

## The FILM WORLD

By  
**TREVOR LANE**

# Dietrich Debunked under the "Purple Light Of A Summer Night In SPAIN"

(Cole Porter's Idea—Not Mine)



### DIETRICH is saved!

No, that doesn't mean that the Salvation Army has been talking to her, nor yet that a stalwart life-guard has been fishing her out of a deep and dangerous piece of Pacific Ocean. It means that the damage that was done to this beautiful actress's career by such films as "The Scarlet Empress" has been wiped out by her work in "Desire," which I saw at a private screening in Wellington the other morning. For the first time she has escaped from the directorial hands of Josef von Sternberg (plain Joe Stern to his friends, I am credibly informed), and has been given an excellent director in the person of Frank Borzage. But in writing R.I.P. to the headstone of Mr. Stern or Herr von Sternberg or whatever his name is, I would like to pay him one compliment. He made a spanking good job of "Shanghai Express," and even if "Legs" Dietrich (the lovely lady's Hollywood nickname) did no more acting in this than she has done in any other Sternberg film, she posed so beautifully against such a variety of backgrounds that the film was like an enjoyable trip through a particularly interesting art gallery.

**BUT** Frank Borzage, in "Desire," has engaged in an interesting pursuit which might be called De-

Disturbing is the most suitable word I can think of to describe Marlene Dietrich's beauty. Above she is seen in three shots from "Desire," her latest film with Gary Cooper.

bunking the Dietrich. She smiles, she laughs, she gets slapped, she's even allowed a wisecrack or two. Like Thorne Smith, Borzage has brought the marble to life—and it's surprising what a number of things that same lovely marble is able to do. (And, incidentally, in her more coy moments, Marlene looks ridiculously like our own Elaine Hamill.) Gary Cooper comes back to her side for the first time since la Dietrich's first film for Paramount, "Morocco." They make an ideal pair—Cooper very much of this earth, nonchalant, nothing of the patent-leather-hair type about him; Marlene, glamorous, gorgeous and all the other G's that mean breathtaking beauty.

### Trouble In Spain.

**THE** plot of "Desire" is Hollywooden—but the handling of the subject lifts it into what the

Americans call the "road-show class." Dietrich is a skilful jewel thief who has just pulled off something big in Paris and is hastening Spain-ward. Gary Cooper is a young engineer from Detroit who has been given a fortnight's vay-kay-shun by the Paris principals of his firm. He, too, is speeding toward Spain. It is inevitable that the two should meet. But Marlene's sophisticated serenity doesn't get any romantic jolts from the rough-and-readiness of the young American—not for a start, anyway. Came the "purple light of a summer night in Spain" (to quote Cole Porter)—with attendant twitterings in the hearts of the jewel-thief and the American engineer. But why go on? You know as well as I do that love finds the right way in the end. I liked "Desire" a whole lot.