PORTLAND THEATRICAL MEN DO NOT FEAR KINETOSCOPE

Thomas Edison's New Talking Motion Picture Invention Will Improve Entertainment but Cannot Alone Meet Public Demands, Believe Local Managers.

MOTION PICTURES that can talk are at last to be a reality, and the inventor, Thomas A. Edison, predicts that they will drive the legitimate drama and vaudeville out of the theatrical field. However this may be, Portland theatrical men interviewed have no fears of the effects of this remarkable invention.

For years the problem of synchronizing the motion picture and the phonograph has engaged the attention of inventors in every country, but it has remained for Thomas A. Edison, the wizard of sight and sound, who gave the world both the motion picture and the phonograph, to invent a perfect combination of the two.

Mr. Edison has named his new invention the kinetescope, and by means of it he expects to popularize the moving picture to such an extent that it will be the foremost form of amusement in the world. Of all the wonderful strides that have been made in the production of motion pictures, this newest invention of Mr. Edison's is undoubtedly the greatest and most important. It furnishes a perfect illusion of talking, moving panorama. For years this great inventor, as well as other inventors, has been working to secure this combination, but it has heretofore been found impossible to produce a machine that would synchronize light and sound perfectly.

Mr. Edison realized that in order to synchronize light and sound waves it would be necessary to take voice and action simultaneously.

This necessitated the development of a phonograph recorder of sufficient delicacy to catch the minutest sound waves at a distance of 40 feet in order that the recording apparatus would be outside the field of the lens. This was accomplished by Mr. Edison after years of patient research. The apparatus was connected to a motion-picture camera by a synchronizing device, which in itself is a marvel of mechanical ingenuity too complicated to describe.

In brief, the complete apparatus consists of the usual motion-picture machine placed in the rear of the exhibition room and a specially constructed and powerful Edison phonograph situated behind the screen upon which the pictures are projected. The phonograph, however, is run by motor and is operated by the man in the film booth. The film machine and phonograph are connected by the synchronizing device, thus keeping both machines in perfect harmony and making it absolutely impossible for one to be operated faster than the other.

In fact, so perfect is this timing, those in the audience can actually see the words forming on the lips of the actors in the film.

Word and Action Recorded.

In making the talking picture, the actor performs exactly as he does on the dramatic stage and his every word and every action are simultaneously recorded. The action is taken in the usual method of 16 pictures per second on negative films, from which the finished positive films are printed. The sound is taken on a large cylinder of soft wax, from which the records for commercial use are moulded of indestructible material.

To what vast purpose the Kinetophone may attain can hardly be realized at present. Through its agency the political orator will soon be able to speak to untold thousands while remaining at his own fireside. It will be possible to see and hear the world's greatest statesmen, actors and musicians in the smallest and most out-of-the-way hamlets in the country. The historic value of Kinetophone productions in future years will be impossible to estimate. In fact there seems to be no end to the possibilities of this invention.

In a big demonstration of the machine held recently in the inventor's laboratory at West Orange, N. J., before a specially invited audience, a lecturer walked upon the stage and proceeded to describe the Kinetophone in such a realistic manner that "the audience forgot," say the account, "it was witnessing a mechanical production." Further details of the exhibition says the lecturer then proceeds to prove his claim of perfect synchronism by various tests. First he drops a china plate on the floor, and not only the initial crash is seen and heard, but also that of the small particles. Horns and whistles are blown and the sound is reproduced perfectly. Then follow piano, vocal and violin solos, and in all of them there is not a single jarring mechanical note heard. As the fingers of the pianist wander over the keys the tones of every note are reproduced. A bugler then appears, and he is followed by two collie dogs which bark with all the realism of nature.

Shakespearian Plays Produced.

The next film was the miser scene from "Chimes of Normandy," a combination of opera and action which was faithfully reproduced and perfectly staged. Every sound, whether from the lips of the actors on the stage in full view of the eye, or from the mob in the street, was recorded with perfect synchronism.

Another picture shown was the quarrel scene from "Julius Caesar." Brutus is seen seated in his tent when Cassius appears. The ensuing quarrel is so thrilling that any lover of Shakespeare will find himself holding on to his seat, entirely oblivious of the fact that only a man-made machine is portraying the fierce anger of the Roman officers.

Then follows a bit of grand opera, the "Miserere" from "Il Trovatore," which is succeeded by other films portraying hilarious comedy and more serious drama.

In all these films the audience is impressed, not only by the perfect synchronism, but the remarkable illusion. When the actors are up-stage and walk down-stage their voices increase in volume in proportion to their photographed figures, and appear to issue from the right or left of the stage, as the actors are situated.

It can readily be understood that the immense popularity of moving pictures will be greatly enhanced by this new invention. The difficulty of procuring scenarios that can be portrayed in pantomime greatly limits their scope. The talking picture permits of a wider range of subjects and action than either the pantomime picture or the dramatic stage.

It is stated that these new machines will be installed in several New York moving picture theaters within the next month and that within 60 days they will be available for commercial use throughout the country. Although considerable expense is attached to the making of the Kinetophone, it is stated that the cost of these new machines will by no means be prohibitive.

Portland theatrical men discussed Edison's prediction as follows:

"WHAT do I think of this new invention of Mr. Edison's?" echoed George L. Baker, manager of the Baker Theater. "And what do I think of its taking the place of the legitimate? Uh! huh! To answer the first question, I am a great admirer of that wonderful inventor. From his great mind he has given to the world a number of inventions which we could not possibly do without at this day and age; at least we would not want to. But that is a big subject, and is not in answer to the relation of the motion picture coupled with the talking appliances to the legitimate drama played by live people.

Success Is Doubted.

"Mr. Edison no doubt feels that he has solved a great problem, but, like the fond parent, I think he is claiming for it more than the child really is capable of. I have witnessed a great number of motion pictures, the greatest of which I think were those taken in the Far North and in the jungles of Africa; others of the domestic drama with subjects ranging from blood-curdling melodramas to the light and airy comedies; and they are wonderful, they are interesting, they are instructive, and furnish millions of people with entertainment. They have affected our business—meaning the legitimate—and many a theater that was a losing proposition has been turned into a movey theater and netted good revenue for its lessee. I say lessee, because very few theater managers ever get money enough to own a theater. But I am free to predict neither that Mr. Edison nor any other great man will ever perfect a mechanical combination of a picture and a voice that will take the place of the living actor. My reasons for making this statement are that we see, during the course of every year, many actors. We are impressed by some and disgusted by others. The living actor, if he is a success, is blessed with personality, with a voice of tone qualities that no disc of a phonograph or the film of any picture can reproduce. Actors of the drama are like actors in real life. You meet people who make no impression at all, while, on the other hand, you meet an occasional one who draws you to him by his personal magnetism, and you feel well satisfied that you had the privilege to be in his company. As an illustration: Every great actor that you have seen in your life you remember for the reason that he has a personality, a personal charm that you cannot forget. Also, I ask you to think and try to remember some moving picture that you have seen, except some special animal life, that made an unusual impression upon your mind.

"Most every moving picture theater, particularly in the United States (because I am not familiar with those in Europe), add to their evening's entertainment from two to five vaudeville numbers, and the same will be true of Mr. Edison's invention. He will no doubt hurt the strictly moving picture show, and at first his child will draw strongly upon its own merits, but then there will be added to the programme in which the pictures are shown additional vaudeville numbers.

Baker Will Add Feature.

"Live vaudeville, legitimate drama, bright and tuneful operas, light and farcical comedies will always have their patrons. And with the utmost respect, and with apology to moving picture managers, and more especially to Mr. Edison, I will install one of his great inventions as an added feature to the Baker players, but it will always be an added feature, I am sure."

IT DOES not seem probable that large productions on the legitimate stage will suffer on account of Edison's kinetophone," said H. W. Pierong, manager of the Empress Theater. "Small road companies may dwindle after appearance of the innovation, but past and present performances in the history of moving pictures are indicative of a never-ending clamor of theatergoers to see real, live folk after they have seen reels of films. A sort of kinetophone already has been shown in vaudeville and it was a success principally because the voices of actual persons accompanied the movement of the pictures. The act was a moving-picture minstrel show in which five men did all the talking and singing off stage. The interlocutor said 'Gentlemen, be seated' and the entire picture troupe obeyed. That same unison of voice and movement was carried out from first to last in the performance, but actually was the saving feature of the novel turn. The kinetophone, even with phonograph voices, may replace the smaller dramatic companies, but, even at that, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and other town hall classics are almost certain to be safe from encroachment by Edison's kinetophone.

Actors in Person Favored.

"Right here in Portland recently we had an example of the virtue of moving pictures as compared with the actual appearance of a star of the 'movies.' When Barney Gilmore was an entertainer at the Empress, moving pictures of him were on exhibition on both sides of the river. Thousands visited the Empress that week to see Gilmore as he is. In my opinion that's the way it always will be. If you can't go to Oberammergau moving pictures of the celebrated Passion Play will satisfy you, but if the opportunity is there you will exert every effort to see not only the reel picture but the real production."

QUESTIONED as to his opinion of the effect Edison's kinetophone is likely to have on vaudeville and the legitimate stage Frank Coffinberry, manager of the Orpheum, said:

"Edison is a great man and considerable weight must be given his assertion that his invention will sound the knell of costly productions on the legitimate stage. The effect the kinetophone will have on the drama depends, of course, on the degree of perfection reached by the invention. The biggest successes on the legitimate stage have been due to magnificent scenic and lighting effects and to the personal magnetism of the stars presented. A mechanical instrument may be devised to picture scenes and lights as arranged on a real stage, but it is dubitable whether a voice record or a film ever will be a satisfying substitute for personality. Moving pictures now aid the legitimate stage and vaudeville, theatergoers being anxious to see in the flesh the artists featured by the 'movies.' No better example of this is shown than the tour of Mme. Bernhardt, who is drawing greater crowds than ever before in her career. Showmen believe moving pictures of the renowned actress have impressed the public with the remarkable powers of the wonderful woman and have implanted a general desire to see her real self.

Demand for Stars Seen.

"It goes without saying that the kinetophone will be featured in first-class vaudeville if it measures up to the standard announced by Edison, but I believe the vaudeville public will still crave for actual sight of the stars and that pictures, no matter how realistic, will not fill the bill.

"Edison's assertion that the kinetophone numbers the days of barnstorming companies cannot be questioned. It seems logical from every standpoint that the kinetophone will be the principal one-night-stand entertainment in country and near-city districts."

"EDISON'S foresight may come true," said Frank McGettigan, press agent for the Sullivan & Considine theaters, "but it is hard to believe that the noted genius has found a substitute for flesh and blood. Edison's own plan seems to preclude the possibility of his kinetophone squelching the legitimate stage. The demand for actors and actresses will increase for the production of picture dramas, and actual experience on an actual stage before actual audiences will be required before actors and actresses are fitted to give artistic portrayals in front of the camera. For pantomime only dramatic-school experience has sufficed in the making of moving-picture films, but now that Edison's kinetophone has made the pictures talk, only those who have had experience on the legitimate stage will find place in the cast of a picture company. That being the case, it would seem that Edison's kinetophone will strengthen the legitimate stage instead of undermining it."

"FOR generations to come, the kinetophone will mean much as a preservative of the human voice and the methods of noted persons and actors," said Manager John A. Johnson, of Pantages, "but as for 'canned' entertainment superseding the person or player, is not possible. For instance, show a small boy a picture of an orange with a drop of orange flavoring to add realism, and notice how quickly he'll drop it for a luscious citrus.

Perfect Reproduction Doubted.

"The oldest and the wisest of us are no more nor less than boys grown up, to use a homely simile, and I am certain that the public will never be satisfied with any but the real thing, unless the real thing is unattainable.

"The lure and the magnetism of the voice and personality of a Bernhardt or a Pauline can never be reproduced by mechanical means. Do you know that half the success enjoyed by theaters is because the public likes to see and be able to say 'I saw So-and-So.'

"Edison's invention is wonderful. I do not want to decry its merit, and it may rout the smaller road companies; it may serve to produce noted plays and show noted persons in small towns where these could not be seen, owing to the expense and the impossibility of staging big acts, but it will never take the place of vaudeville, which is fast becoming the main amusement diet throughout the world. The American people, particularly, do not like to watch one thing overlong, nor stay in one place longer than necessary, and that is the big reason why vaudeville will, in time, force the legitimate productions to the wall, and why the kinetophone can never take its place."

"THOMAS EDISON," said Melvin G. Winstock, general manager of the People's Amusement Company, yesterday, "has not been here lately or he would know that motion pictures are not a thing of the future but of the immediate present. They have arrived and are here to stay for all time to come, and are not only here to stay for all time to come, but are having the widest, deepest influence upon the lives and pleasures of the people. The motion-picture theater today, properly conducted, is the university of the masses. Let him deny it who may. If Edison had seen between 65,000 and 75,000 people sit for two full hours at a time at one theater, in one week, to see a classic tragedy he would know that the people are ready and willing today to accept the good, big things dramatically in motion pictures just as they are even without this marvelous alleged invention of his. About a year ago Mr. Edison said that in six months' time he would have perfected the synchronization so that the action of the body and gesture of the limbs would be in perfect uniformity and harmony with the inflections of the voice. This is not a new thing. Four or five years ago we tried the old Gaumont singing and talking pictures. As a novelty of the passing moment they drew some public attention, but the pictures were bad, the phonography rasping. The rusty sound was offensive to the ear and died from public view as it should have done.

Similar Ventures Fail.

The Camerophone people wasted $3,000,000 in attempting to foist a very poor imitation of the Gaumont singing and talking pictures. Dr. Kitsie, of Philadelphia, a noted inventor, is at this very hour trying to sell stock in a $6,000,000 corporation on an idea of the same kind. The best that can be done with the singing and talking picture is to give us a picture accompanied by a sound very much like a phonograph speech or song, and the public can readily see how long a thing of this kind would remain in public favor. Just imagine an audience of several thousand people gathered together in a comfortable theater to see six reels of "Cleopatra" and to hear six or eight squeaky, rasping voices continually beating on the drum of the ear in an attempt to spout the classic language of Sardou. As a matter of fact the classic drama of the motion picture is today accepted by the most intelligent people of the earth and the addition of voice, either spoken or reproduced, is absolutely sacrilegious and superfluous. I do not like this idea of Mr. Edison's boasting that through an invention of his he is going to put my friends Heilig, Baker, Pantages, Sullivan & Considine and the dear old Keating & Flood absolutely out of business. There is nothing in this. I never favor threats of that kind. All that I believe in is that a man should do the best possible for the cause or institution that he represents and let the consequences be what they may. I am a firm believer in the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, and if motion-pictures are fittest to survive in the broad domain of public amusements there is no question that they will survive whether Mr. Edison threatens putting everybody out of business or not."

"Getting down to the real question," continued Mr. Winstock, "the public today and for the last year through such institutions as the Peoples, has been educated up to an appreciation of the highest, the best and the most educational things in pictures, and there has not been in that length of time a single recorded film of any big literary or classic production made either by the Independents fighting so valiantly for an open market in this business, or by the so-called trust that has not been conspicuously successful.

Late Productions Successful.

"Let me recall to the public a few things in proof of this assertion. 'The Passion Play,' three reels; Sarah Bernhardt in 'La Tosca,' three reels; Blanche Walsh in 'Resurrection,' in four reels; Nat Goodwin, in 'Oliver Twist,' in five reels; Dante's 'Inferno,' in five reels; 'The Star of Bethlehem,' in three reels, and lastly the biggest thing yet undertaken, Helen Gardner in 'Cleopatra,' in six reels, and at this very time I am negotiating with a Parisian firm for an 11-reel production of Victor Hugo's 'Les Miserables.' If I get the latter I will have to run six reels the first week and five reels the second week, on the idea of the Chinese method of presentation, it being well known that sometimes one play in a Chinese theater will run for 1000 nights. Every one of these brilliant attractions has been presented by our company and without a single exception the public has absolutely broken the doors of the theater down in an effort to crowd into the theater at continuous performances to see these great classic big things."

AN emphatic "No," to the question as to whether the invention would result in the abolishment of all other classes of shows, was the answer given by L. C. Keating, of the Lyric Theater.

"I think it will be impossible to accompany some of the best subjects with talk, that is, the large out-door subjects," said Mr. Keating. "No doubt they will be able to produce some dramas and operas with a certain degree of success, but supposing, just as the villain is about to say "Curses on you, Jack Dalton," something goes wrong with the phonograph record; would not that queer the whole show? The moving talking picture is nothing more than a moving picture machine with a phonograph attachment. Several years ago there was much controversy over moving pictures that talk. I experimented with the problem for some time, and finally attached a small dynamo to a moving picture camera and a phonograph having an attachment for recording sound. On starting the dynamo the camera and the phonograph operated at the same time.

Improvement Is Seen.

"Well, all I had to do was to play the record and run the film with the dynamo at the same speed that they were taken. The result was a moving picture that would talk. I went to a prominent patent attorney in Oakland, Cal., where I was living at that time, and explained my idea. He looked the matter up and found, of course, both the moving-picture machine and phonograph were patented. There were a number of contrivances in the patent office that added conversation to moving pictures.

"About a year later many machines came on the market under different names. Mr. Edison is not the inventor of the moving-talking picture any more than he invented the phonograph part. Neither is Mr. Edison the inventor of the motion picture, nor moving-picture machine, that honor belonging to a Frenchman.

"No doubt, Mr. Edison's invention will be a great improvement over the machines of this kind used in the past, although his moving-picture machine has made less progress and fewer changes in the last decade than any other on the market.

"I believe there will always be picture shows and that they will always do business, but we have few real picture shows that depend entirely on pictures for an attraction, a majority of the moving-picture theaters in the West running vaudeville acts. They should be rightly termed vaudeville theaters, which they really are, pure and simple.

"If a good opera company comes to town it will be well patronized just the same; a good dramatic show will always draw, a good musical comedy will play to good business, and vaudeville bills will never lack patronage. The moving picture business has made greater strides during the past few years than other classes of entertainment. Nevertheless there will always be people who want to see real live actors instead of shadows, and hear the tones of a human voice instead of 'canned talk.'"

APPEAL MADE TO YOUNG IN BEHALF OF BIRD LIFE

John Burroughs and Ernest Thompson Seton Unite in Asking Concerted Action to Aid Bills Now Before Congress.

NEW YORK, Jan. 25.—(Special.)—John Burroughs and Ernest Thompson Seton, the world's most widely-known naturalists, today issued the following joint appeal to the school children of America:

"An urgent appeal we make to you in behalf of our native birds, many species of which are in danger of extermination. To you is now given the opportunity to render substantial help toward their preservation. A measure is now before Congress, the purpose of which is to place all migratory birds under the protection of the Federal Government. Such a law is greatly needed. If it is not passed our birds will continue to decrease—to the great and everlasting disadvantage and shame of the American people. The destruction of bird life is costing the American farmers millions of dollars annually through the constantly increasing devastations of harmful insects upon which the birds feed. But a greater loss their slaughter is bringing to all who love God's great out-of-doors.

"The measure now before Congress is non-partisan and non-political. It should have the hearty indorsement of all patriotic and nature-loving Americans. But it is in danger of being lost in the great mass of less important legislation now pending in Congress.

"We, therefore, appeal to the school children of America to help in this vitally important matter. We ask you to get your parents, teachers and friends to write or telegraph to the Representative in Congress of your district and the two Senators of your state, now in Washington, urging immediate action upon the pending bird protection bill—that they may understand how deep is the interest in it and how great is the need for it. If you will today get two or three such messages written and sent (they need not be long messages—a simple signed request will do) you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have rendered substantial help in this great and good cause. Why not make this your task for today—and tomorrow? Your teacher or your newspaper will give you the names of your Senators and Representative. The messages should be sent at once.

"And this appeal is big enough and important enough to extend to all the grown-up children who are out in the greater school of life—men and women, who would help conserve one of the country's most valuable and interesting resources. To such we appeal for immediate co-operation. A message—to Washington—sent today—from you—will help to save our birds from destruction. Surely you'll send it."

SHIPYARD SETS RECORD

Clyde Engineers Turn Out 381 Vessels With Tonnage of 642,214.

LONDON, Jan. 25.—(Special.)—Clyde shipbuilders and engineers had a record year in 1912. The tonnage of the 381 vessels launched totalled 642,214, an increase of 11,600 tons on the figure of the previous year, and showing a world's record for a single river. The output included many vessels for the British Navy. Marine engineering also easily established a record in indicated horse power, the total being 877,125, an increase of 78,000.

The tonnage of vessels launched represents more than Germany's complete output last year, and twice that of the United States. The prospects for the Clyde during the current year are extremely good. Every berth is occupied, and, barring labor disputes, another record should be established.

"I am an old man—and many of my troubles never happened."—ELBERT HUBBARD

THE white hair and wrinkled faces of our busy men and women tell of doubt, fear and anxiety—more than disease or age. Worry plays havoc with the nervous system—so that digestion is ruined and sleep banished. What oil is to the friction of the delicate parts of an engine—

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Golden Medical Discovery

is to the delicate organs of the body. It's a tonic and body builder—because it stimulates the liver to vigorous action, assists the stomach to assimilate food—thus enriching the blood, and the nerves and heart in turn are fed on pure rich blood. Neuralgia "is the cry of starved nerves for food." For forty years "Golden Medical Discovery" in liquid form has given great satisfaction as a tonic and blood maker.

Now it can be obtained in tablet form—from dealers in medicine or send 50 one-cent stamps for trial box. Write R. V. Pierce, Buffalo.

DR. PIERCE'S PLEASANT PELLETS Relieve constipation, regulate the liver, and bowels. Easy to take as candy.