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was in *Candida*. Shaw may well be justified in his little joke (the last unspoken line of the script is "But they do not know the secret in the poet's heart"—a reference to the last spoken line, in which Marchbanks boasts of an unnamed secret better than that which *Candida* has just revealed to him), but I feel that he is unjustified in writing a play a major effect of which is to project a riddle. When Katherine Cornell put on the play in New York again last week, I saw it for the first time, after having read it a couple of times during the past ten years. After seeing it, I felt when I read it: there is something screwy about it ideologically. That is to say, it seems to me to be a collection of provocative ideas and situations which cannot fail to carry the audience along at a high pitch of interest, but while the ideas expressed at various stages are penetrating and relevant to important human issues, the behavior of the characters shows inconsistency, and the ideas the playwright airs show a similar anarchy. I cannot get away from the notion that Shaw had no basic idea in this play, and simply put his characters into situation after situation, and let them say one thing after another, without any special method in his madness except to make a play which would be interesting and, in terms of the time of its writing, daring. *Candida* certainly "plays," even escaping offensiveness in the rather callow and obvious comic relief of papa-in-law Burgess, and the situations and the characters' reactions in them are pretty genuinely human. What seems inhuman is that these characters should be together under these circumstances, and that all the things any one of the characters does could have been done, however human, by that same character. The company does a great deal to clothe these people with reality, but for me, at any rate, it doesn't quite come off. I must continue to feel that Shaw wrote an exercise in provocative ideas disguised as a comedy of manners, and found to his delight that he had also written a first-class piece of critical leg-pulling. Robert (*Aged 26*) Harris's Marchbanks seemed a little too feverish to carry the force that the script requires, and Miss Cornell's *Candida* seemed so generous and poised that it was impossible to understand or to forgive her nasty condescension toward Marchbanks and her husband. But that, it seems to me, is Shaw's fault, not Miss Cornell's.

Everybody jumped with both feet on a little comedy called *Cross-Town*, so here goes for a good word for it. I got a few solid laughs from this piece of nonsense about a mugg turned author via the plagiarist route—laughs which were not, as I recall it, detonated by gaglines, but by something essentially humorous about the characters' reactions to situations, and by the accurate turn of the common speech put into their mouths. The play was rough and creaked in the joints, but Playwright Joseph Kesserling seems to me to have a keen ear for the garden variety of New York language, and for heading his characters into situations which are not merely incongruous, but funny in several ways at once. And his

statement of the character of the upper-class dame who tried to make the mugg into a gigolo seemed to me keen and largely unsentimental. He should stick to his guns, and, like his character, turn his hand to writing not about artificial notions, but about the real things that go on in the lives of the people he apparently knows pretty well. The cast of the play was composed of a number of people comparatively unknown, with the exception of Joseph Downing. Fraye Gilbert, Mary McCormack, and Jack Irwin are among those who did excellent work with their material.

ALEXANDER TAYLOR.

THE SCREEN

MANY stage versions and certainly the silent film version of *The Golem* have been in essence anti-Semitic. It is with a great deal of pleasure that I can announce that the current French-language version of *The Golem* (produced by A. B. Film in Prague) is definitely not anti-Semitic. As a matter of fact, it definitely draws parallels with the current persecutions of the Jewish people in Germany and other fascist countries. And as such it can be called anti-fascist. Furthermore, insofar as the slogan of the film is "Revolt is the right of the slave," this current version of the cabalistic legend of medieval Prague can be considered as "class-angled."

This is all very surprising, since director Julien Duvivier (of *Poil de Carotte* fame) has made a violently reactionary film (*Maria Chapdelain*) and a definitely anti-Semitic version of the crucifixion (*Golgotha*) before this.

The film carries the usual legend beyond the time of the good Rabbi Loew who created the Golem, a monster in human form, to a later period in the reign of the mad emperor, Rudolf, played by Harry Baur. It is a period of royal intrigue and debauchery. The Jews in their ghetto are incredibly persecuted and exploited. This goes on until the people can stand no additional terror, and they awaken the Golem by the slogan, "Revolt is the right of the slave." The court is destroyed and Rudolf is compelled to abdicate his throne to a more liberal and enlightened monarch.

Duvivier has given the production magnificent settings, and has handled his excellent cast with a great deal of skill. Harry Baur gives a sharp and sympathetic portrayal of the mad Rudolf, and Charles Dorat plays Rabbi Jacob with restraint and sensitivity. Duvivier is not always clear in his scenario and direction. But his handling of the cabalistic ritual, the scenes in the synagogue, and the mass sequences come up to his best things in *Poil de Carotte*.

It seems as though Joe E. Brown's switch from the house of Warner to R.K.O. hasn't improved his lot. *When's Your Birthday?* (R.K.O.-Radio) is his usual lame-duck comedy with a few good laughs. Some day, perhaps, a good comedian will get a decent role. *Sea Devils* (R.K.O.-Radio) is a conventional sez-you melodrama with the Coast Guard and Victor McLaglen and Preston Foster as the

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collective heroes. *Ready, Willing, and Able* is the stock-in-trade Warner musical comedy with Ruby Keeler doing her routine. *Silent Barriers* is another in the Gaumont-British imperialist-chauvinistic empire builders series. Instead of conquering South Africa, this time the glorious British imperialist conquers the Rocky Mountains in the form of the building of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Photographed (in a very dull way) against the magnificent Rockies, this film is a pretentious "western" which suffers from stupid writing, bad direction, and anti-labor sentiments (in spite of the written dedication to the "rank and file").

As a result of the printer's error, I gave the impression last week that *Wings of the Morning* is "the first feature film of the Spanish civil war." Actually the film is about Ireland, but it does use the civil war in Spain in one of its early sequences . . . and, regretably, in a pro-fascist way. I mention it only to point out that this is a foretaste of what London and Hollywood will try to tell us about Spain.

Another effort is being made in New York—this time at the Belmont Theatre—to palm off the Nazi-made *Amphitryon* as a French film. It was made by the recently "coördinated" U.F.A. studios and is merely distributed by a French agency as a blind. The management of the Belmont says it isn't afraid of picket lines. Well . . .

PETER ELLIS.

THE DANCE

TRAINED in the German schools of dancing, Fe Alf presents a well-disciplined body, an excellent technical equipment, and a decided leaning towards the theater. Moreover, she has rid herself of much of the sentimentalism, the romantic gesture, and the unhappy quality of defeatism that was apparent in her first New York concert in 1935.

She has had difficulty, however, moving beyond this negative stage of development. Principally, her work has followed one of two directions, both self-conscious and neither very satisfactory. For one, she has attempted to draft on work already done a new concept. The *City* cycle, for example, originally closed on the depressed note of the acceptance of "Degradation." It is now concluded with the gesture of the clenched fist. But the compositant climax is false to the body of the work; nor do the two new phrases, "Presage to Conflict" and "Triadic Progression" (the names of which indicate the dancer's shift in approach to her dance—"Perpetual Drive," "Slavery," and "Degradation" constituted the original cycle) serve to point the sympathies of the dancer, but, rather, to stress the inadequacy of her method.

The second of the two directions is even less fortunate. *Summer Witchery*, *City Stimulant*, *Duet for Clarinet and Dancer*, and *Sola* are rather slight, at best in the nature of theatrical *divertissement*, and decidedly in the manner of retreat. It isn't general that

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