

THE FUTURE OF THE PHOTOPLAY

Director Feels Character Will
Replace Action in Fu-
ture Pictures

By THOMAS H. INCE

The photoplay of tomorrow will be the intimate drama of human relations, of the thought-provoking motives and emotions, rather than the spectacular drama of "big" scenes and merely thrilling action.

This does not mean that the "big" scene or virile action (comprised in the picture quality we nickname "punch") will disappear, but that they will take their rightful subordinate place in the story; that sheer human drama, the things of heart and brain, will be the dominant factor.

The photoplay of tomorrow will not, however, be less a drama of situations than now—situation is a basic requirement of all drama. But as we grow in artistic perception our situations will grow closer to life and farther from set artificialities.

Nor does this mean that the future photoplay will be less stimulating. It will be more so, for it will stimulate thought as well as emotion.

The spectator may go out from witnessing a great battle scene on the screen, with its thrilling climax, in a state of great emotional excitement. But such states of feeling soon wear off and are forgotten. The play, unless it provides something for the mind to bite on, is likely to be forgotten, too. And a play forgotten is a dead play.

But the vivid unfolding of a complex human problem that touches the spectator's own experience will leave him not only profoundly moved, but thinking earnestly, and he will remember.

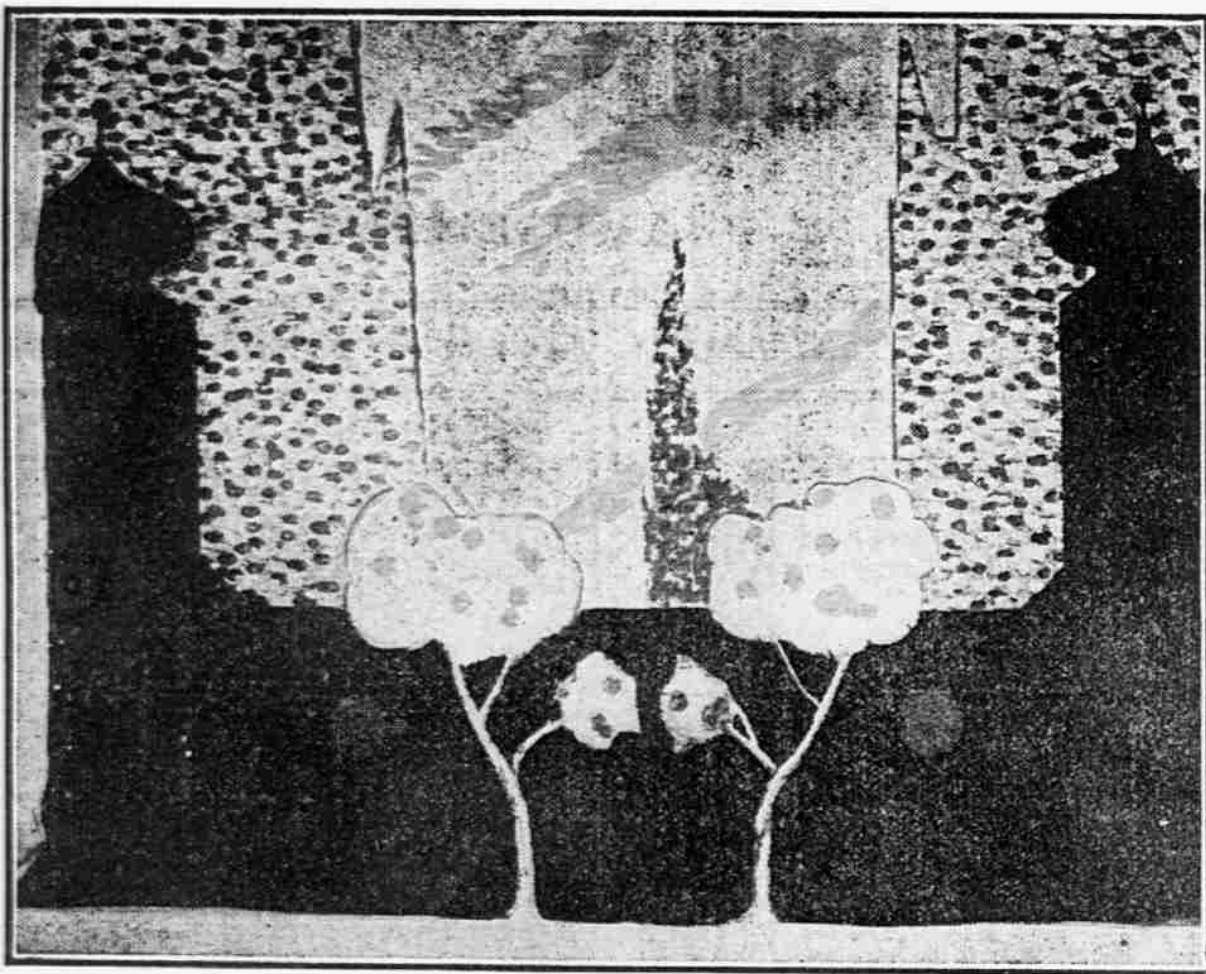
That is why I foresee a change in public taste, a development in discrimination that will make possible a type of photoplay as yet so rare as to be almost unrecognized.

"Characterizations" Wanted

I have suggested the kind of play this will be, and an important element in it will be a more intimate analysis and a subtler depiction of individuality, a finer perception of personal values. "Characterization" will be one of the chief watchwords of the director of the future.

To put the whole situation in a fine phrase, not my own: "The screen drama will refine itself in the fire of its own creative impulse."

"THE GARDEN OF THE SORCERESS"



Another of W. H. K. Yarrow's fantastic settings for "The King of the Black Isles."

In doing this it will burst many bonds, as all art must do when it lives and grows. Already this art has freed itself from hampering traditions to a marked degree, but it will go farther yet and new ways be found to express pictorially a wide range of delicate moods and meanings that so far have depended on the spoken word.

One of the first limitations to go will be that of a set length. Few photoplays do not suffer from having to be fitted into a given number of full reels. Again and again I have seen plays miss fire in, say, four reels that would have succeeded in their original five or six, and we all

know examples of weak four or five-reel dramas that would have been excellent in two or, perhaps, two and a fraction.

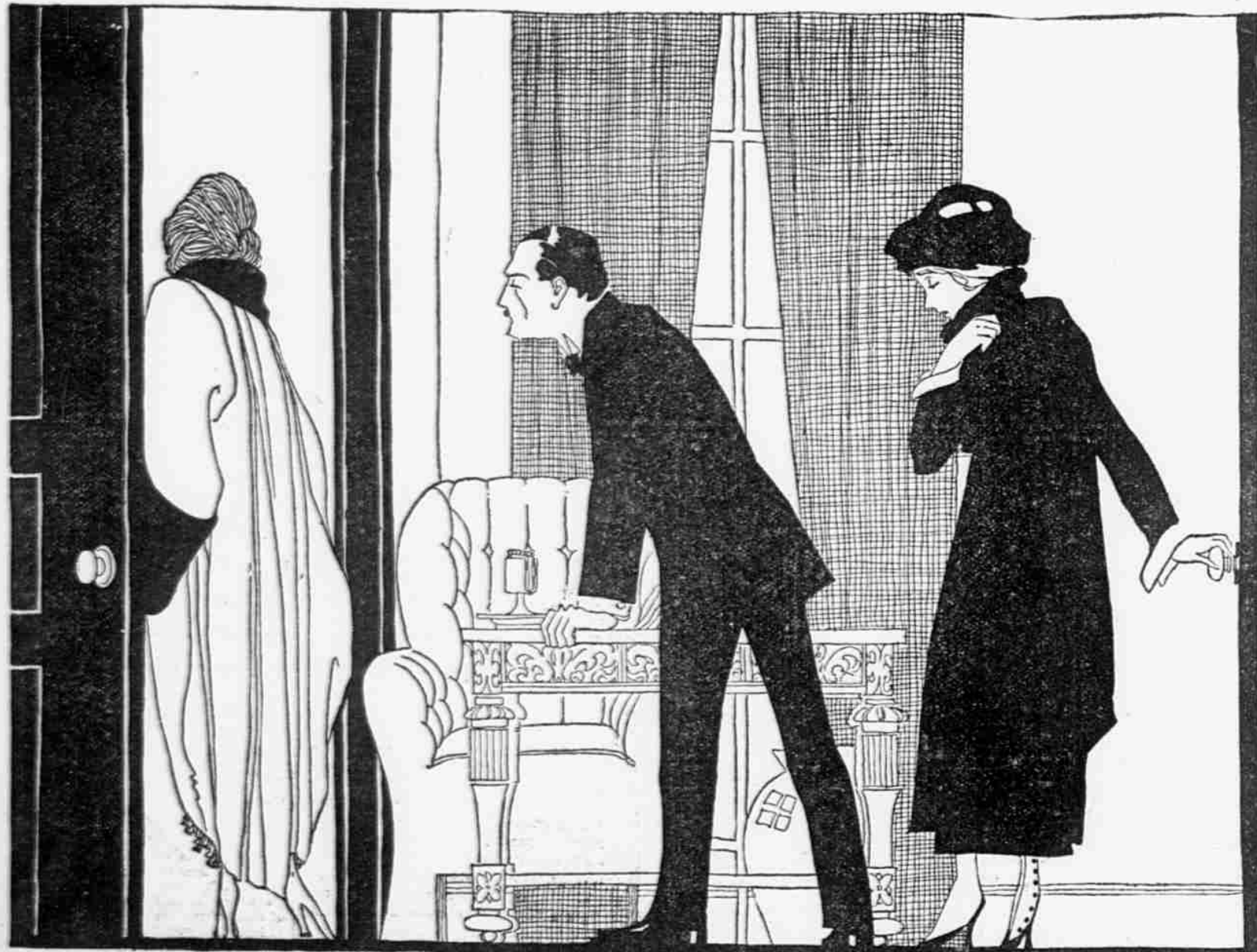
Of course, one can in advance tell roughly what length a picture story is worth, but there must be a reasonable freedom to let the story make its own length for the best results—and only the best now stands a chance of life. A really honest artist does not write or paint to exact measure, and if you try to make him do it you get less than his best quality of work.

The true motion-picture work of art may start as a two-reeler and end as a twelve, or it may be photographed to 12

reels and end logically with two and a quarter. Of course, we must try to meet within reason the natural and inevitable limitations of the business end of the industry, but these will gradually grow less so as to permit the capture of quality plays, whatever their length.

As public appreciation of quality in photoplays grows—which it will very rapidly when we show it our best quality—the premium will grow higher and higher on inspirational work that bears the stamp of individuality and high artistic purpose. Such plays will stand out from the common run, and by them we will be guided to the future photoplay.

CAST OUT BY "OUTCAST"



"Valentine" Gillian Scaife

"Geoffrey" David Powell

"Miriam" Elsie Ferguson