ON THE TRAIL OF THE MOTION PICTURE

Eugene O'Brien Makes Real Ascent Into Stardom

Young Actor Does Some Convincing Work in His First Stellar Role and Is "The Perfect Lover"

By Virginia Tracy

AT "De Luxe Annie," when the young crook had turned sorrowfully from his lost love, we heard a woman remark—such a wise-looking, stout, gray woman: "Yes, but when they have him for a star he'll take just the same parts everybody takes and I'll know beforehand that he'll marry her and everything 'll turn out all right and I shan't care what becomes of him!" It was an actor, on the other hand, who once quite casually observed: "What I want is to get in all the good parts I can before they star me, because, of course, after that I'll never do much of anything."

Oh, those heroes, patterns of virtue or blameless victims of fate, who must never know an impulse which might lose sympathy for that expensive proposition, the star. As if sympathy were gained by being always in the right, by Sir Charles Grandison and not by Valjean and Othello! We long dallied with the nudge we meant to give the mysterious and guilty "they," indicating criticism from two such different sources. We dallied and we have lost our chance. We are obliged to advise the old lady that "The Perfect Lover," in which has been fulfilled the threat of stardom she saw hanging over Eugene O'Brien's head, will do exactly the reverse of lessening her interest in his fate, nor can we offer it to our ambitious friend as any reason whatever for declining offers of advancement. As a matter of fact, in no previous picture has Mr. O'Brien even begun to have the opportunity which his first starring vehicle affords him, nor in any picture, to our mind, has he handled his opportunity with anything like so finished and yet so individual a result.

Title Does Not Describe Picture

Brian Lazar, the hero of "The Perfect Lover," is not a part such as everybody takes. Nor, even though it is he himself who, by a well established convention of romance, sits down before the crisis of his story and tells us the events leading up to it, do we ever, until the very last moment, know whether everything turns out all right. We entirely agree with our old lady that this is a singular quality, even in so novel and curious, so genuinely distinguished a picture.

In order to get at this picture the first place to get is away from the title. The title is beautiful in one sense and the picture is beautiful in another, but this is their only claim to union, and, strange as it may seem, they continue to pull different ways. If we could invent a single word equivalent to "The Adventures of Genius on Its Way Tarough the World"—a word of which one syllable should convey, "And the Devil Take the Women!—All but One!" that accommodating word would be "The Perfect Lover's" perfect title. Not that we should go quite so far as that subtitle which makes Lazar remark to the labyrinthine vampire Lucille Lee Stewart plays so admirably and significantly, "You and I know that there is nothing wrong between us," as if he were inviting the censor to come in and sit down. There is love enough in the picture, heaven knows: love false, fair, foul, true; the world and the devil, maids and wives, offering love for all their lives. But the love which is its brain and backbone and life and soul, a man's love for doing the work that he was born to do, is the last thing suggested by the title, and we offer our sympathy to the state of mind which settles itself before "The Perfect Lover" with its mouth full of chocolates or even with its head full of Swinburne, and is confronted by the haggard, ghastly, rain-soaked ghost that lowers with so frozen and yet so burning a torment from that first night-dark, storm-swept street.

Clothed in Vivid Photography

Ralph Ince begins his picture as if it were some glorified mystery story. He knows the drama of lighted windows in the rain, of storm drops bouncing from the pavement like malevolent little worlds, of the mockery in the gleam of a street lamp on that doorway where Lazar shelters for a moment and of the opening of that cold, wet hand with its frayed sleeve to disclose all the fire and the glory of the great jewel in the ring which this shivering scarecrow has been carrying like a splendid secret through the night. Struck with an interest incomparably more vivd and intriguing than we had expected, we soon see that to Mr. Ince a spiritual struggle is a thing as glowing and resounding as the siege of Troy, and the artist fighting the world is to him as gallantly exciting as Jack the Giant Killer. He proclaims this by the enormous reliance on sheer beauty which he displays so unhesitatingly and with such an actual enchantment of success.

His picture walks in beauty; it is made of it; for suggestion, interpretation, emotional quality, you might almost say he has used nothing else. The light that touches the lovemaking amid those country roads, those ponds and hedges, and spring woodlands with such ineffable and crystalline youth speaks as differently as words from the malign fireshine of that masked ball which is not so much like a flesh and blood ball as like that where through the windows Poe could see wild forms that moved fantastically to a discordant melody. He and his photographer have brushed everything with such glows and tones or mellowed color that light cannot fall on a board without making it eloquent and lovely, so that the scenes slip past us in a sheen and glimmer of radiance which remains more or less the radiance of a dream, and from which we awake with a start to find the picture vanished.

An Impression Varied but Whole

This may be called a merely technical adventure, but to us it has a truer realism than the most careful collection of realistic details. What it does is to present the quagmires that ensnare Lazar veiled in the glamour in which they appeared to him and without which they never could have snared him. By another novelty of technique the action, launched from Lazar's point of view and confined to his knowledge of its sequence, attains that picture form which the artistically elect are always reproaching pictures with not having—pure narrative.

Whether we should wish for pure narrative always or be inclined some times to welter in projected drama, narrative is in this case wonderfully effective. All the huddle and litter of detail, of incident to amplify incident, being gone, the continuity runs swift and limpid like a tune, and though, as Lazar tells his story in ever varying and advancing pictures, there seems as much changing motion as in the waves of the sea, yet when we look back we look back as on the waves of the sea, upon an impression as single as a fable.

O'Brien Shines Brightly as New Star

This impression is that of a man of genius who has gone through what, in the freedom of modern language, it seems a little weak and cosey to call hell and brought his genius out alive. Our interest then lies in our conviction that this genius is a pretty big thing, and when all is said we think it must be Mr. O'Brien's acting that convinces us. We are not now speaking of the charm with which he invests the character easily enough, nor of the love scenes which range all the way from the fever of that one where the censor was so suddenly invited in to the young reverence with which he treats the girl who is for him the soul of all that he has lost. He inflects the part with the fullest sensibility through all the kinds of person Lazar became before he became himself, but to our mind his most original contribution is this ability to make us accept Lazar's great powers without question. It is an effect fruitlessly sought by many and many an actor and an author before now, and we think it is achieved here mainly by our seeing our hero gradually acquire a deep fund of self-possession, like that of a man who really knows his destiny; a sort of reserve strength of independence and security such as, in their differing ways, a tree or a king or a day laborer or any great natural force might have. This never leaves Lazar from the moment he begins to paint his real picture—not even when he snatches a piece of bread from his enemy's table, not even when we see his wife's necessity turn the actual world into a kind of delirium—and we think it is this which marks his performance as not only profoundly but exceptionally imaginative.

In fact, as a new star in that which we never weary of trying to read, we had intended expounding Mr. O'Brien with all the learned analysis at our disposal. We knew there was a certain danger in this, unless we took care not to say a word about his appearance or personality, or admit that his Lazar would have had any different effect on us if it had been played by an old gentleman with a beard. We have learned that a feminine reviewer is naturally suspect as unable to display toward young gentlemen with appearance, with personality and without a beard that completely impartial judgment invariably displayed by masculine reviewers toward members of the opposite sex. But we hope we would have braved this danger if one of these very masculine colleagues had not got ahead of us. He begins his review by saying: "No doubt the women elected Eugene O'Brien as a star," and then he adds: "I can't help liking him." It is enough. When a man says that a star was elected by the women and yet that he can't help liking him, no frail feminine words can add one syllable. Praise can no further go.

Wanted—Octavus Roy Cohen For Wilful Wanderings

Octavus Roy Cohen is lost—at least the Goldwyn company, for which he has contracted to write a number of motion picture plays, doesn't know where to find him. He returned to his home in Birmingham, Ala., after attending the opening of his play, "The Crimson Alibi," and a letter was received from him saying he would send on a play within a few days. But the play has not come. The only news received of him is that his wife says he has set out on his annual visit to the newspapers where he worked in the days before magazines and theatrical managers and motion picture companies began to bid for his work. Mr. Cohen was a reporter. It was hard work and little money, but those years marked Mr. Cohen for their own. So now, when he has more orders than he can fill and when he could buy any one of the papers on which he used to be a "cub," he goes back every year and takes assignments on the old papers. He walks into an office, greets the reporters and the editor as if he had been there all the time, gets an assignment and goes out to cover it. Then after a few days he goes to another paper. When the round is finished he returns home and is a successful author once more. What strange ideas some people have of a vacation!

New Elliott-Faversham Combination for the Screen

Maxine Elliott, who has returned from her visit to her sister, Lady Forbes-Robertson, in England, was met at the pier by Mr. and Mrs. William Faversham, and a definite announcement was made for the forthcoming season.

Miss Elliott and Mr. Faversham have made a star combination for moving pictures. They have formed their own organization with a capital of $300,000.

Rehearsals will begin at the Paramount Building, where Mr. Faversham and Miss Elliott have their own studio.

George D. Baker will direct the first two films, the scenarios of which he has made from H. de Vere Stacpoole's "The Man Who Lost Himself" and "White Man," by George Agnew Chamberlain. Part of the time will be spent at Daytona, Fla., where a studio is being erected for them.

No "Double" Can Alleviate "Toil and Trouble" Here

Convinced that there is a growing demand for serials, several men well known in the industry have just formed a new company for their exclusive production. The company will be known as the Allgood.

A. Alperstein, treasurer and general manager, announces that their first serial will have Charles Hutchison, daredevil "stuntsman," as star and that the first episode is already fairly under way at Ausable Chasm in the Adirondacks.

"One of the things we most insist on," explains Mr. Alperstein, "is that there are to be absolutely no doubles in our serials. All of our actors will themselves take the chances which are necessary to give the thrills the public demands."

"Penrod" To Be Seen On the Screen

Booth Tarkington's famous "Penrod" stories are to be placed on the screen. Contracts have been signed by J. R. Grainger, Eastern representative for Marshall Neilan Productions, and the author, as well as George W. Tyler and Klaw & Erlanger, who own the theatrical rights.

Mr. Neilan will produce "Penrod" after his present production, "The Eternal Three," is completed. In the title rôle will appear Wesley Barry, the freckle-faced youngster who has appeared in recent subjects staged by Mr. Neilan.

Is It a Gift or a Privilege?

So much comment has been aroused by the success with which Maxwell Karger selected the actresses who portray the beauty mannequins in "Lombardi, Ltd.," that he is now being dubbed a second F. Ziegfeld.

"Picking them like that is a gift," said a friend of his recently, after he had witnessed a scene in the smart Fifth Avenue shop. "Gift nothing," replied Mr. Karger, "it's a privilege."

Another International Polo

Eddie Polo, the Hercules of the films, will sail for New York from Liverpool late in the month following the production of a Universal serial in Europe.

The Polo expedition is under the direction of J. P. McGowan, a widely known serial director. The serial, which is to be called "Trailed Around the World," was made in all of the European countries.

What Sort of Man Was Adam?

Theodore Kosloff, the Russian dancer, has been cast as Adam in "The Tree of Knowledge," which is being produced at the Lasky Studio. Theodore says that it takes him four hours to put on his make-up, which is explained only after one learns that his conception of Adam is a hairy person closely resembling an ape.

Enid Bennett, Rialto

New Films This Week

Anita Stewart will be seen at the Strand Theatre in her latest production, "Her Kingdom of Dreams," a picturization of Louise Provost's novel of the same name. In this photoplay Miss Stewart is supported by an all-star cast, including Spottiswood Aitken, Frank Currier, Mahlon Hamilton, Thomas Holding, Kathlyn Williams, Fred Huntley, Edwin Stevens, Anna Q. Nilsson, Robert McKim, Herbert Prior, Thomas Jefferson, James Neill, Wesley Barry, Thomas Santschi and Tully Marshall. "Imposing on Good Nature" is the title of the latest Outing-Chester scenic, which will also be shown, as will a comedy cartoon with "Happy Hooligan" as the principal. Eldora Stanford, soprano, will sing the aria from the first act of "Louise." This number will be presented with special scenic and electrical effects.

The new Artcraft picture in which Marguerite Clark will appear at the Rivoli this week is "Widow by Proxy," a comedy which had a long and successful career on the stage. Nigel Barrie is Miss Clark's leading man. "Shocks of Doom," from a story by O. Henry; a Sunshine comedy, "Dabbling in Society," and the Rivoli Pictorial, with a "Happy Hooligan" cartoon, will be the other film features. Adolf Bolm has arranged Liszt's "Dream of Love" and it will be danced, in a special setting, by Nina Derouginska, Nancy Lee and Marshall Hall. The orchestra, under the direction of Erno Rapée and Joseph Littau, will play the "Dance of the Hours," from Ponchielli's opera, "La Gioconda." The soloists will be Emanuel List and Gladys Rice, who will sing Bayley's "Long, Long Ago."

"Stepping Out," the new Paramount photoplay in which Enid Bennett will be seen at the Rialto this week, is based on a story by C. Gardner Sullivan. The picture was directed by Fred Niblo, under the direction of Thomas H. Ince. Niles Welch is Miss Bennett's leading man. Of equal importance with the feature will be the new Mack Sennett comedy, "Uncle Tom Without the Cabin," a satire on a one-night stand "Tom show." The Rialto Magazine will contain the usual news features and a cartoon. The Rialto Orchestra, led by Hugo Riesenfeld and Nat W. Finston, will play the overture to Wagner's "Tannhäuser" and Jerome Kern's "Nobody Home." Greek Evans will sing Henry Trotere's song, "The Tramp."

"The Miracle Man" will move from the Rivoli to Moss's Broadway Theatre commencing Sunday afternoon. Thomas Meighan and Beatty Compson are the featured players in this unusual photoplay production, which was directed by George Loane Tucker.

One of the big features of the week's programmes at Loew's New York Theatre and Roof will be the first showing of Olive Thomas in "The Spite Bride" on Tuesday. The daily attractions scheduled for the balance of the week will include Frank Keenan in "The False Code" on Monday; Mary Pickford in "The Hoodlum" on Wednesday; Madelaine Traverse in "The Splendid Sin" on Thursday; Virginia Hammond in "Miss Crusoe" and "The House of Intrigue," with Peggy May and Mignon Anderson, on Friday; Sessue Hayawaka in "The Dragon Painter" on Saturday, and Mae Murray in "Twin Pawns" on Sunday.

"Checkers," the greatest racing photoplay ever screened, will be shown at the Academy Theatre for the first half of the coming week. The remainder of the bill will include the latest "Mutt and Jeff" animated cartoon, "Everybody's Doing It," "Flips and Flaps," Frank Keenan in "The False Code," and the latest News Pictorial. The feature for the second half of the week will be Peggy Hyland in "The Merry-Go-Round."

"The Last of the Duanes," the William Fox de luxe production, starring William Farnum, will continue at the Central Theatre.

"A Temperamental Wife," starring Constance Talmadge, will be the feature at the Strand Theatre, Brooklyn.

"The Right to Happiness" will remain at the Park Theatre.

Shadows on The Screen

Marjorie Rambeau went to the Adirondacks yesterday. Accompanying Miss Rambeau was the scenario of the first picture she will do for the Albert Capellani Productions. Mr. Capellani will return from France about the first of October, when the title of the picture will be announced.

Myron Selznick has engaged Alfred Hickman, well known actor of stage and screen, to support Owen Moore in "Piccadilly Jim," his first Selznick starring production.

The day that Agnes Ayres finished a Fox picture in which she was playing opposite William Russell she signed a contract to work under Leonce Perret's direction.

Is there some unwritten law which compels motion pictures made from stage successes to change their names? There must be, for it is invariably done. Which reflection is the result of a notice sent out from the Goldwyn office that Pauline Frederick's picture made from Pinero's "Leity" is to be known as "The Loves of Letty."

Cosmo Hamilton was an interested spectator at the Biograph Studio last week, where he witnessed the "shooting" of some of the scenes of his story, "The Miracle of Love," which Director Robert Z. Leonard is making.

Henley has signed a contract to produce four features a year for the house of Pathe. Pathe will soon release "The Gay Old Dog," Mr. Henley's production of Mrs. Sidney Drew's adaptation of Edna Ferber's famous story.

In an effort to procure the proper costumes for "A Rainy Day," Clare Briggs, producer of the Paramount-Briggs Comedies, practically ransacked every costume establishment in New York, but finally found the required articles in the attic of his home in New Rochelle.

Francis W. Sutherland has been appointed assistant conductor for the Strand symphony orchestra. Mr. Sutherland has lately returned from France, where he was division bandmaster of General O'Ryan's band.

B. S. Moss's Regent, Hamilton, Jefferson and Flatbush theatres have reopened again after having been closed for several months in order to undergo extensive alterations and improvements. Large symphony orchestras will be a permanent attraction in all the theatres of the Moss circuit.

The Adolf Philipp Film Corporation announces the first three musical film comedies: "My Girl Suzanna," "The Midnight Girl" and "Oh, Louise!" Adolf Philipp appears in all three of them. Also Patsy De Forrest, Marie Pagano, George Henry, Edward Elkas, Louise Buckley, Harold Pool and others.

B. A. Rolfe this week finished the production of "The Amazing Lovers," and the negative is now in the cutting room being assembled and edited. The picture, based on the Robert W. Chambers story "The Shining Band," with adaptations for the screen by Charles A. Logue, is the first of a series founded on stories by Mr. Chambers.

D. W. Griffith's sensational achievement, "Broken Blossoms," which has had such a phenomenally successful run in several of the principal cities of the country, under Mr. Griffith's personal presentation, is now going to be released throughout the country by United Artists Corporation, the so-called "Big Four."

Irving Willatt, one of the most daring and efficient directors in the moving picture business, has just completed for Thomas H. Ince a filmization of Gouverneur Morris's story "Behind the Door," in which Hobart Bosworth, supported by Jane Novak, is featured. In this story Mr. Bosworth did some remarkable stunts, among which was a jump from a battleship forty feet into a high sea off the west coast. The picture, it is said, will be one of the most sensational ever released on the American screen.

So pressing is the demand for new and beautiful film stars that P. A. Powers, of the Universal, is going to send a group of trained directors out over the highways and byways as scouts for material. The Universal is in need of material as the result of the Roma-New York Pictures Corporation, formed in an alliance with the Garibaldi interests in Italy, which will furnish pictures to Russia and the near Orient.

Victor Schertzinger has become an author of motion pictures; moreover he has sold his first play to the Goldwyn Company. It will be presented soon with Mabel Normand playing the star. The play is said to be the best vehicle she has ever had, which is not surprising in view of the fact that Mr. Schertzinger directs all her pictures.

Merit Productions Formed

Important in the week's news is the announcement of the formation of two new companies—Edgar Lewis Productions, Inc., and Edwin Carewe Productions, Inc. Harry Cahane is the link binding these new companies to the Albert apellani Production, Inc., which he promoted last spring. A fourth series is in process of formation, in which June Caprice will be starred. The director for Miss Caprice has not yet been selected. The four companies will be known under the general head of "Merit Productions," and each will be a separate unit.

Syd Chaplin to Go West

Sydney Chaplin returned to this country last Saturday after a trip through the Old World, visiting England, France and Switzerland during his nine weeks' pay. He will leave for Los Angeles and will produce pictures at the same studio used by his brother, Charlie. Mr. Chaplin brought back with him 30,000 feet of film, the best of which will be used as his first Paramount-Artcraft special under his $1,000,000 contract with the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation.

"The Willow Tree" for Metro

"The Willow Tree" is to be an elaborate Metro production of the Japanese stage fantasy by J. H. Benrimo and Harrison Rhodes which, when it scored a decisive hit at the Cohan & Harris Theatre, served to bring a new stellar figure to the stage in the person of Fay Bainter. Viola Dana, in the screen version, is to enact the dual rôle created by Miss Bainter—that of the image carved from the sacred willow tree and of the American girl.

Thirteen Lucky for Lesser

Sol Lesser, who is handling the tour of "Yankee Doodle in Berlin," the Mack Sennett travesty, in conjunction with the personal appearance of the Mack Sennett Bathing Girls, announces that the Fox circuit of thirteen theatres has booked this production. This picture and the girls will be presented in exactly the same manner as at the premier presentation at the Broadway Theatre.

A New Guy Empey in The Post-Bellum Days

By Harriette Underhill

One day last week the telephone rang and when we answered it a brisk, extremely energetic voice said: "This is Guy Empey talking. My press representative said that you had consented to take luncheon with me today at Claridge's, but that I was to call up and verify it."

"Consider it verified," we answered, with all the vivacity we could muster at the cold, gray, hopeless hour of 10:30 a. m.

"Will you know me," asked Mr. Empey, "in case I do not remember you? You know, it is two years since I saw you, and ladies have an alarming way of changing the style of their hats and even the color of their hair from season to season."

"Shall we know you?" we answered scornfully. "Of course. You wear a khaki uniform, and you are pale and haggard and battle-scarred. Don't you remember 'Over the Top'?"

"Oh, but I'm not pale nor haggard any more. Just look around for the shortest, fattest, homeliest man you can find, and that is Guy Empey."

So at 1 o'clock sharp—for we are nothing if not punctual, it being the easiest way we know to gain the upper hand—we climbed the stairs in the Claridge lobby and discovered Mr. Empey down by the desk. He discovered us at the same time, and each recognized the other and his description of himself was perfect, only he isn't short, nor fat, nor homely.

Mr. Empey is making pictures for himself now, and the part of this information which refused to percolate through our brain is that they are not war pictures and have nothing to do with the war.

"Was that a war picture?" we would ask, and then, in a moment, forgetting that he had already told us, we would say, "Is it to be a war story?" when he told us about his new book.

"You are just like every one else," he said, in despair. "I'm not doing anything now, either pictures or stories, dealing with the subject of the war."

"Excuse it, please," with far more sincerity in our voice than Central ever puts into hers. "Are you interested in titles?"

"Am I?" said Empey, with conviction. "They can make or break a picture and they are the most interesting part of the work as well as the most difficult."

"Particularly the conversational titles," we answered. "They are as important as the dialogue in a play. A title will establish a character as soon as he makes his appearance on the screen. For instance, you see a young wife enter the library and toy with a book. If she says, 'I hope dear John won't be late at the office. I fear he is working too hard and his health may be impaired,' you'll know that she is an old-fashioned wife and that she probably has no humor in her make-up.

"But if she says, 'I hope Ralph will stay late at the office to-night. We need more money and I must have those sables. It won't hurt him. He is strong and healthy,' what then?"

"Great," ejaculated Mr. Empey. "May I have that title? I need it for a comedy I am doing; and will you help me title my next picture? I like your ideas."

"Will we?" we stammered, in joy and agitation. "It is the height of our ambition," and the next day Mr. Empey called up to say that he was quite serious about the titles and we said so were we—just dying to show the world some really good titles.

Everything that you would fancy Mr. Empey was going to be he isn't. He has a wonderful imagination, and he says the most unexpected things. Listen to this one: Two girls sat at the table next to ours in the dining room. They were perfect products, indigenous to New York. They were waved, powdered and perfumed, but one of them was not satisfied. She propped her mirror up against the sugar-bowl and proceeded to touch up her eyebrows.

"Poor little thing!" said Mr. Empey, shaking his head. "Did you ever drive fast through the country and when you stop find dead butterflies all over your radiator? That is what is going to happen to those little girls if they come into contact with life—they will be withered up on the radiator."

"Not if they are salamanders," we answered, for we felt quite optimistic concerning the fate of these "butterflies."

"Thank you," said Empey, "I'm going to use that one, too."

Staff of the Capitol Announced

Managing Director Edward Bowes of the Capitol Theatre announced yesterday the personnel of his staff engaged to create and supervise the motion picture presentation in that huge house in conjunction with the stage novelties under the direction of Ned Wayburn. The announcement names Hy Mayer as art editor; Thomas F. Walker, film editor; George Huntley, chief of projection, and James Pratgley, camera man. A large staff of assistants will aid these department heads.

AMUSEMENTS

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Beginning Today at 1 P. M.
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"STEPPING OUT"
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MACK SENNETT'S
Greatest Paramount Comedy
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"WIDOW BY PROXY"
"SHOCKS OF DOOM" from a story by O. Henry
SUNSHINE COMEDY "His Naughty Wife"
RIVOLI ORCHESTRA "Dance of the Hours."

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OLIVE THOMAS in "The SPITE BRIDE"

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Thurs., Fri., Sat.: Delancey
Tues.: 7th Ave., 42d St., New York
Wed.: 86th St., Borland, Circle
Sat.: Bijou (Brooklyn)
Fri.: 110th St., Broadway (Jersey City)
Thur., Fri., Sat., Sun.: Avenue B, De Kalb (Brooklyn), Fulton (Brooklyn), Metropolitan (Brooklyn), Palace (Brooklyn), Warwick (Brooklyn)

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CARL EDOUARDE, Conductor
MACK SENNETT'S
Newest Paramount Comedy
'UNCLE TOM WITHOUT THE CABIN'
SOLOISTS—SCENIC—REVIEW

AMUSEMENTS

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