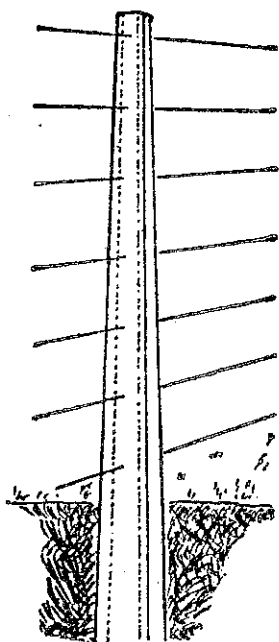


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Are They Poison? FILM STARS ATTACKED

(Continued from page 35).

demand higher salaries. The early film-makers sent forth their product to the public with no more indication than that it was an Essanay picture, a Biograph, an Edison, or a Vitagraph. Mary Pickford, who made her first film in 1909, worked first for Biograph; but all the time she was with that company she was never known as anything but "The Biograph Girl," or "Little Mary, the Movie Girl with the Curis."

To-day the film industry has gone to the other extreme.

Within limits, the star system is a very desirable and useful thing, which only a crank would want to see completely abandoned.

The trouble is, however, that the star system seems to be getting out of control. Stars have a scarcity value which forces up their price to the producers. A studio's production budget is not inexhaustible. It can spend only a certain amount in each year, spread over a certain number of pictures. If it has to pay an enormous competitive price to secure the services of "box-office" names, it is obvious that there will be less to spend on other equally important departments—on stories, for instance, or on direction—and, most serious, on those lesser pictures which make up the bulk of the average studio's programme. There is too wide a gap now between the few "big" pictures, which are often over-produced, and the many smaller films which, in turn, are too often under-produced "quickies" because the studio hasn't enough money or stars to go round.

There are, of course, very many other films that are neither "big" nor "quickies," that have strength of story, soundness of plot and acting—but until Hollywood stops throwing star-dust in the public's eyes, those pictures are not going to get the attention they deserve. Until then, men like Sam Goldwyn will have some reason to wring their hands and moan about the impending doom of Hollywood.

(Continued from previous page).

manor house. For a moment Miss Garbeau stood at the head of the stairs and veiled her eyes. With a significant glance at the candle she said, in low, husky tones: "Ay still want to be alone!" and swept majestically down the corridor with her drapes rustling.

Before he left the German tourist pointed violently at something behind us—using his whole arm and hand in a most remarkable manner. When, after following the direction of his gesture, we turned back, he had gone. In a thoughtful voice Sir Jason said: "He must have seen the ghost of old Sir Montgomery, who hanged himself over the lintel when Charles I was beheaded. . . . Strange, very strange."

Miss West and the others then bade our host good-night, Miss West remarking cryptically that she was glad her bedroom was on the second floor. With that Sir Jason and I took a last glass of port and retired.

The memory of that strange dinner-party has confirmed my faith in the savoir-pas of the British aristocracy for all time.