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GREATEST OF MOVIES HERE WELL RECEIVED

Something happened in Pomona last night and will happen again to-night, that never happened here before and will probably never happen here again. It was the presentation at the Belvedere theater of a stupendous moving picture drama, for the first time before any audience. It was really a try-out of the biggest thing in moving pictures the world has ever known. A critical audience was gathered together to see the wonderful new movie drama, and to express its ideas of the value of the play before an average American audience.

Here was a drama that the great David Griffith has been at work producing in the vicinity of Los Angeles for many months. He has it now so far along that he and his associates want to see how it is going to be regarded by the average audience. The play will not be ready for the public for weeks to come.

There is to be a re-arrangement of the thousands of scenes, a lot of work in cutting out of unnecessary scenes, and the music is to be yet made appropriate to the scenes—the reaching of climaxes in proper shape and fitting of music to the character of the scene.

Mr. Griffith has many a long day of hard work yet to do on his immense drama before it is ready for the public.

Mr. Griffith says that even the name of his drama is yet to be selected. It has been called "The Downfall of the Nations," but that is only a temporary name for use while the production is being made. The first scenes were performed last October and the work has been going on from that time to this. The idea came from Mr. Griffith himself. He has put more labor in it than he did in the Clansman, which is still one of the three greatest motion picture productions. The cost of the new drama has been several hundred thousand dollars. It is so enormous it involves thousands of men and women. It must have cost an big fortune in costumes alone. An army of carpenters must have been employed by Mr. Griffith in creating stage properties for the wealth of scenes. In a word it is stupendous.

FAMOUS IN MOVING PICTURE DRAMA

Last night Mr. Griffith brought out with him from Hollywood the chief performers in his dramas to see the initial performance of his biggest production.

He was accompanied by his chief directors, his best scenic artists and a dozen of his most famous actors. There were Miss May Marsh, who was the leading lady in the Clansman, besides her mother, her sister, Miss Tinscher, Miss Fanning, and the thirty men who directed scenes in the new play. There were also numerous critics whose counsel Mr. Griffith has sought in the production of his plays in the past.

THE DRAMA ITSELF

"The Downfall of the Nations," is portrayal of the intolerance of the ages. It is an immense theme. It demands the highest round of artist skill to prepare a play that will do the subject properly. It is so big a theme that many a moving picture director is staggered at the idea of putting it in moving picture form.

The Intolerance of the Babylonians is taken as the type of pre-Christian era intolerance. The time was the reign of Belshazzar and the conquest of the Persian, Cyrus. The intolerance of the people who listen to the soothsayers and the army of reformers is shown in a vast number of wonderful scenes in the city of Babylon, in the days of the coming and taking of Babylon by the Persian hosts. The scenes on Belshazzar's court, in the public places and in the camps of the Babylonian king are simply marvelous. But the scenes in the manner of the conquest of Babylon, and the manner of defense by Belshazzar and his armed forces are the most remarkable in immensity and action ever put on any screen. There are thousands of the scenes. It must have taken some ten thousand actors to portray these scenes.

The intolerance of the Pharases and the Sadducees in the days of the Saviour are portrayed. There again are some wonderful scenes. The dramatic quality is clear and sympathetic.

The intolerance of the days following the Reformation in Europe are shown by scenes in the time of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in Paris in 1572. These scenes alone are a great drama in themselves. Oh, the time and talent and money that must have been spent in preparing that part of the play.

Modern day intolerance is shown by scenes in a factory town, in the tenement districts of the big cities of today. The lives of the underworld and the unhumanity of the modern would-be reformers are told in powerfully dramatic scenes, in which some really wonderful acting is done. The audience sat in amazed silence during the performance of these parts.

It is all a wonderful enormous and very costly work of moving picture art. It is undoubtedly the biggest of all motion picture plays. But in our humble opinion it will not be the success that the Clansman or Ciberia have been, for the reason that the human interest is lacking in the "Downfall of the Nations." The public will look calmly on the marvelous scenes of warfare in ancient Babylon, and will gasp at the horrible scenes of slaying in the days of St. Bartholomew in Paris, but they will not see

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element of heartfelt interest in them.

Even the scenes in which the Meek and Lowly Nazarine appears in the days of the Crucifixion, are not fetching as they ought to be.

The only human interest in the drama is in the scenes where the poor, little mother shows her devotion to her baby and her persecuted husband. The audience gave a quick response to that bit of humanity. "One touch of nature makes the whole world akin."

Another thing, the play is too much hurried. It has not one moment of repose, from start to finish. It is a continuous round of quicksteps. Everybody is on the qui vive. The armies are always in a rush; the massacring Parisians are on the jump all the time, and the way the poor people in the tenements run up and down stairs and fight and make love, is so rapid that the man in the audience longs to see some one take rest once in a while.

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