
and MUSIC

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 30, 1915

THE CARTOON COMEDY, LAST MYSTERY OF THE MOVIES

How the Lightning Artist Makes This Pen and Ink Marvel—Four Thousand Separate Draw- ings to a Reel

IN SPITE of the press agent, there is still one movie mystery. It is that pen and ink marvel, technically known as the cartoon comedy.

Everybody knows these pictures, and a good many people claim to have originated them. Some of us met them first through Lyman Howe. To every travel picture he pinned on a ridiculous little burlesque. At the end of a film of a military academy, for instance, the bill of a stork obtruded itself into the blank of the screen. The bird followed the bill, likewise an inkwell. The bill sucked up ink and then proceeded to draw some warlike figures, which promptly came to life and went through military evolutions, such as juggling a cannonball from the mouth of a 42-centimetre gun. At the end the whole thing blew up, and pieces coming down through the air formed the letters "Intermission" on the screen.

The most famous cartoon comedy was one by Windsor McKay, featuring Tessie, the Ichthyosaurus. Since then the drawn movie has become a regular part of the output of many of the big companies. Lubin has an artist who divides his reel with negro comedy. Edison handles its series from a novel angle. Each picture begins with an ordinary "real life" scene between Edison actors. One of the characters introduces a book of cartoons. The picture on the page expands to the full size of the screen and goes through its evolutions. Then at the end comes the close of the real life incident.

One of the most popular and clever series of cartoons is that issued by Pathe with "Colonel Heeza Liar" or "The Police Dog" as its hero. J. R. Bray, the originator of these drawings, claims to be the first to put motion into the drawing itself. Mr. Bray started his experiments over seven years ago, and that was when motion pictures were still very young. Today he is the head of a whole organization devoted to making his pictures, has a corps of artists working under his supervision and has patents on his process which cover the use of transparent material or material made transparent by any agency whatever in the making of animated drawings.

On another page will be found a reproduction of one of Mr. Bray's drawings. To produce a series of comic evolutions on the film, the artist draws thousands of such sketches, each a little different in the detail of its actions. The background is standardized to a certain extent, making it necessary to draw in only the moving figures. Each picture is separately photographed, drawing following drawing in the order of events which they develop, while the camera slowly, very, very slowly clicks its shutter.

It takes between four and five thousand drawings to make 1600 feet or one reel of film. In addition to the colossal toil of the art work it takes a week to photograph the drawings one at a time. Great speed united with unvarying accuracy is essential. Every stroke of the pen must count. Mr. Bray works so fast that he is able to keep four trained artists "inking in" the outline drawings which he makes. The necessity for accuracy is evident, when it is learned that the drawings are magnified on the screen at least 25 times.

Mr. Bray spent years in study before he attempted to make an animated cartoon film. For months he haunted the Bronx Zoo in order to study the animals there and analyze their motions. He even bought a large farm across the Hudson from Poughkeepsie and stocked it with various animals in order to further extend his knowledge of animal anatomy. The result of these studies finds expression in the life-like motions of the various animals which move across his films.

Mr. Bray was recently interviewed in his sunny New York studio engaged in conducting Heeza Liar through another series of escapades. Tall, slender and blonde he looks more like a successful business man than an artist.

"Problems," he said, "come to the artist in this work that never rise in ordinary art. I have employed some very able artists to assist me, and find that very few of them can get the knack. For instance, one of the hardest things in the world to handle in these animated drawings is perspective. To have a figure come from the far horizon straight toward the observer—to have it grow from a dot to the proper size and preserve the 'balance' makes an almost insurmountable problem. I think I am correct in saying that not one artist in a thousand can put motion into drawings."

HOW PHILADELPHIA CAN GET SHAW AT FIFTY CENTS A PERFORMANCE

The New Stage Society Which Has Made an Audience Its First Production—"High Brow"? Maybe; But It's Easier to Be High Brow Than You Think

SUPPOSE you had 50 cents and theatre tickets cost \$2. Suppose you liked "Man and Superman," and the Broadway stage insisted on giving you "Daddy Long Legs." After about 10 years of helplessness, maddening dissatisfaction you might have sense enough to do what people in Berlin, London, New York, Boston, Chicago, Indianapolis and a dozen other cities have done. You might decide to go ahead yourself and produce the kind of plays you wanted to see. That is what the members of the Philadelphia Stage

Society are doing. And next week comes the test.

Now there is no getting round the fact that this is a "high-brow" matter. It is for people who aren't satisfied with the plays of Broadway and Broad Street. But—and this is a great big "but" which makes the whole thing worth talking about—it is surprisingly easy to cultivate that altitudinous forehead. Liking intelligent plays isn't half so hard as the managers think. If the Stage Society lets Philadelphia find that out, just as the Washington Square Players have let New York, then it will do a mighty big and worthwhile thing.

Anyway, the high brow has a right to kick at the American theatre. And his kick isn't that other people get what they want—which is partly true—or that he has to see what he doesn't want—which is almost entirely false. His kick is that he can't get what he himself wants. The economic organization of the American theatre won't let it cater to anything but the wholesale trade. The library can, the art museum can, even saloons can. But the theatre can't.

The high brow has another complaint and almost anybody liking good, satisfactory amusement can join him. If he finds a play he likes and goes to see it he has to pay for half a dozen other plays he never saw. To begin with, he has to pay somewhere in the neighborhood of \$2 for a good seat. On top of that he knows that a considerable part of his \$2 goes to meet the losses on other theatrical ventures that the manager or the theatre has suffered. At the very best, he is paying for the privilege of not having had to watch those failures' slow demise.

It's hard to say who first thought of the cure for this. The credit is probably due to the country whose almost perfect theatrical system made the evil least evident.—Germany. At any rate, the Neue Freie Volkshuene is the best and simplest specimen of a voluntary organization of people who wanted to produce good dramas cheaply for themselves. This organization of subscribers was able to hire theatres and actors for days when they were free, and to put so much amateur talent and spirit into the work that a very modest but dependable subscription fee covered the adequate production of plays of limited appeal. Sure of an audience and a certain sum of money, everything else could be made to suit.

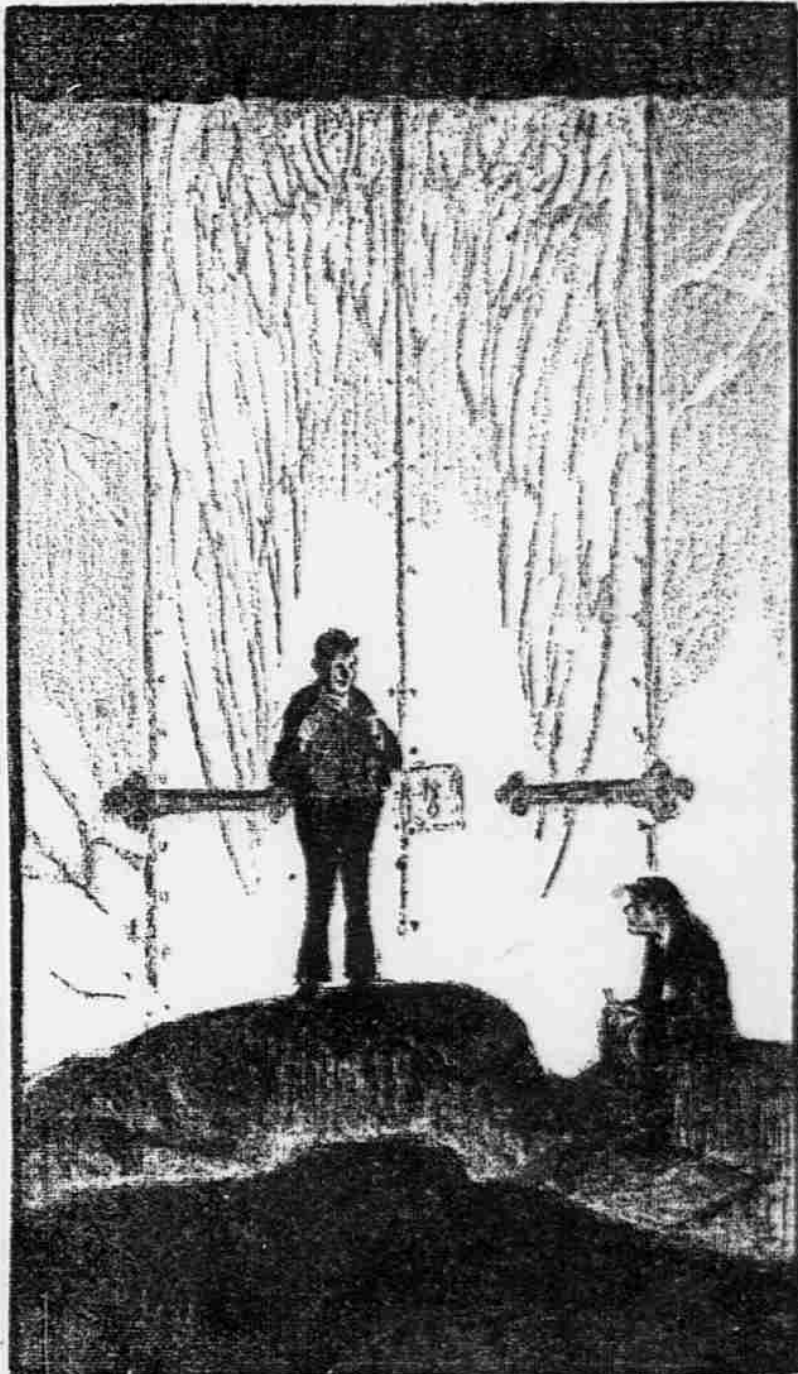
The idea spread. It spread through Germany into France, where Antoine and Brieux got their starts through the Theatre Libre, a playhouse beginning in the second story of a cafe where artists went to see what the boulevard theatres couldn't give them. The idea spread into England. The Incorporated Stage Society of London gave Shaw, Galsworthy, Barker, Bennett, St. John Hankin to the English-speaking stage. Three or four years ago the idea reached America. Here it was modified decidedly towards the amateur, because the flux and flow of the uncertain touring system put professional aid at a disadvantage.

Boston had one of the first of these ventures. At the Toy Theatre a group of amateurs gave new plays with a scenic and histrionic finish that were truly remarkable. Shaw's "Getting Married," Chesterton's "Magic," and Guiney's "Maria Rosa" were the monuments reared there. Out in Chicago, Maurice Browne's Little Theatre contributed seats, Euripides, Strindberg, Schnitzler, Maurice Baring, Synge. Other local clubs of amateurs in Lake Forest, Madison, Milwaukee gave Maeterlinck, Goldoni and Hoffmannsthal. This year sees more association of the kind in Indianapolis, St. Paul, and other Middle Western cities. Here in the east, New York has a marvelous example to show in the second season of the Washington Square Players. Upon their model the Philadelphia Stage Society is hoping to build as successful a future.

The first production of the Stage Society is to be an audience. Like the Washington Players and all its ancestors, it is beginning at the right end, finding a

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PHILADELPHIA'S NEW STAGECRAFT



The setting for Lord Dunsany's phantastic drama, "The Glittering Gate," as Morris Hall Pancoast has designed it and as the Stage Society will present it at the Little Theatre next week.

MRS. FISKE ON PHOTOPLAY ART

The motion picture as a medium of artistic expression is still in its formative state. It is an art that has not yet found itself—though it has, assuredly, found the public. Really it has not so far found a suitable name for itself, as witness the various absurd and vague terms used to identify it. When its farthest capacities have been discovered, when its limitations have been fixed, then

shall we have in the motion picture an art that will be, in the full meaning of the term, superb. Its possibilities reach beyond the boundaries of the imagination. That is why it is so fascinating to the artist. It is a new road, pressing farther and farther through a wilderness of great possibilities, and at every step one is likely to meet with some new and delightful adventure.