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THE LIFE
AND WORK OF
rex ingram

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THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

THE LIFE AND WORK OF REX INGRAM

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by

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

My attention was first brought to Rex Ingram and his work about five years ago, on reading a magazine article on the subject by Mr. Liam O'Leary, a film archivist and author. I was fascinated that an Irishman should have made his name as one of the finest, early directors of motion pictures in the world. In having this opportunity to research a subject in which I had a great interest, I decided that Ingram's life and work was the one.

While searching for information, I have been in contact with organisations in America and Europe, but, found the most co-operation and help here in Ireland. This assistance which was invaluable to me came from Mr. O'Leary himself, who could not have been more helpful or shown more interest.

In writing my thesis I have tried to give some idea of Ingram's overall contribution to the Arts. His work in the Fine Art field and in the Cinema shows how Ingram's hard work and determination was rewarded. I have outlined in the following chapters Ingram's early life in Ireland with his family, his studies at the Yale School of Fine Arts, his subsequent career in America and Europe's film industry and his activities in retirement.

On writing this piece of work I have become increasingly interested in the cinema and particularly Ireland's contribution to it. Unfortunately this is an area which has been sadly neglected by the Irish themselves, but with the film industry's recent revitalisation in Ireland let us hope that the Irish will take a greater interest in this aspect of Ireland's culture.

CHAPTER ONE

REGINALD INGRAM MONTGOMERY HITCHCOCK'S LIFE IN IRELAND

Family Background & Life

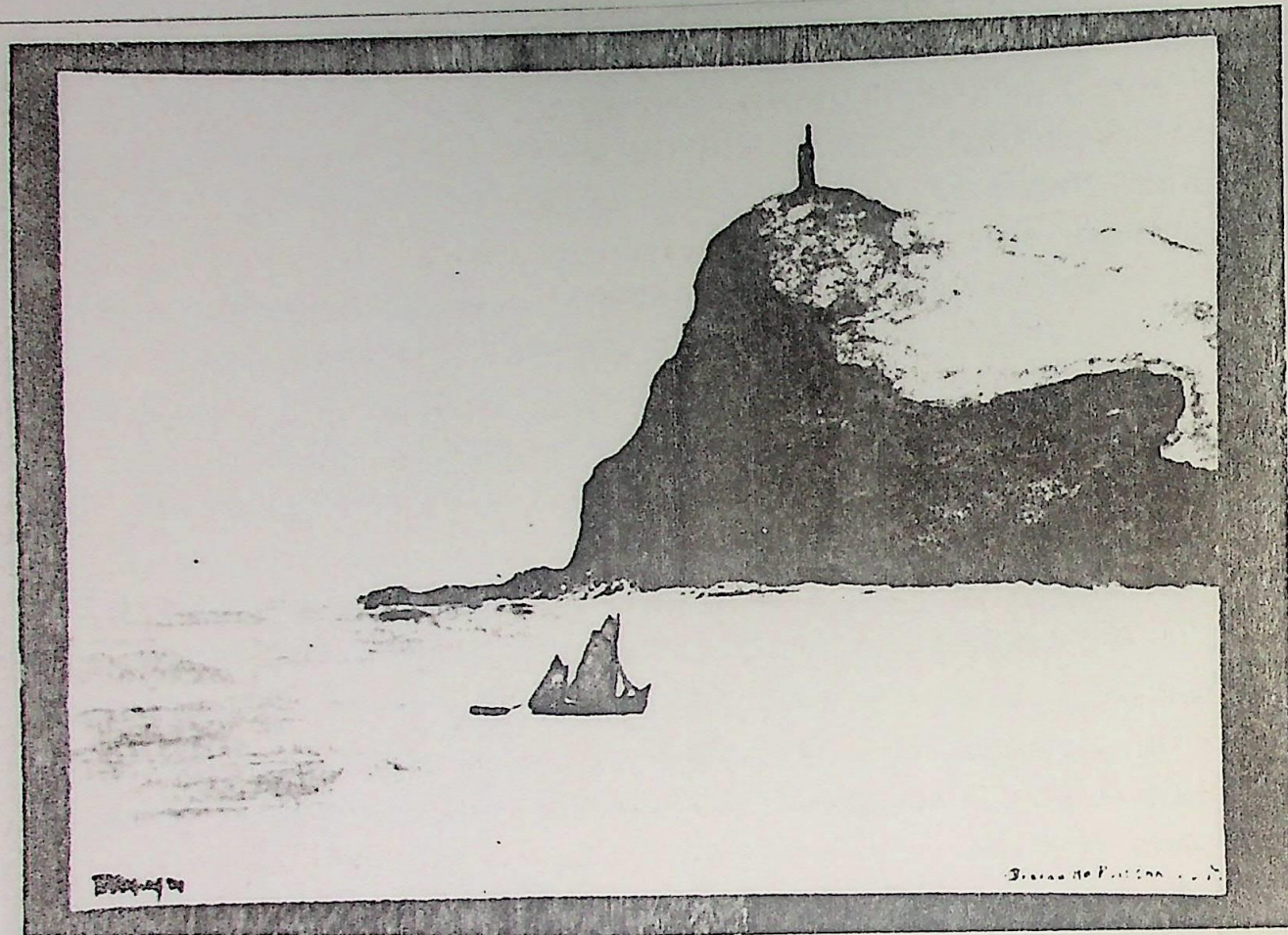
Rex Ingram was born in Dublin on January 18th 1893 at 58 Grosvenor Square. His real name was Reginald Ingram Montgomery Hitchcock. His parents were Kathleen Ingram, who was the daughter of the Dublin Fire Brigade Chief and the Reverend Francis Ryan Montgomery Hitchcock who was a Divinity student at Trinity College and a classical scholar. Rex's father subsequently became a Church of Ireland clergyman. In 1894 there was another son born to the Hitchcock family, called Francis Clere Hitchcock. The family belonged to the Protestant professional class.

Rex's family moved to the country and settled in Borrisokane, Co. Tipperary. He revelled in his new lifestyle. His father, apart from his academic interests was an athletic person and encouraged his sons in these pursuits, particularly boxing. While in Borrisokane the boys had many opportunities to sample the outdoor life and regularly went horseriding.

In 1903 the family finally moved to Kinnitty in Co. Offaly. Rex's father became Rector there, continuing to study and write. He was the author of about fifteen books on history and religious subjects.

During this period in Kinnitty Rex was constantly drawing and his mother, who had always loved art in visual and musical forms encouraged her son in these activities.

His main output at this stage was of caricature drawings of his village friends. He spent a lot of time out of doors with his spaniel and enjoyed the countryside. Rex's visual sense was in its early stages of development at this time, it would prove in later years to be one of his greatest assets both in the Fine Art and Cinema fields.



1 Bradda Head by Rex Ingram

Considering Rex's future involvement in entertainment one must consider the past. His family had no history of theatricals but they improvised their own entertainment at home. Could this have influenced his future

Schooldays at St. Columba's College

It was decided that in 1905 Rex should return to Dublin to St. Columba's College, Rathfarnham, where he would be educated.

At school, records recall that Rex was not particularly academically minded. He appears to have been somewhat of a loner and not very popular with most of his schoolmates or teachers. He was a sensitive boy who did not like being dominated, his father's tuition in boxing helped him to hold his own at school. Rex made his mark on the playing fields, excelling at cricket as a fast bowler and in athletics.

Apart from achievements in the Art field in which he was encouraged by the college's substitute headmaster, he also won the Knox Essay Prize for English, a skill he was later to use in writing screenplays throughout his film career, and as an author in his retirement.

While at St. Columba's Rex befriended Osborne Burke, a new boy who was being victimised by others. He helped him to survive school life with some boxing tips and they became firm friends. Rex visited the Burke family and enjoyed the company of Cherrie Burke, Osborne's sister with whom he maintained a friendship, writing to and sending her some of his cartoons.

During Rex's time at school he suffered the shock of his mother's death under surgery. His mother, who had so greatly influenced and encouraged him was gone. Rex left St. Columba's in 1909, his future lay ahead of him. Should he carry on in his father's footsteps and enter Trinity or, should he follow his own taste for adventure and the exotic inspired by a visit to the Cork International Exhibition? This exhibition included many exhibits to catch the boy's imagination, including contributions from different parts of the world, one of which was "A Street in Cairo", the type of location Ingram was to include in some of his future film work.



2. Grafton Street. Shopping. by Rex Ingram

In 1909 accompanied by his father Rex took a trip to the Isle of Man, where he sketched and painted. One of these works is a water-colour of Bradda Head, Port Erin. It shows a large sailboat towing a small rowing boat, past the headland. Rex was sixteen years old when he painted this small picture, and it is signed R. M. Hitchcock. When he returned home he studied under his father to apply for Trinity, but, he still had dreams of travelling. Rex continued to do his caricatures of people. He went to the Baldoyle races where he studied the fashionable racegoers. He also enjoyed walking down Grafton Street, observing the passers by. One of his sketches from 1910 shows a well dressed, monacled gentleman carrying some small packages and smoking a cigarette. The drawing is done in ink and wash. The line is rather sketchy and there is some use of hatching as shading. Notes on the drawing tell that it was done in Grafton Street at 11.45 a.m. and it is titled Shopping. The drawing shows Rex's eye for expression which proved a great asset in later life. It was at this time Rex wished to make more of his artistic potential and was interested in advertising. He went as far as to contact a company which supplied postal tuition in Art. He also brought work to the Combridge Galleries in Grafton Street, but they were not interested. He left the premises in a temper saying that some day they would pay as much for his autograph!

CHAPTER TWO

HITCHCOCK'S EARLY LIFE IN AMERICA

Emigration

Rex had seriously considered emigrating to South America, but a friend of his family, Gordon Burt Hitchcock (no relation to the Hitchcock family) who lived in America, said that he could fix Rex up with employment if he came to New York instead. On July 3rd Rex landed in New York and was finally found a job in the New Haven Stockyards, until he would commence his studies at the Yale School of Fine Arts.

At the Yale School of Fine Arts

In January 1912, Ingram started life at Art College. His tutor for sculpture was Lee Lawrie who was responsible for Rockefeller centres famous statue of Atlas and, various other decorative sculptures for that building. Lawrie and Ingram built a firm friendship which lasted until Ingram's death. Rex posed for Lawrie sculptural works entitled Civil War Generals. His fellow students included Thomas Harte Benton, American painter and mentor of Jackson Pollock. Cole Porter the songwriter was also a contemporary of Ingram. Another good friend who was also to become a film director in Hollywood from the twenties was Frank Tuttle.

During Rex's time at Yale, he was a regular contributor of illustrations to The Record the University magazine. In issues from 1912 to 1914 Rex submitted work which was varied both in style and subject matter. In the June 18th issue of 1912 they ranged from advertisements for college publications to mildly political cartoons.

One of these illustrations is a full page of nine drawings on the subject of womens suffrage. They describe women of the past and women fighting for the right to vote. These ladies are portrayed as large forceful figures reeking all sorts of vengeance on poor, small, unfortunate gentlemen. These early drawings in pen and ink are less effective than Ingram's later work. They are loose sketches using more than enough hatched shading which is inclined to confuse the relationship between the figure and ground, thus, the message becomes indistinct.

Later drawings in this number show a more decisive and confident use of line. In Giving the Bride Aweigh showing a rather large lady on a scales with the small bridegroom nearby, the use of shading which moulds the figures is more successful as is the use of solid black areas. This makes for better composition. His cartoons of college life also show this technical improvement and are spontaneous.

Ingram's drawing of a baseball player in this issue shows a further variation in style. The figure holding a baseball bat, and dressed in sports gear is treated in graphically cleaner fashion. Flat areas of black and white are used and give the illustration more impact. The background is given a mid-tonal value by the use of atomiser sprayed ink. The drawing is enclosed in a black border from which the head protrudes. In this issue one can see the development of Ingram's drawing skill, with the later use of more effective line and tone. All of Rex's drawings of this period are signed Rex Hitchcock.

The first drawing one comes upon in the Record issue of March 10th 1913, is a caricature of Jim Donnelly, a member of the Yale police force. This drawing shows a strong but sensitive use of line getting over the warm and lively character of this elderly man. During Ingram's college days he kept a scrapbook in which he asked his friend to leave some souvenir of their own. Donnelly contributed a photograph of himself along with writings.

Also in this issue of the Record is a full page colour illustration of a seated cowboy. The style is like that of the basketball player drawing. The colouring used in the printing is orange, pink, beige and black on white. The illustration shows a feeling for dramatic lighting, using strong lights contrasting with dense darks. The overall composition is strong and graphic.

Ingram's further illustrations for this number show a greater knowledge and understanding of drawing. There is more economy and expressive use of line, flat colour and shading. Thus the drawings are direct in putting across their message. His numerous illustrations have charm and a lively quality which adds to their crispness and clarity.

In the February 21st 1914 number Rex's submissions show that his overall skill had improved.

There is more expressive use of texture, along with line. The shading in his drawings gives unity to the composition, and the figures stand out well in front of just a suggestion of a background.

In Ingram's work one notices the eye that he has for characters and types which people his work. His drawings show his skills of observation and his perception of peoples' attitudes and mannerisms. These attributes Ingram was later to put into action in his films by casting ethnic types and, actors who by their physical attributes and acting abilities, contributed to the atmosphere of his visual expression.

Rex's work shows his knowledge of anatomy and its movement along with his technical skills in drawing where he used light and dark to give roundness to the form, which was helpful in preparatory sketches for his sculptural works.

His friends at college found Rex a cheerful, entertaining and imaginative companion who was always on the go. While at Yale he made friends with Horace Newson who's home was at Long Island. On one of his visits there he met Charles Charles Edison, son of Thomas Edison. Ingram's interest in the Cinema grew and after a visit to see Vitagraph's Tale of Two Cities he was sure that this new expressive medium had great potential and decided to get involved in it.

THE BACKGROUND TO THE AMERICAN FILM INDUSTRY

In order to fit the career of Rex Ingram into the life of the filmmaking industry of the United States and to evaluate his overall contribution to cinema, it is necessary that one knows something about the industry's growth and development and, how it found its' home in the now legendary Hollywood.

The Origins of Hollywood

Hollywood was only known by this name when the wife of Horace Henderson Wilcox christened her husband's 120 acre country estate so in the year 1844.

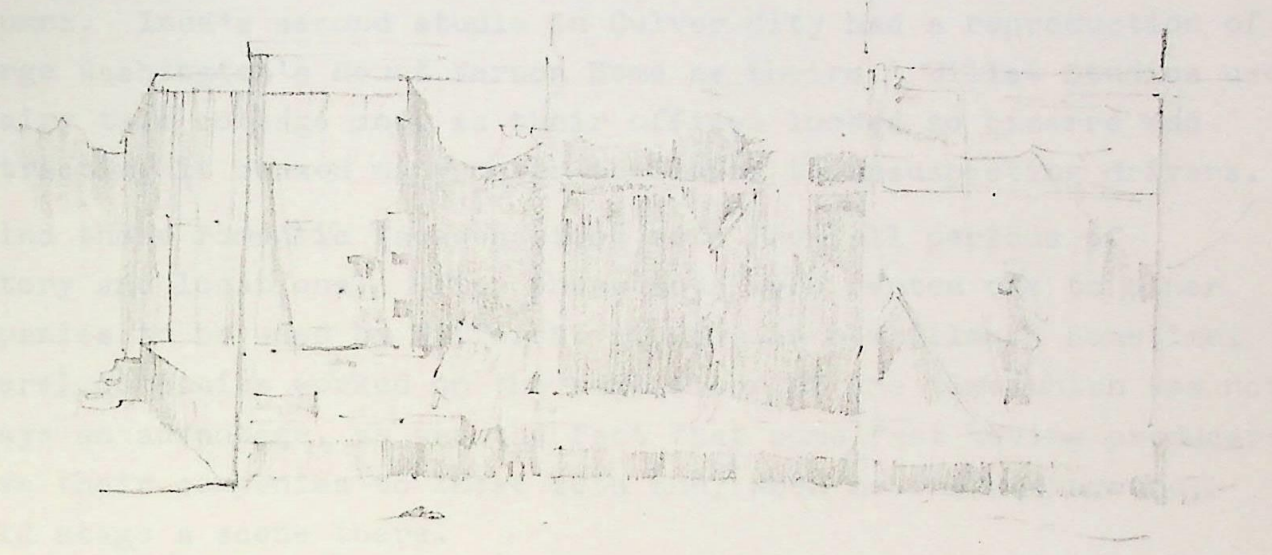
The setting up of the movie business in Hollywood was a slow process. The American Biograph & Mutoscope Company arrived in Los Angeles in 1906, attracted by the claim that Los Angeles had 350 sunny days per year. Chicago Selig's company sent out a small group of actors in 1907. When one of the company left in California, Francis Boggs, director, took on Hobart Bosworth, a theatrical actor on Broadway, who had lost his voice. Now that silent movies were in action, he could resume work. His health improved with the good weather but, he was horrified when the company was recalled to Chicago, as he knew he could not survive. So he set about convincing Selig that Hollywood, with its marvellous climate, was the place for movie making and he succeeded.

The First Studio

Eventually, the first real movie studio was opened in 1911 in Hollywood. Incidentally, this was the same year Rex Ingram first entered the United States.

William and David Horsley founded this studio when they set up a West Coast Branch of their "Centaur" Company.

They had found the New Jersey backgrounds unsuitable for use in the westerns they were producing, so they decided to change location. It was a literal "toss-up" as to whether the new branch would be in Florida or California. The Chief Director tossed a coin and California won. Hollywood had its first studio in a converted road-house on Sunset Boulevard, on the site of which now stands the Columbia Broadcasting System, better known as C.B.S.



4 Hollywood's First Studio.

Life in the Studios

Hollywood and its studios held a fascination for people all over the world who longed to visit California. The Prince of Wales (later the Duke of Windsor) risked courtmartial by jumping ship just to visit Hollywood. Even the Princess Beatriz de Ortego y Braganza of Spain consented to visit and was given "royal" treatment there, until, she was unmasked as a typist from San Francisco.

The studios built facades to enforce their public images and the dreams they sold. Ince, later, M.G.M. & Warner Bros., used classical columns. Ince's second studio in Culver City had a reproduction of George Washington's Mount Vernon Home as theirs. Willat Studios used a fairy tale cottage and, as their offices looked so bizarre and distracting it caused many motor accidents to unsuspecting drivers.

Behind these romantic facades stood sets from all periods of history and locations. Often these sets were rented out to other companies to be used by different studios in new films. Sometimes several companies worked on the same floor at one time which was not always an advantage, as was the fact that some fast moving producers drove their companies to these sets and, when no one was around, would stage a scene there.

Generally, life in the early days of the Hollywood studios was a lighthearted affair. Filmmaking was not looked on as work at all and so as an occupation was not taken seriously.

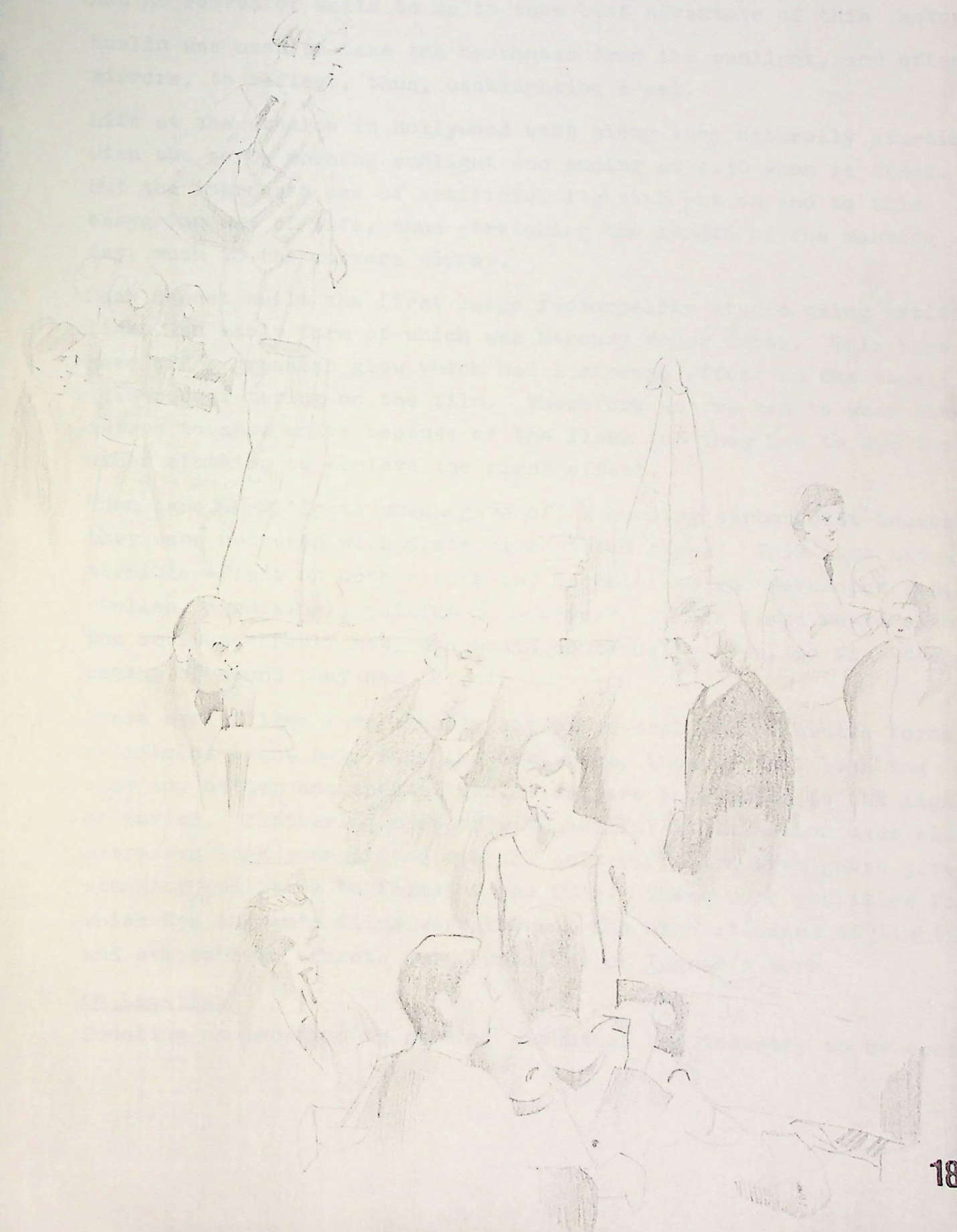
The film crews were uninhibited by any restrictions which an established medium would have imposed, and so they worked freely and experimentally

On coming on to a set on any normal working day one would see what an active, spontaneous and noisy experience it was. The director, armed with a megaphone and sometimes a gun, for crowd scenes, would shout instructions to his cast and crew. There might be a small orchestra supplying "mood music", in order to help the director draw the desired emotion from his players, who had no real audience from which to judge their performance. Adding to this atmosphere would be the hissing lights and the noisy carpenters building sets for the next production.

Light

Light and the moulding of it has always been the principal tool of the filmmaker.

5. On The Studio Floor



This was especially so in the early days of movie making, as silent, monochrome film was the medium.

In the East of the United States studios were built of glass and from the earliest days were equipped with electric lighting. On the West coast natural light was used and as often as not studios had no rooves or walls to as to take best advantage of this factor. Muslin was used to take the harshness from the sunlight, and often mirrors, to reflect, thus, backlighting a set.

Life at the studios in Hollywood went along very naturally starting with the early morning sunlight and ending at 4.30 when it faded. But the increased use of artificial lighting put an end to this easygoing way of life, thus stretching the length of the working day, much to the workers dismay.

Mack Sennet built the first large factory-like studio using artificial light, an early form of which was Mercury Vapor Tubes. This type gave off a greenish glow which had a strange affect on the tonal values registering on the film. Therefore actors had to wear blue shirts to show white because of the flare and they had to dye their other clothing to achieve the right effect.

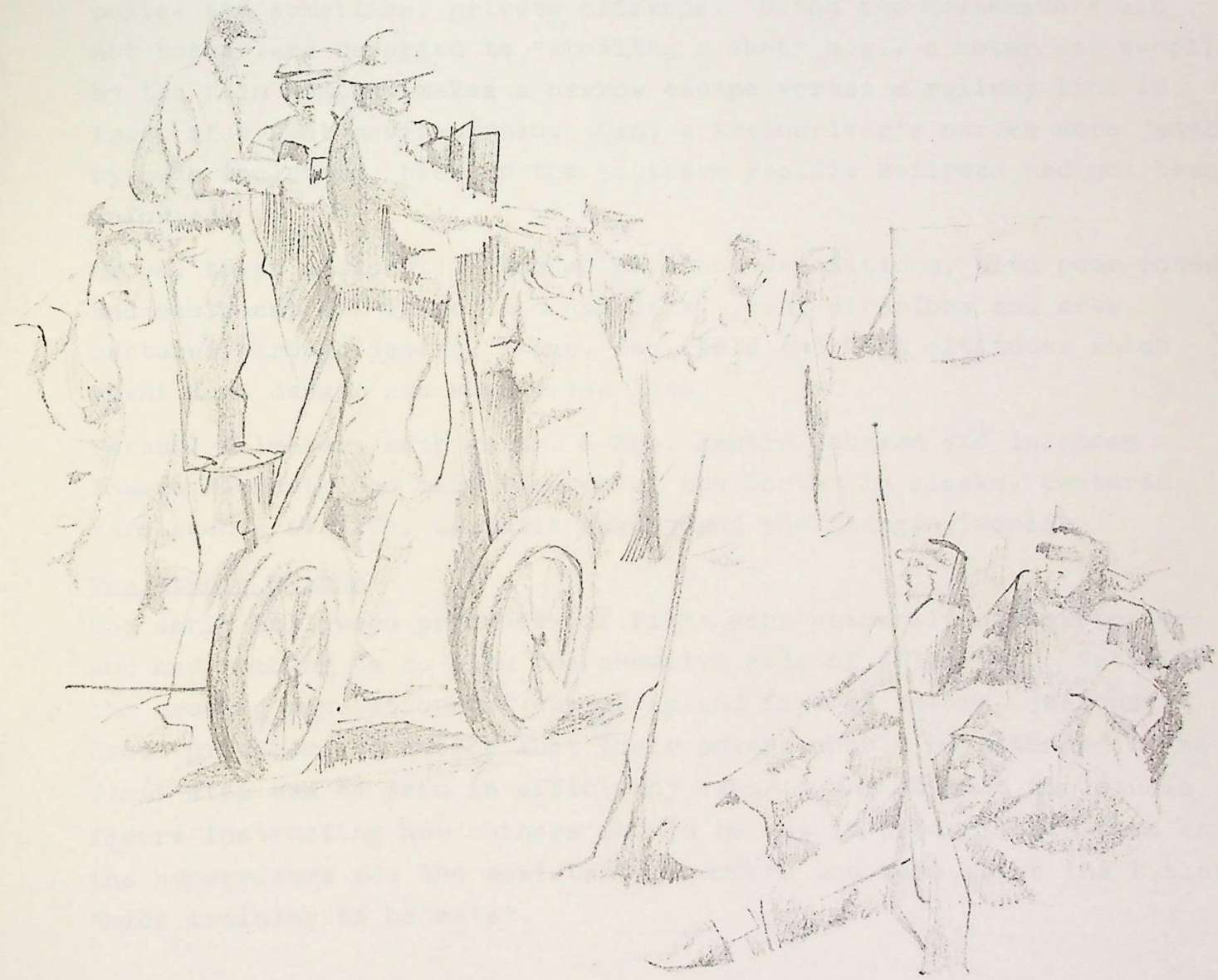
Then came Klieg lights which gave off a burning carbon dust because, they were not used with protective tinted glass. This dust had a terrible effect on both actors and technicians who developed red, swollen, agonisingly painful "Klieg Eyes". These lamps would also make the sets unbearably hot, and would continually hiss, so with the coming of sound they had to go!

These early films were cleanly lit by natural and primitive forms of artificial light but, when the new, cool, incandescent lighting came in, better and special qualities were introduced to the lighting of movies. Flattering effects with skilful illumination made elderly actresses look younger and overall soft diffusion with gauze gave stunning qualities to films of the 20's. These were qualities for which Rex Ingram's films were known. The high standard of lighting and atmospheric effects were qualities of Ingram's work.

On Location

Shooting on location is another aspect of the industry to be considere

6. On Location



The studio complex also included a backlot of standing sets and exteriors. Rex Ingram's wife Alice Terry says of Inceville studios; "When you got to the end of the streetcar line, you went to work on a stagecoach with a team of six horses. Almost like coming over in a covered wagon! The place was full of cowboys, from the Bison 101 Ranch, and we even had an Indian settlement with authentic Indians".

Despite these facilities certain directors did not like working so near the front office because what they were or were not doing could be supervised, so they preferred to go where "filmmaking was fun". This, of course, meant going on location, and was a practice which took Rex Ingram as far as Africa.

Generally, the public co-operated with filmmakers on location because moviemaking was seen as such a novel business. In most cases of location work companies were required to get permission from the police and sometimes, private citizens. Often the moviemakers did not bother and resorted to "stealing a shot" e.g., a motor car supplied by the film company makes a narrow escape across a railway line in front of a fast moving train. Many a traindriver's nerves were jangled by such incidents, because the Southern Pacific Railroad had not been informed.

Often, trips on location became perilous expeditions, with poor roads and equipment and inadequate supplies. Many directors and crew ventured through desert, swamp, snowfield and high altitudes which meant much danger and even lives lost.

Factual filmmakers such as Mr. & Mrs. Martin Johnson and Irishman Robert Flaherty who made "Nanook of the North" in Alaska, captured rare scenes of life, unspoilt beauty and the changing world.

The Studio System

The early Hollywood producers of films were primarily administrators and had nothing to do with the creative side of filmmaking. But with the growing reputations of directors and fame of actors, jealousy drove producers to decide that their powers should be extended. The first step was to send in efficiency experts who plagued the studio floors instructing how corners should be cut in production. Then came the supervisors and the assistant producers who were given the titles "mice training to be rats".

One can imagine that at this stage, in order to make a living, one had to conform to the studio system or go! Rex Ingram experienced a lot of this meddling attitude which did not endear producers to him. On this subject Ingram said "my sympathies are all with those directors who stand or fall on their own merits. I have too often seen a good picture, and the career of a promising director, ruined by so-called "supervision"".

These producers/dictators ruled Hollywood for 30 years and guarded their positions so jealously that they did not train anyone to succeed them. Thus for the good or ill of the industry, this studio system died with them.

CHAPTER FOUR

INGRAM'S EARLY FILM CAREER

Edison

Rex Ingram enthusiastically joined Edison's studios in the Bronx, and worked as a general helper and an actor. He had the physical qualities that made a successful movie idol, he was handsome, blue-eyed and dark haired, but, his acting was not up to standard. He appeared self-conscious in the role of actor. He decided it was time to move and headed for Vitagraph studios. He had stayed less than a year at Edison.

Vitagraph & Fox

In 1914 Ingram joined the Vitagraph Company as an actor in their stock company and played a great number of varied roles. He also came across his old college friend Thomas Harte Benton and was in a position to get him a job as a scene painter. Ingram's films in which he appeared during 1914 were:- The Necklace of Rameses; The Spirit and the Clay; Her Biggest Scoop; Eves Daughter (Artist's Madonna); The Crime of Cain; The Evil Men Do; The Circus and the Boy; His Wedded Wife; The Upper Hand; Fine Feathers make Fine Birds; The Moonshine Maid & The Man; Snatched from Burning Death.

During this period he was also working and keeping up his drawing skills. He was planning an illustrated version of Omar Khayam, with drawings stressing the meanings behind the verses. He had dreams of following the movement of William Morris and establishing a haven in America where artists could create craft and art objects in a studio atmosphere. He dreamed of his own "castle", of decorating each room in the best of each particular period in history.

In 1915 he moved on to become an assistant director and scriptwriter for Fox, where he produced scripts for such stars as Theda Bara, an American actress, the first one to be called a "vamp" because of her screen personality, Betty Nansen and Robert Mantell. Ingram worked on the screenplay of a film called Yellow & White. While doing so he came into conflict with the controlling powers. He decided that he would leave Fox and join the increasingly successful Universal Company.

Universal

I was 1916 when Rex Ingram went to Universal. There he began his first major work with eight films.

He was only twenty three years of age and already writing scripts and directing from stories, written by himself. His first film for Universal Bluebird was The Great Problem featuring Violet Mersereau, Dan Hanlon and Lionel Adams.

The second was also for Universal Bluebird and was a story set in Hong Kong and an American Chinatown also with Violet Mersereau and William Garwood and was called Broken Fetters.

The third for Universal Bluebird in 1916 was called The Chalice of Sorrows. It was based on the story of Tosca and set in Mexico.

For this production, the unit moved to Hollywood where it was filmed with Cleo Madison, Wedgewood Nowell and Charles Cummings. Ingram's last film of 1916 was Black Orchids again starring Cleo Madison with Francis McDonald, Wedgewood Nowell and Howard Crampton. In it Ingram told his favourite story of a Femme Fatale.

1917 saw Ingram producing four more films for Universal. The first was called The Reward of The Faithless with Claire de Bray, Betty Schnade and Wedgewood Nowell. It was a dramatic and romantic story of Russia telling of love and revenge.

The Pulse of Life was the next Universal Bluebird production, an Italian story with Wedgewood Nowell & Gypsy Harte, both of whom were in Ingram's next production, The Flower of Doom. This was a complicated Chinese story with Nicholas Dur , also acting in this film for Universal Red Feather. Ingram's final movie for Universal Bluebird was The Little Terror with Violet Mersereau and Sidney Mason, who acted in this story of the circus.

As 1917 drew to a close Rex Ingram and Universal quarrelled and Ingram was fired.

Paralta-Hodkinson Company asked Ingram to direct two films, the first being His Robe of Honour (1917) with Henry B. Walthall and Mary Charleson. These two actors were also the stars of Ingram's next film Humdrum Brown (1918) the story of a bad lad who becomes a hero.

Things began to go badly for Ingram. His marriage to serial queen Doris Pawn failed after a short while and ended in divorce. He decided to join in the war effort and went to Canada to join the Royal Flying Corps, but he suffered an accident and was injured without doing active service.

He returned to Hollywood without a cent to his name. Ingram finally went to Universal and directed two films for that company.

The first for Universal Jewel was Under Crimson Skies formerly The Beachcombers. It starred Elmo Lincoln who was soon afterwards to become famous as the screen's first Tarzan of the Apes. The film was a swashbuckler full of adventure. The second and final film by Ingram for Universal was The Day She Paid. This was a tale of the Haute Couture world starring Francella Billington, Charles Clary and Harry Von Meter.

Ingram once again spread his wings. He had great experience behind him and at the age of only twenty seven he made the decision which would eventually give him the exposure and acclaim which his art deserved.

Unfortunately little of Ingram's early work survives but critical opinion of the time points out the favourable artistic features which distinguished his work from other directors. Among these factors were Ingram's 'Fine Art' approach to composing pictures, his sculptural feeling for light and shade and his success at achieving the correct atmosphere and realistic qualities in his films.

Ingram was in the process of exploring the artistic visual potential of the cinema. He was trying to create visually satisfying films, which would increase the public's appreciation of this medium.

THE RUBAYAT

These two drawings are from Ingram's proposed version of The Rubayat of Omar Khayam in which he hoped to illustrate the meanings behind the verses.

"N habuk' Lord and Master of my Heart. Thy'n' habeke is all I want to hear"

This drawing illustrates the above caption and shows two lovers in embrace. The romantic image is one which was to become popular in films of later years such as The Sheik and Ingram's own The Arab. The characters in Arab dress are set against an exotic background. The use of dark and light in this picture balances the composition. The line is loose and rhythmic and deftly expresses the theme.

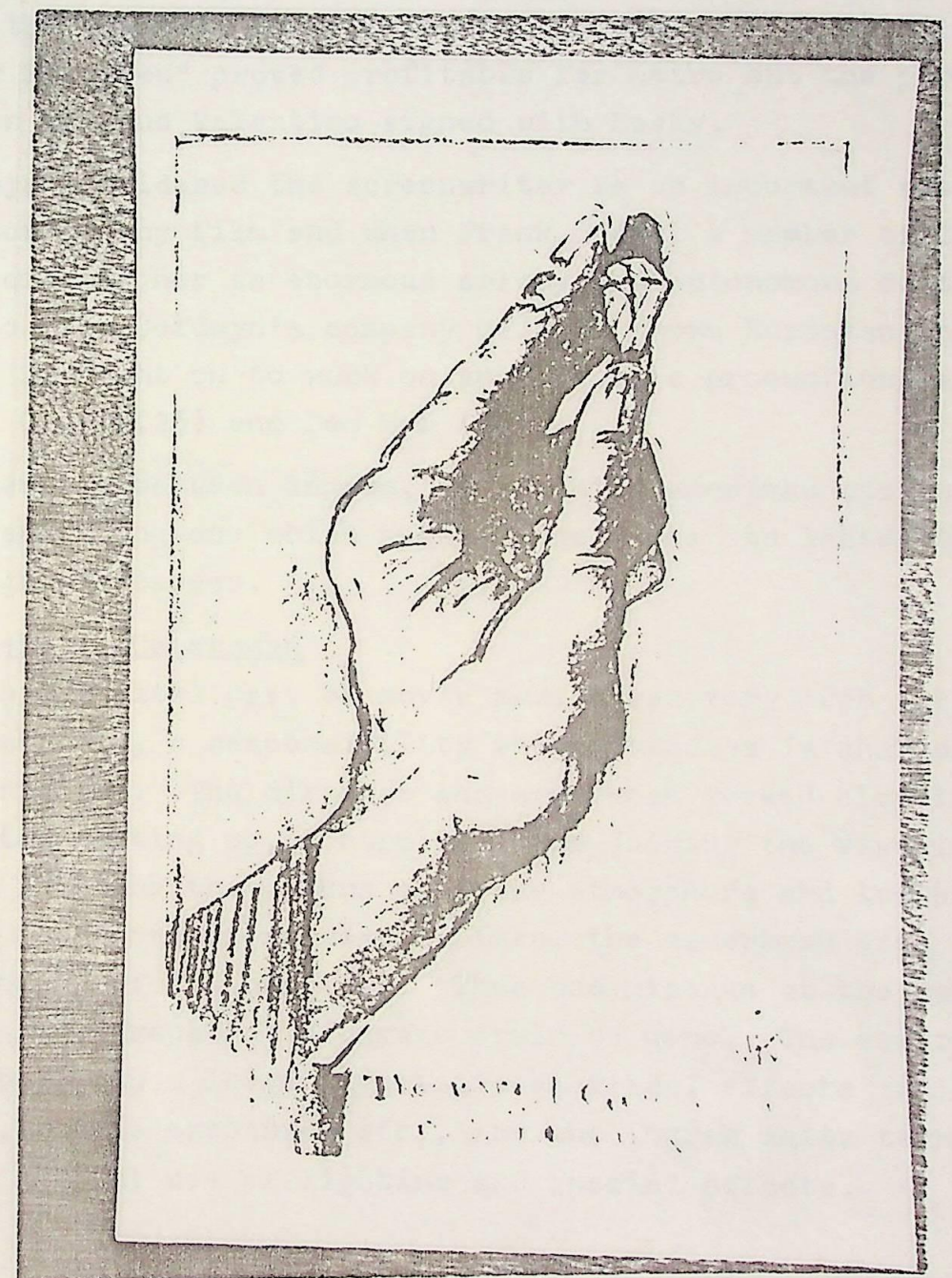


"The Rarest Gem is from a mine unknown"

In this illustration Ingram shows a hand holding a precious stone up to the light. The stone radiates light which illuminates the top of the picture.

The execution of the hand shows a sculptural quality in Ingram's drawing. The structure of the hand is clear and moulded with light and dark, and stands out well against a dark background. The technique of drawing is loose and free which is expressively suited to the subject.

All the illustrations in this series are signed thus - (R)



CHAPTER FIVE

MOVE TO METRO

Ingram's Creative Team

In 1920 Rex Ingram joined Metro Studios where he set himself up as producer/director with a team of highly skilled film workers.

June Mathis - Scenarist

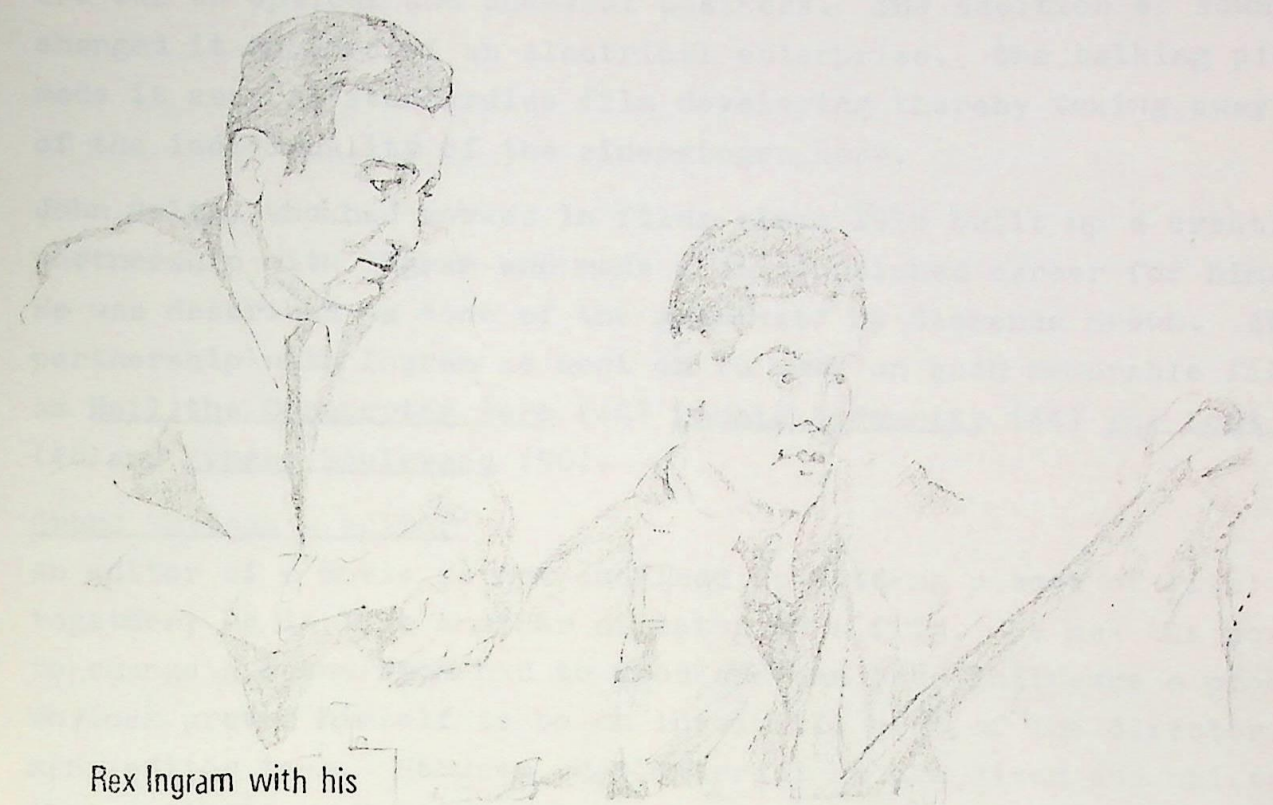
Most of the top class screenwriters in Hollywood were women. June Mathis was one of the most important and remained so throughout the silent film age. Her partnership with Rex Ingram at Metro was a highly successful one both artistically and financially for the company. She was responsible for the scenario of The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and The Conquering Power and she collaborated on the scenario of Ingram's "Turn to the Right". Her involvement in the casting of Valentino for "The Four Horsemen" proved profitable for Metro but the partnership broke when she and Valentino signed with Lasky.

Sam Goldwyn considered the screenwriter as an important artistic contributor to any film and when Frank Godsol a member of Goldwyn's company, offered her an enormous salary and autonomous control, she was tempted to join Goldwyn's company of well known European and American writers. She went on to work on such classic productions as "Blood and Sand (22) Greed (23) and Ben Hur (27).

The partnership between Ingram, Seitz, his cameraman and Whytock, his editor, was a long one which spanned the years and lasted through almost all of Ingram's career.

John F. Seitz - Cameraman

Photography, a vital part of movie making was very much the responsibility of the cameraman, a responsibility which nowadays is shared between many technicians. The director and cameraman worked closely together. The director setting up, controlling and judging the visuals and the cameraman lighting them, thus creating atmosphere and translating and recording the director's ideas. Often, the cameraman even supervised the developing of the negative. Thus one mistake at the hand of the cameraman and irreparable damage could be done. The cameraman and director built up a large repertoire of visual effects including fades, dissolves, double exposures etc., and the Ingram Seitz team were famous for their skilful use of lighting and special effects.



Rex Ingram with his
editor Grant Whytock



9. Some of Ingram's Creative Team on 'The Four Horsemen'

Seitz himself comments - "Motion picture photography of the silent era was an optical and chemical business. The addition of sound changed it to more of an electrical enterprise. The talking picture made it easy to standardise film developing thereby taking away much of the individuality of the cinematographer".

John Seitz, who had worked in films since 1916 built up a creative partnership with Ingram and made a distinguished career for himself. He was described as "one of the greatest" by Clarence Brown. After his partnership with Ingram he went on to work on such memorable films as Hail the Conquering Hero (44) Double Indemnity (44) The Lost Weekend (46) and Sunset Boulevard (50).

Grand Whytock - Editor

An editor of a movie is not confined to putting pieces of film together, he is like another director on a film. He has the power to change a scene from bad to good and can thus influence a production. Whytock proved himself to be an invaluable part of the director, cameraman, editor team. He used what material he was given and maintained the continuity and reinforced the rhythm of the film which the director had imposed. Thus, the director's job was more creative than a lot of people imagined.

Whytock worked on most of Ingram's films and their partnership proved fruitful of a number of successful and visually pleasing productions.

Shore Acres (1920)

Rex Ingram's first film for Metro Studios was a version of James Herne's play Shore Acres. This is a story of justice battling injustice and triumphing in the end, a common enough theme in films of the day. In the original version of the play the leading role was taken by Herne himself, who made his name in this part. In the film this part of Uncle Nat Berry was taken by Edward Connolly, who proved to be a less powerful actor than Herne. Alice Lake appears to have featured in this production, and was publicised as the star. Frank Brownlee played the part of the brother in a film which was considered, all in all, interesting by the audience at the Capitol in New York, where it opened in May 1920.



The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (1921)

In 1921 Rex Ingram directed a spectacular film version of "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" originally written in Spanish by Vicente Blasco Ibanez. This novel had been translated and published in America at the end of the First World War. It was highly acclaimed by the critics as the best novel to come out of the war, and within twelve months had been printed over fifty times.

The story told, was of two Argentinian sisters who were both married - one to a Frenchman, the other to a German. When their multi million-aire father dies, they travel to Europe and settle in the homelands of their husbands.

Julio is the son born to the Frenchman, he becomes an extravagant and colourful character of Bohemian Paris. He has an affair with a married woman, Marguerite Laurier. She joins him frequently in the French cabarets to dance the tango which is the latest European dance craze.

When the war breaks out Julio refuses to enlist but he then follows Marguerite to the front where she has gone to be with her wounded husband. When he sees the atrocities of the Germans, he changes his mind. He decides to join the French army, he is promoted from private to lieutenant and then awarded the Croix de Guerre for bravery. Finally, the war brings him face to face with his German cousin and as the two go into battle an explosive shell bursts nearby and kills both of them.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are - War, Conquest, Famine and Death.

Metro pictures refused to even consider making an offer for the film rights of the novel, as the company had failures with previous war films.

Meanwhile, in New York Richard Rowland, a Metro chief, was impressed by the success of the book and began to negotiate with Ibanez's agents for rights. Finally he closed a contract for twenty thousand dollars against ten per cent of the film's gross earnings.

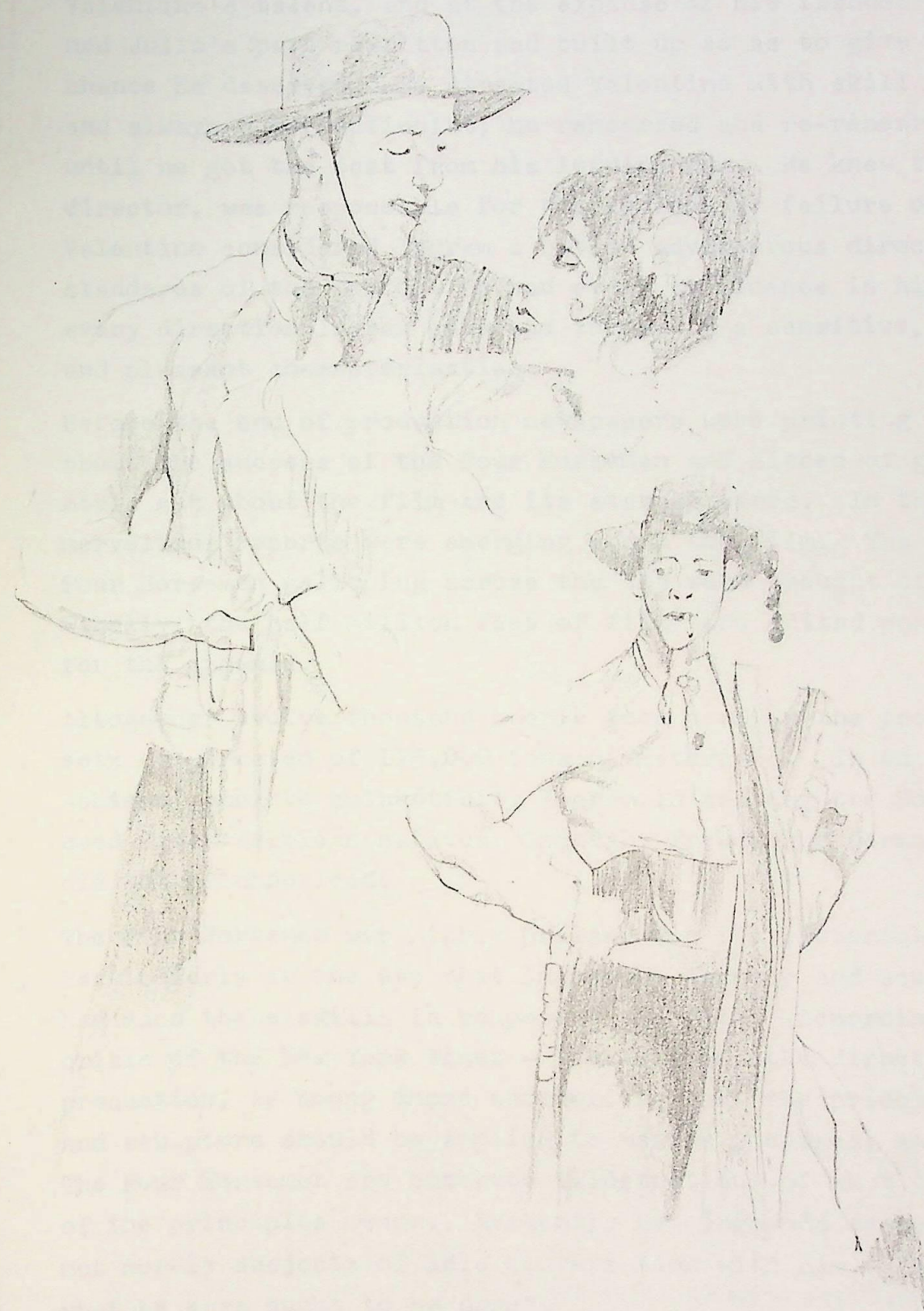
Rowland decided to use June Mathis as screenwriter on the picture, she had the reputation of being the best in her field.

He was delighted with the results. The scenario followed the novel faithfully in the main, but there were some omissions because of the length of the novel. South American life was vividly expressed, the all important war scenes kept the spirit of the original, with Julio's love affair with Marguerite somewhat idealised, and Julio coming to a melodramatic end. Rowland had such trust in her that he asked June Mathis to pick the director and leading man. He advised her to pick two well known men - a first class director and a promotable leading man. Ignoring this, she picked two relatively unknowns.

Ingram was delighted to have this chance to direct the Ibanez best-seller, but at first had some reservations about the choice of the leading man, an almost unknown young Italian, suitable to play the Latin-American "type". His name was Rodolpho Alfonso Raffaello Pierre Filibert Guglielmi de Valentina d'Antenguella, who adopted the name Rodolpho di Valentina during his early career. He finally took the name Rudolph Valentino. Ingram knew that Mathis had been instrumental in his getting this job as director on the film, she had also endorsed his choice of his fiancée, Alice Terry, as the female lead, so after making his criticisms of Valentino he gracefully gave way to her choice.

The next step was to contact Valentino to see if he would play the role of Julio. While working in New York Valentino was asked to contact Rowland. He did so and met June Mathis. He could not believe it when she said to him "I'd like you to play Julio in the Four Horsemen". He even agreed to take a cut in salary so as to have this chance. He was overjoyed on hearing that Alice Terry was to be his leading lady, so thrilled in fact that he jumped to his feet and applauded. Under her real name of Alice Taaffe she had worked as another extra on his first Hollywood picture, Alimony.

On arrival in Hollywood he received the star treatment from Metro. He was visited by Ingram's work-mate Mathis who told him to follow Ingram's direction closely, and to play Julio with restraint, using the great asset of his expressive eyes to communicate the feelings of the character.



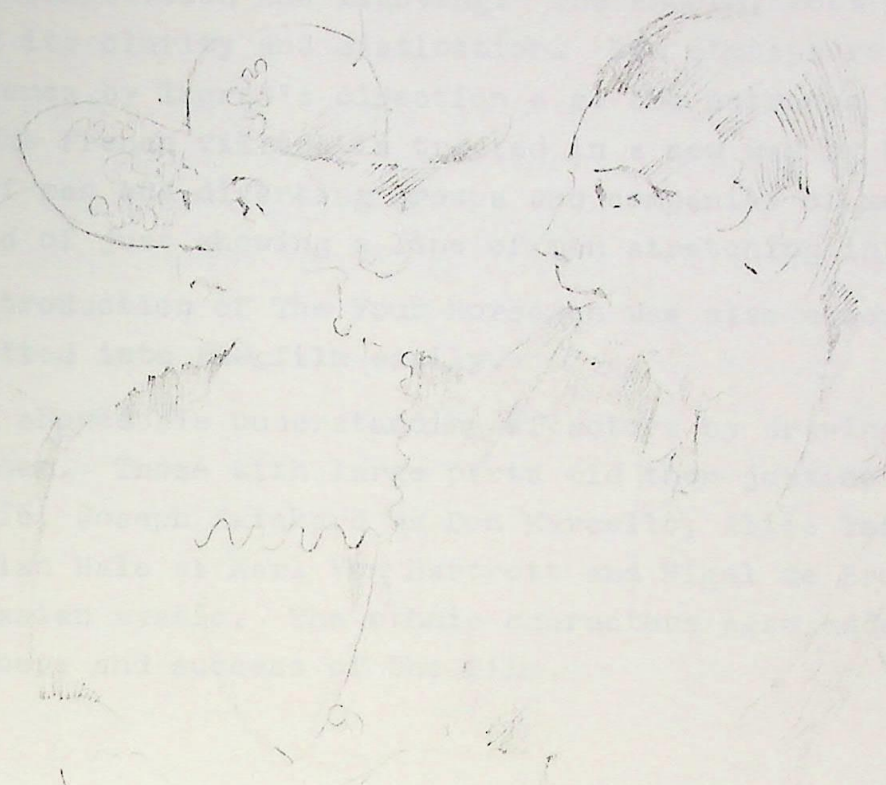
11. Valentino as the gaucho in the film, 'The Four Horsemen'

Valentino could not have been more co-operative with Ingram who spent hours drawing the finest possible performance from the actor. Ingram was determined to make a once in a lifetime film and spared no effort. His opinion of Valentino changed and he recognised Valentino's talent, and at the expense of his fiancée's role, he had Julio's part rewritten and built up so as to give Valentino the chance he deserved. He directed Valentino with skill and understanding and always a perfectionist, he rehearsed and re-rehearsed his scenes until he got the best from his leading man. He knew that he, as director, was responsible for the success or failure of the film. Valentino considered Ingram a rather adventurous director by the standards of the day but he had every confidence in him and followed every direction Ingram gave and turned in a sensitive, philosophical and pleasant characterisation.

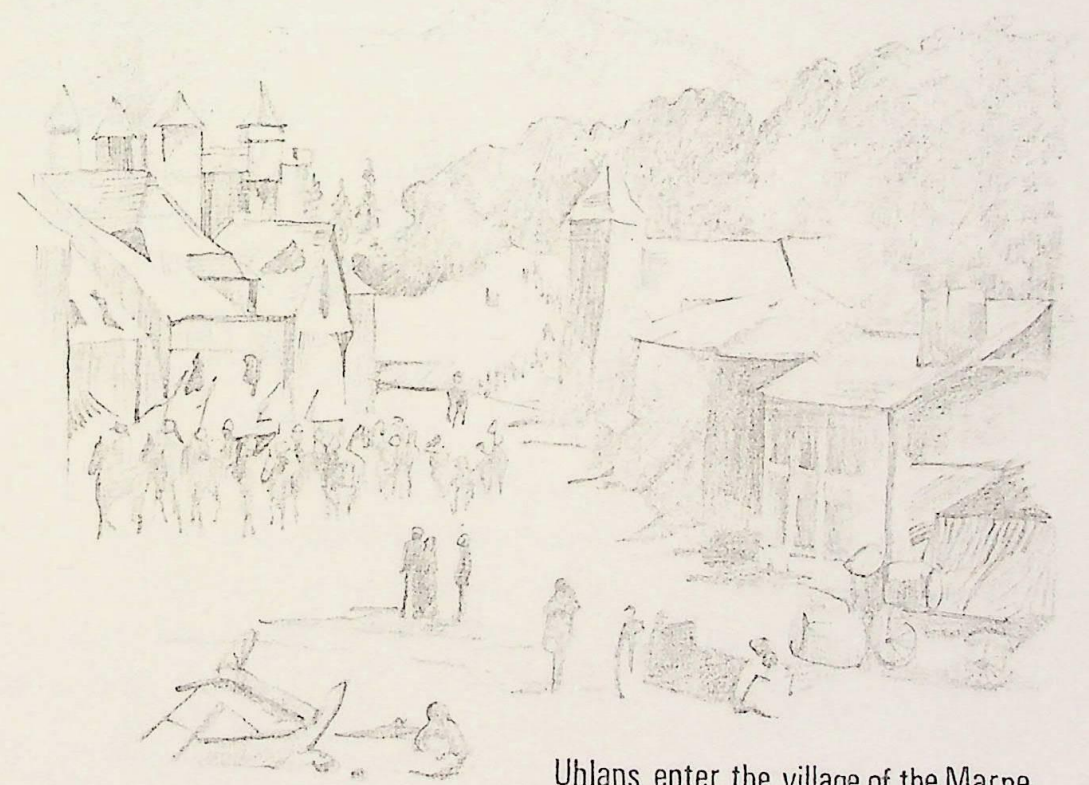
Before the end of production newspapers were printing predictions about the success of the Four Horsemen and pieces of gossip from the movie set about the film and its star appeared. In the editing room marvellous reports were emerging about the film. The scenes of the Four Horsemen galloping across the sky were thought of as spectacular. Finally, the half million feet of film were edited down to two hours for the cinemas.

Altogether twelve thousand people took part in the production on sets constructed of 125,000 tons of materials. In an effort to achieve complete authenticity Ingram in casting the Four Horsemen, used South American natives, Spanish, French and Germans. His efforts did not go unnoticed.

The Four Horsemen was highly praised for its pictorial qualities. Particularly in the way that Ingram, a painter and sculptor himself, had used these skills in composing the film. According to the film critic of the New York Times - "Rex Ingram, the director of the production, is among those who believe that the principles of painting and sculpture should be applied to motion pictures, and scenes in The Four Horsemen are concrete illustrations of what the application of the principles means. Evidently Mr. Ingram's expressed ideas are not merely subjects of idle conversation with him. He tries to do what he says ought to be done".



Alice Terry and
Rudolph Valentino



Uhlans enter the village of the Marne.
Art Director Joseph Calder

The dramatic qualities of the film were emphasised by the effective use of composition and lighting. The smooth, soft photography maintained its clarity and distinction. New atmosphere was brought to old themes by Ingram's direction e.g. the entrance of the soldiers into the French village is treated in a new way by breaking the main line of men and diverting groups and companies of men from it, instead of just showing a line of men stretching into the distance.

The introduction of The Four Horsemen was also executed with taste and fitted into the film easily.

Ingram showed his understanding of actors by drawing good performances from them. Those with large parts did them justice such as, Valentino as Julio, Joseph Swickard as Don Marcello, Alice Terry as Marguerite, also Alan Hale as Karl Von Hartrott and Nigel de Brulier as Tchernoff the Russian mystic. The ethnic characters also added to the total atmosphere and success of the film.

The Release of The Four Horsemen

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse opened simultaneously in New York, Boston and Chicago on March 6th 1921.

The New York premiere at the Lyric Theatre like the others, was a sensation. It went ahead under the direction of Dr. Hugo Ricsenfeld and there was a reaction of hearty approval there. This success was another step towards making movie-going a respectable pastime. It made the vast sum of four and a half million dollars which helped bolster the declining economy of the Metro Company (only three other films of the twenties figure on the Variety list of top grossers). When the film was first released Valentino had only featured billing but after his great acclaim, all the prints were recalled and altered to make him the star.

On its opening at the Palace Theatre in London it was a great success. The critic of The Daily Mail described it as "a great advance in film production" and said that on the whole, "it is an excellent film. Last night it held the attention so closely that smoking or talking was indulged in by very few of the fashionable audience which filled the theatre".

In the Palace Theatre Vivian Van Damm employed eighteen sound effects men to accompany the film. These men worked behind a screen, with rear projection so that they should be able to follow the action. They used 23 drums of different sounds and sizes, rifles, revolvers and magnesium flares, also a shower bath dripping to make a 'raining' sound. They also used a huge cylinder of compressed air which they released thus making a snorting sound of the beast of war. The most spectacular part of this show was when maroons were set off electronically, one person who was present described it as - "noise, reeking smoke and general pandemonium, which made it appear like a visitation from The Four Horsemen themselves".

The League of Nations was so impressed by Ingram's film that they got in touch with the presenter of the film, Marcus Lowe to see if they could make short speeches during the four minute interval halfway through the show.

Lowe was so delighted at this interest that he sent a copy of the film to Geneva where the Assembly of the League of Nations was taking place. Further, he was writing to send copies all over the world so that people might learn a lesson from this view of "The Great War". This and the success of the film displeased the Government of Germany which tried to have the film banned in Italy!

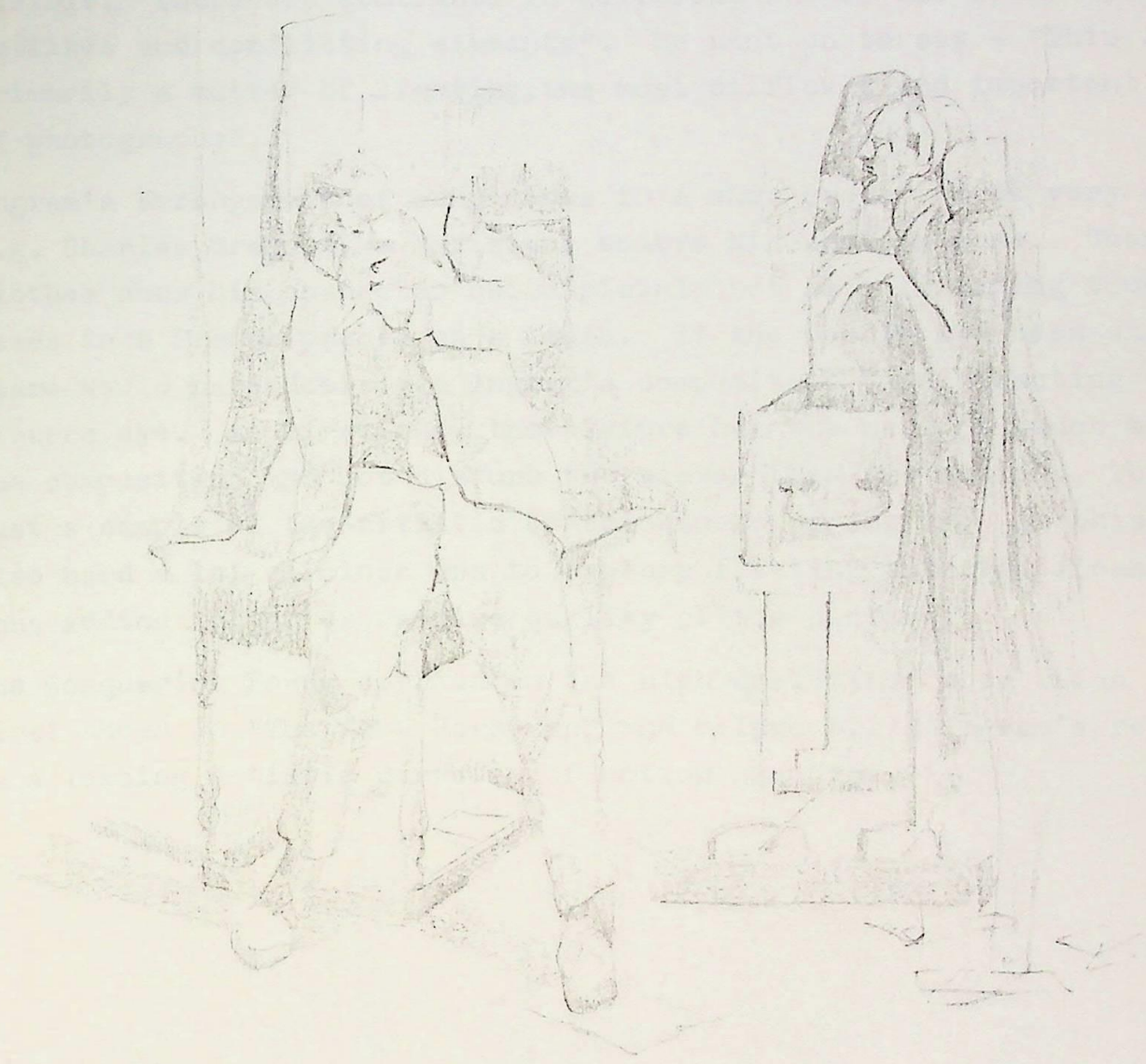
The Four Horsemen was revived in 1926 and shown at the Capitol in New York. The critic, Mordaunt Hall commented "Although there has been an appreciable improvement in the technical end of cinema work, Mr. Ingram's brilliant film is one that can still hold its own with the worthy pictures of the present, and in some respects it surpasses the majority of serious subjects that emerge from the busy studios.

The Conquering Power (1921)

The Conquering Power was the second film made by The Four Horsemen team. The screenplay was adapted by June Mathis from Balzac's Eugenie Grandet. It tells the story of a young Parisian dandy called Charles Grandet and his supposed cousin Eugenie Grandet, a provincial girl untouched by Paris. Charles father loses his money speculating and commits suicide after sending his son to the home of Pere Grandet, Eugenie's father and a great miser. The story follows the progress of Charles and Eugenie's love affair and the opposition to it of Pere Grandet. Finally, love triumphs over all. June Mathis used this story as a starting point to build up interesting, if exaggerated, situations. Although the action was emphasised, when taken in the context of the whole production it was fundamentally genuine.

When the time came for this scenario to be put into production, The Four Horsemen crew was lined up and Valentino was asked to work with Alice Terry again. The film looked like being another blockbuster. But Valentino had changed, he had come under the influence of Natacha Rambova who was determined to take his career in hand and who was extremely ambitious. Valentino had become much more self-assured and not as eager to please as he had been. He was looking for an increase in salary of 100 and after much arguing at the studio he settled for 50 which brought his salary up to 400 per week. During production there were many rows on the set with Rex Ingram, who was at a loss as to the change in Valentino's personality. He had changed from being conscientious charming and helpful to an arrogant, moody and temperamental actor. One of the crew who also noticed the change remarked "Valentino should know better than to fight with Ingram. Actors don't impress him - he makes actors. He may be exacting, but he's the best".

In this constantly hostile atmosphere the film continued, at the end of it all Ingram was said to have threatened never to work on a film with Valentino again, and so their professional partnership was over. The film was released and the production was a success with audiences. Valentino gave a good performance and Alice Terry was charming and expressive in her role.



Double Exposure by John Seitz

13. THE CONQUERING POWER

Other notable performances were given by Ralph Lewis as the old miser. Edward Connelly as a provincial notary and George Atkinson as his son.

The critic of the New York Times was impressed by the picture and described the high quality of pictorial composition thus - "Ingram tones his scenes so they are soft but distinct. No difficulty in watching faces, the slightest changes of expression are immediately visible. There are contrasts in different scenes but never hard outlines and conflicting elements". He went on to say - "This is primarily a matter of lighting, the most difficult and important part of photography".

Ingram's arrangement of components in a shot proved to be very effective e.g. Charles Grandet, a Parisian, enters his uncle's home. Charles' clothes show his character quite plainly but as a finishing touch he leads in a French poodle on a leash. If the poodle had been white the glare would have destroyed Ingram's composition by distracting the viewers eye. As it stands, the picture has the perfect touch to finish the composition and not disturb the viewer from the action. This is just a sample of the artistic consciousness of Ingram. In this film he also used a lot of close ups to capture fleeting but significant glances thus adding to the expressive quality of the picture.

The Conquering Power carried on the high quality of work which was first shown in "The Four Horsemen" and helped build Ingram's reputation as a leading artistic director of motion pictures.



14. TURN TO THE RIGHT

Turn to the Right (1921)

"Turn to the Right" was adapted from a play of the same name by Winchell Smith and John E. Hazzard. June Mathis and Mary O'Hara collaborated on the scenario for this picture.

The New York Times said of the film's content and storyline - "Now as nearly everybody knows, "Turn to the Right" is pure hokum, down on the farm stuff, with all the stock characters that the theatre has been able to collect from village and city storerooms, a sweet little mother, her noble young son, a mean old skinflint, his angelic daughter, a pair of comic crooks ripe for reformation, a well-disposed rich man, his scoundrel of a son and others to suit and to match." Members of the cast working with this material were Alice Terry and Jack Mullhall, Harry Myers and George Cooper as the two crooks, Edward Connolly, Lydia Knott and others. Ingram worked hard to get the best from his players. He coped well with the material at his hands and the film was well received when it opened at "The Lyric" in New York on January 23rd 1922.

John Seitz and Ingram once again collaborated well and made a film of high pictorial quality. This team produced effective pictures which were, according to the New York Times critic, "The kind of pictures seen in his previous works, softly lighted yet clear, well composed and expressive".

Ingram had once more put into use his artistic training, and this was evident. He also was restrained in his telling of the story by toning down the sentimentality of it, while still making it appealing to the audience.

Once again Ingram had whetted his audience's appetite and they awaited another impressive production.

They were not dissappointed.



15. THE PRISONER OF ZENDA

The Prisoner of Zenda (1922)

Anthony Hope wrote a novel about the adventures of an Englishman in a Kingdom of Ruritania. He was the physical duplicate of the dissolute king, but his moral superior.

The Englishman impersonates the king for a while and saves the throne from Black Michael and his fellow conspirators.

Ingram's final scenario was adapted from the Edward Rose stage version by Mary O'Hara who, by this time, had taken June Mathis' place on the production team as scenarist.

Ingram went about choosing someone for the role of Rupert of Hentzau. He chose a young actor called Ramon Samaniegos in whom he saw the same qualities that Valentino had. Ingram gave him a personal contract at 125 per week. He changed his name to Ramon Novarro. As Rupert of Hentzau, Novarro made his mark, complete with beard, monacle and long cigarette holder. Ingram continued to build up Novarro's career and put him in three pictures with Alice Terry which made him a star. Other members of the cast were Alice Terry who, as always was good to look at, Lewis Stone playing the dual role. Also taking part were Robert Edison and Stuart Holmes. Ingram directed his players making use of facial expressions and bringing out the meaning in each characterisation.

The pictorial composition of the film was as usual of a high standard, making great use of lighting, creating softness and clarity. The scenes were both individual and animated and so sensitive as any previously produced. The pictures were full of depth, unified and harmonious. The treatment of the Ingram/Seitz/Whytock team was greatly suited to the subject. "The Screen" column of the New York Times said "Mr. Ingram's reputation as a director is increased and the public has another photoplay well worth seeing". This critic also commented on the teamwork which went into the film and, the material used in "such scenes of pictorial beauty and human appeal as Mr. Ingram, with the aid of his faithful cameraman John F. Seitz and a competent case can make".

Once again Ingram had produced an artistic and creative work with wide public appeal.



Trifling Woman (1922)

The film "Trifling Woman" was notable because the actual author was Rex Ingram himself. Ingram decided to return to his former profession of scenarist for this picture but also coupled this with his directing talent to create this piece.

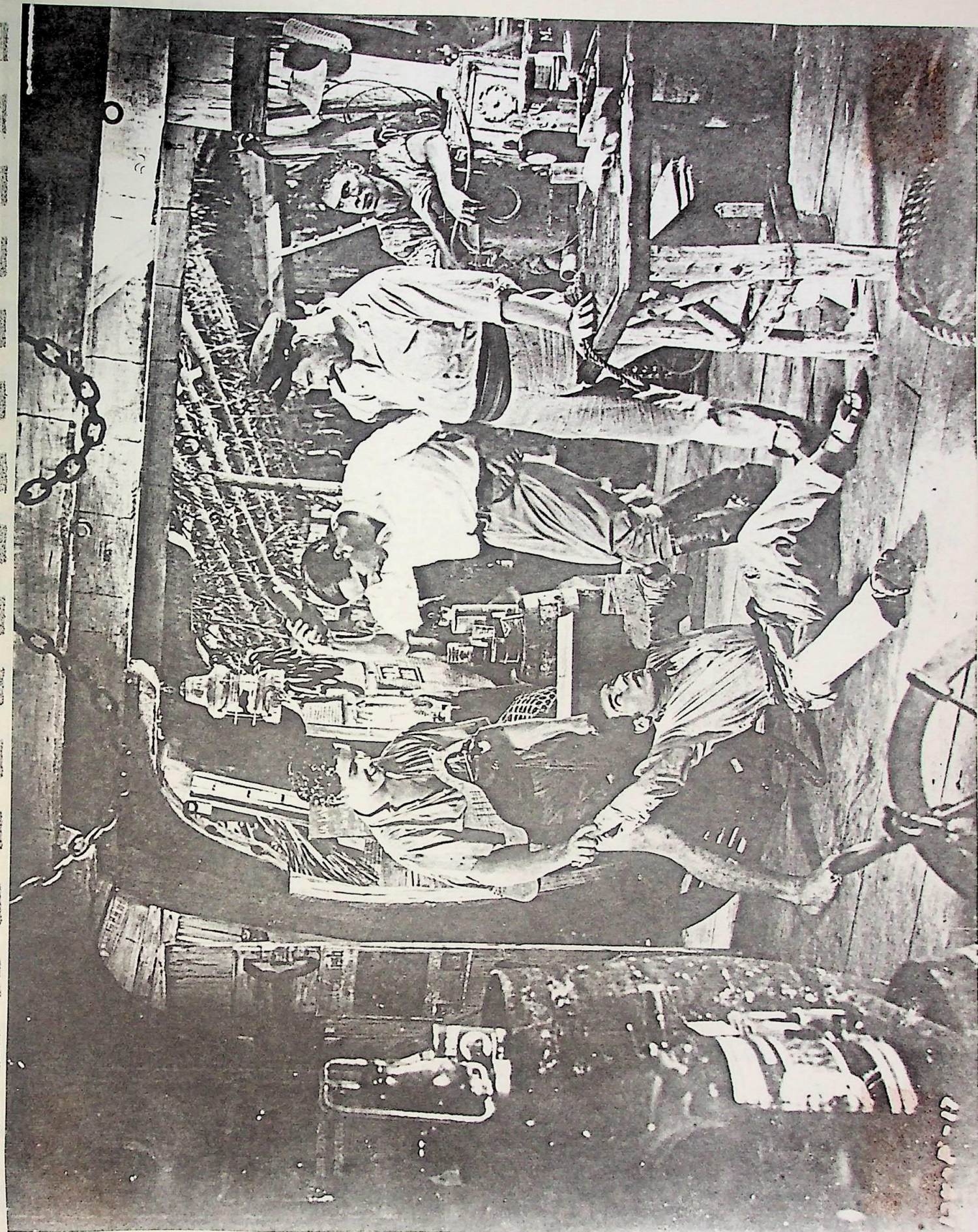
The storyline, although improbable, made the film compulsive viewing. As the New York Times put it - "there is an evening of exciting entertainment in store for you at the Astor".

The framework of a story within a story is used, the main plot being the tale of three men infatuated by a single woman. One of these men is an aged Baron barely holding on to life. Another is his high living impetuous son and the third is a middle aged Italian Marquis. All of the men are in Paris and competing for the attentions of the woman, Zareda. The story tells of their conflict and deaths. The old Baron goes first by poison which he had intended should kill the marquis. The three others die in a dungeon where the Marquis has dragged the young man and Zareda.

Ingram enhanced Ramon Novarro's career by casting him in a different type of role, thus widening the actor's range. Novarro proved his ability and once again acted with Lewis Stone who played the old Baron and Barbara La Marr as Zareda. By including a number of excellent "types" in his film Ingram achieved the utmost from his material and created the right atmosphere.

Of the superb visual content of the film "The Screen" said of the pictures - "They hold your attention and as pieces of pictorial composition many of them are beautiful".

Ingram combined mediaeval towers and castles, dungeons and dark cellars, murders, duels and strange characters to produce a vivid and vital film of his own story.



17. WHERE THE PAVEMENT ENDS

Where the Pavement Ends (1923)

"The Passion Vine", a story by John Russell was translated on to film by Rex Ingram and released as "Where the Pavement Ends".

The story told of Miss Matilda, a missionary's daughter, on a desert island who, neglected by her father, Pastor Spencer, seeks companionship elsewhere. Her father is driven by greed and is willing to give up his own daughter to Captain Hull Gregson, a drunken trader played to the hilt by Harry T. Morey. But Matilda is in love with Motauro, a handsome young chieftain of the island and they meet near the passion vine, Gregson spies on them and plans to have Matilda for himself. In order to ingratiate himself with the Pastor he says that he'll sell no more alcohol to the islanders. The Pastor is taken in and promises Matilda to the Captain. Matilda is horrified and she and Motauro elope by way of the passion vine down a waterfall, but the boat they expect to find at the bottom is not there. Gregson has foiled their plan and when Motauro returns to the village to get a boat so as to escape he is captured. Matilda makes her way back through a tremendous hurricane and collapses at the Captain's shack. Motauro and the Captain have a fight in which Gregson is killed. Matilda tells the native that she cannot marry him, he leaves his wealth with her and commits suicide by diving off a ravine.

Matilda's father comes to his senses and decides that they should return to England.

"The Screen" commented - "This is a picture without hokum, without the lovers embracing in the last scene". But could the audiences take a film without a happy ending? Obviously not, as the exhibitors found out. The moviegoers so resented the cruelty of their new screen idols fate that Ingram had to shoot an alternative ending.

In the new ending Novarro turns out to be a well sun-tanned Caucasian and so he can marry Matilda! Such is the influence which the audiences had on moviemaking in these silent days.

In 1923 Rex Ingram suffered a great personal and professional setback. He was originally expected to be the director of the forthcoming production Ben Hur, a lavish and large-scale project. June Mathis was working on the preparations for filming and was given the job of choosing the director and leading man.

Ingram was so eager to direct a film on the subject that his Metro contract included a clause concerning it. He would direct Ben Hur, even if the film was acquired by any other company, he would still be given permission to work on it.

John Seitz recalls - "While we were making Where the Pavement Ends, Rex received word that Ben Hur was going to be made without him. This made for a sudden change in his personality. Everything had been going so well and he was having his way in almost everything. This came as a great shock to him".

Ingram's star, Ramon Novarro, also said he was upset. "Marcus Loew himself had promised him the picture. His reaction, when he lost it, was a hundred per cent Irish - and you know what I mean".

Scaramouche (1923)

Ingram's next production was his second most successful film - "Scaramouche" from the novel by Rafael Sabatini. He spent seven months producing it and all the hard work did not go in vain. It was enthusiastically received by the audience of the 44th St. Theatre where it opened on October, 11th 1923.

The story was set against the background of the French Revolution, Ramon Novarro giving a fine performance in the Mr. X role of Scaramouche and as the terror of the aristocrats, the fencing master. Alice Terry was beautiful in the role of Aline de Kerkadiou with sumptuous costumes and wigs. Lewis Stone gave one of the best performances of his career as the lazy and frivolous middle-aged popinjay in laces and satins, ready to kiss or kill at a moments notice.

The cast list is long and all the actors proved to be good in their parts under Ingram's direction. They included George Siegmann as Georges Jacques Danton, the long haired and pock marked orator and leader, Willard Lee Hall as the drunken Kings lieutenant, who executes his role with great finesse. Ingram directed his actors with restraint and spared no effort to achieve accuracy. The splendid exteriors full of detail and the interiors which made the most of showing either palatial surroundings or clay hovels, contributed immensely to the atmosphere. Lighting was also an important factor in this respect and John F. Seitz achieved the right feeling in his collaboration with Ingram on this.

The production was full of contrasts which emphasised the gulf between the rich and poor of that day e.g. - the film shows crippled, starving sightless people begging for bread in the streets. Then, the exquisitely dressed Marquis de la Tour d'Azyr, an aristocrat, comes out on to the street.

Ingram also employed special effects in this film, one such showing four lighted candles burning down to the hilt to suggest the passing of time.

As a final touch to the production, at the end, a young artillery officer is brought into the story, he turns out to be Napoleon Bonaparte.

This production turned out to be a great credit to Ingram and his team as it combined, as "The Screen" said - "Mr. Ingram's deft artistic touch and most competent cast" with a marvellous story resulting in an exceptional and engrossing film.

The Arab (1924)

At this time the film industry was constantly being interfered with by business interests. The stars whose reputations and fame were growing sought control and actors like Chaplin, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks formed their own companies.

D. W. Griffith realised that the era of the producer/director was over, as he said to Ingram at the time - "We're building on sand Rex, just building on sand".

Ingram knew that Griffith was right and that to survive he must leave Hollywood.

He decided to go to North Africa, a place which had fascinated him since childhood. The production to be made there was called "The Arab" adapted from Edward Selwyn's play.

The story is set around the hatred of the Mohammedans for the "Infidels". The hero of the tale is Jamil, played by Ramon Novarro who works as a porter or dragoman. He is the outcast son of a sheik. He is friendly with a missionary's daughter Mary Hilbert, played sympathetically by Alice Terry. Jamil loves being read to from The Bible by Mary and is very proud of the few words of English he has learned.

Dr. Hilbert, the missionary, sets up his headquarters near to a mosque. The Governor of the district aims to create trouble between the Mohammedan population against the few white people and their christian converts. Jamil returns to his father and asks for his help to save the foreigners. Just in time, he rounds up enough of his father's followers to defeat El Kirouan and save the day.

Among the notable performances in this film were - Ramon Novarro's and Alice Terry's as Jamil and Mary, Gerald Robert Shaw as Mary's father, Justa Iribe as Myrza and Paul Vermoyal who was excellent as Iphraim.

In this film Ingram did his utmost to express the atmosphere of the desert. He enlisted many native types to give authenticity to the film. While in North Africa he cultivated relations with the Bey of Tunis. He was interested in the Arab way of life and culture. His friendship with the Bey proved useful to Ingram's moviemaking as, no matter what his needs were, from genuine Arab costumes to herds of camels, his powerful friend saw that he got it.



19. THE ARAB

He even presented Ingram with his own "court jester" - "Shorty" Ben Mairech, a midget who was always there to entertain him.

In "The Arab" Ingram used these natural locations and extras to produce absorbing and interesting scenes of great pictorial value. The scenes are unmistakably genuine, showing caravans of Bedouins, life in the streets of Biskra, and, scenes showing low white buildings, odd narrow streets and interiors where one sees Mohammedans sipping Turkish coffee while playing chess. The critic of "The Screen" remarks on the "impressive stretches showing Arabs in white burnous seated on the hot sands in the scanty shade of a few palm trees" and "the sight of the great arched wall of striking length is impressive and compelling. This critic made the important point about this film that "its artistic worth is undeniable".

Ingram's approach had brought visual excitement and quality to "The Arab".

A Selection of Ingram's Fine Art Work from 1921 - 1926.

Los Cuatre Jinetes del Apocalipso

This loose but strong drawing of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse must have been executed around the same time as Ingram's film was in production.

The four horsemen emerge dynamically from a bank cloud. They are thrown into relief by the sun setting behind wisps of dark cloud.

This drawing expresses the atmosphere of the horsemen galloping across the sky. It could possibly have been used as a visual for the climactic scene of Ingram's famous film. It shows Ingram's knowledge of anatomy and composition.



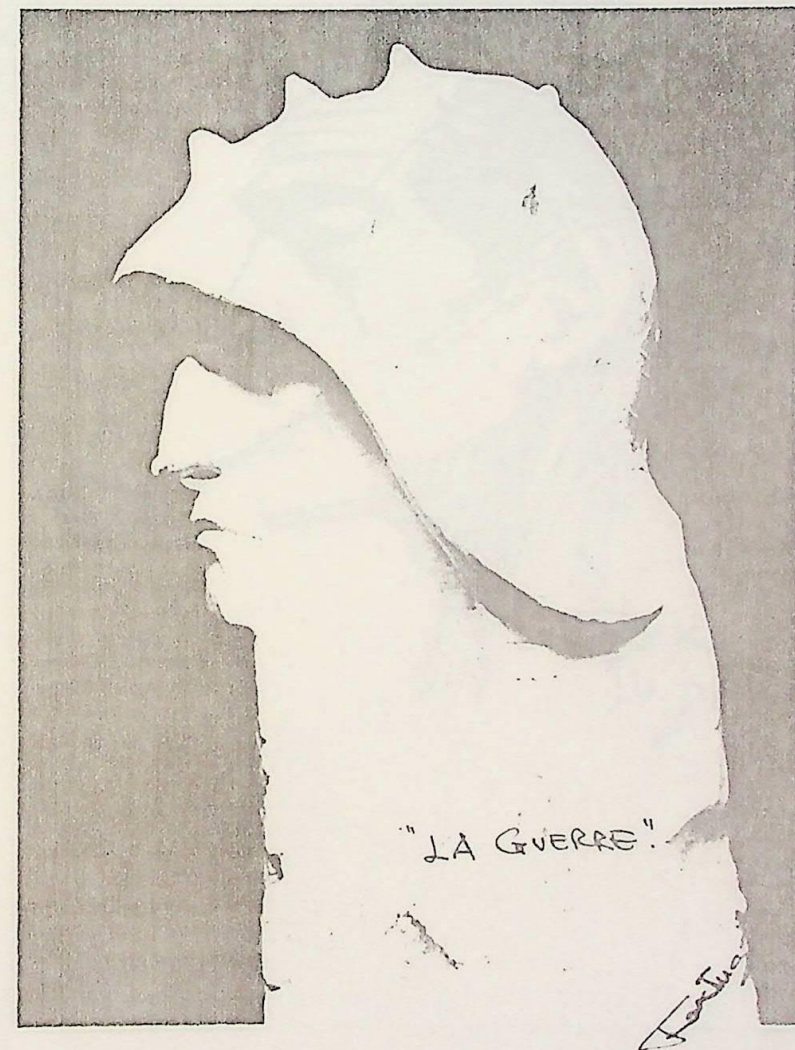
20.

La Guerre

This piece of sculpture was executed in 1921 by Rex Ingram. It is a head of lifesize proportions showing one of the four horsemen - WAR. The head was placed in the foyer of the movie theatre in New York where the Four Horsemen opened.

La Guerre is a strong, aggressive piece of sculpture expressing its title in the bulk of the piece. The determined features of the face and the angular, simplified shapes used, lend themselves to the subject.

The face with its sharply formed nose and firm mouth is given a sinister appearance by the shadow cast over the eyes by the helmet. The helmet itself reminds one of a German coal-scuttle type, sharp points stick out from it like those on the back of a prehistoric monster. The strong form of the head appears to have grown from the base on which Ingram's name has been inscribed.



21.

This is a life size head of war. I made it for the West
Lobby. In the opening of the "Four Horsemen" in
N.Y.

Self Portrait

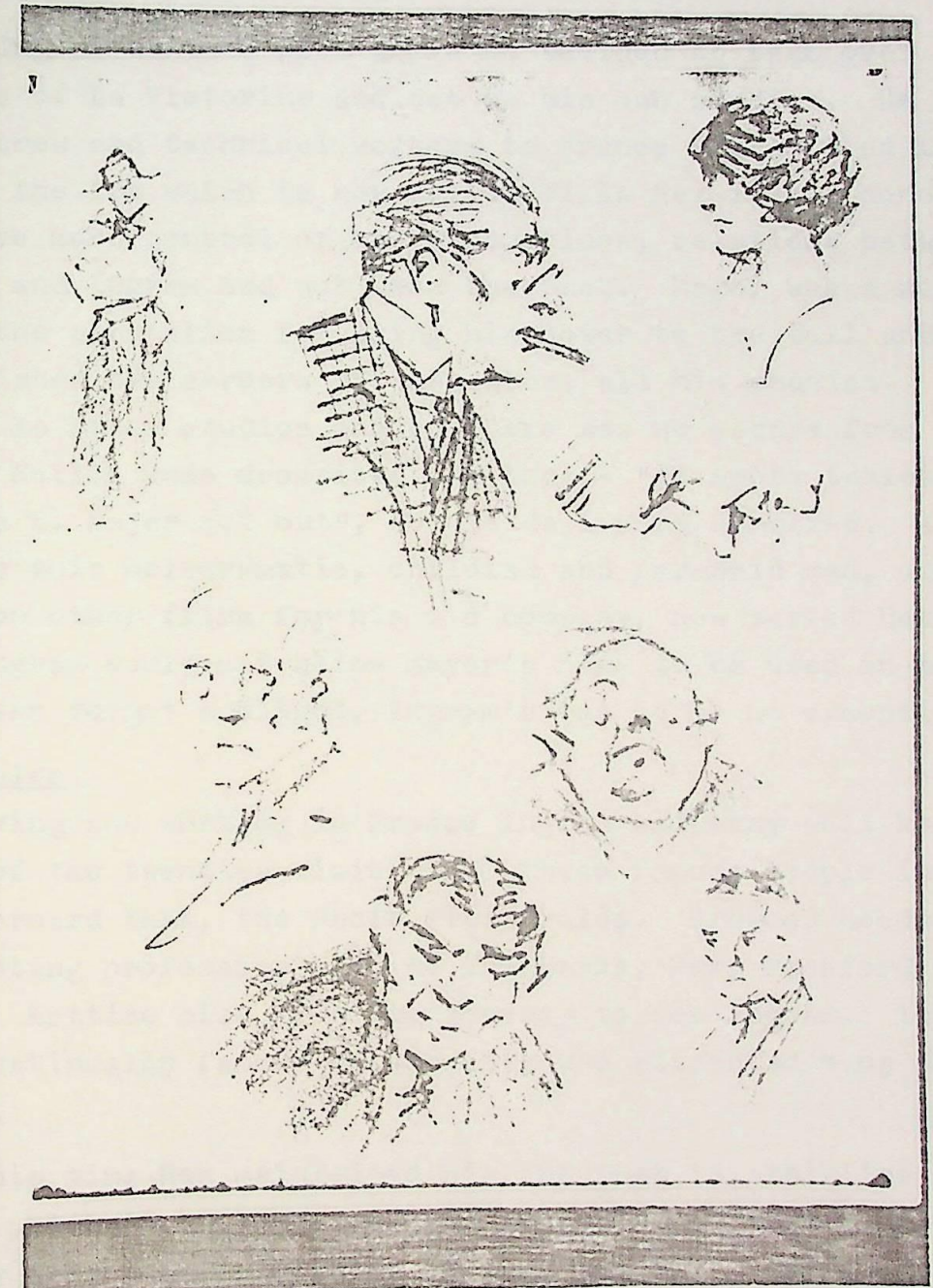
This strong crayon drawing of Ingram himself, drawn in 1924 shows a direct and crisp treatment of the subject. The drawing has a definite sculptural quality and the features show a resemblance to those of his sculpture La Guerre (1921) in their angularity and expression. Heavy shadows beneath the eyes and chin throw the head into relief. Ingram has treated this drawing almost as a caricature of himself, emphasising his most prominent features in its execution. His keen eye and hand came into their own to express their subject.



Sketches on an envelope

This collection of quick sketches show how Ingram was always aware of the people around him and on the look out for a memorable face.

The drawings are quick and effective, capturing essential qualities of different "types" of people and showing the spontaneity of Ingram's expression. This type of drawing must have proved helpful to him, while visualising scenes and characters for his films. This observation is evident in many of his movies in choice of actors and extras.



23.

CHAPTER SIX

INGRAM IN NICE

Settling In

Ingram enjoyed the experience of film-making away from the Hollywood pressure and interference, he considered that a director was the best illustration of the term "fall-guy", that he could imagine. "He is the one upon whose shoulders all of the blame invariably falls if the picture is not good - and if it is good, he is not always the one to get the thanks".

In 1924 Ingram went to Nice where he decided to take over the old buildings of La Victorine and set up his own studios. He transported actors, crew and technical workers to France and settled into his own villa on the lot which is now called Villa Rex in his honour. Ingram would have more control of his productions, relations between Louis B. Mayer and Ingram had not been the best. Mayer was a notorious rogue who had the reputation for using his power to the full and is said to have finished the careers of just about all his enemies. His influence extended to other studios and so there was no escape from his wrath. Marshall Neilson once described him thus - "An empty taxicab drove up and Louis B. Mayer got out", so his days were numbered. Ingram could not abide this melodramatic, childish and paranoid man, and while working on other films for his old company, now called Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Ingram would not allow Mayer's name to be used in the credits. Mayer never forgot a slight, Ingram's was to be no exception.

Life in Nice

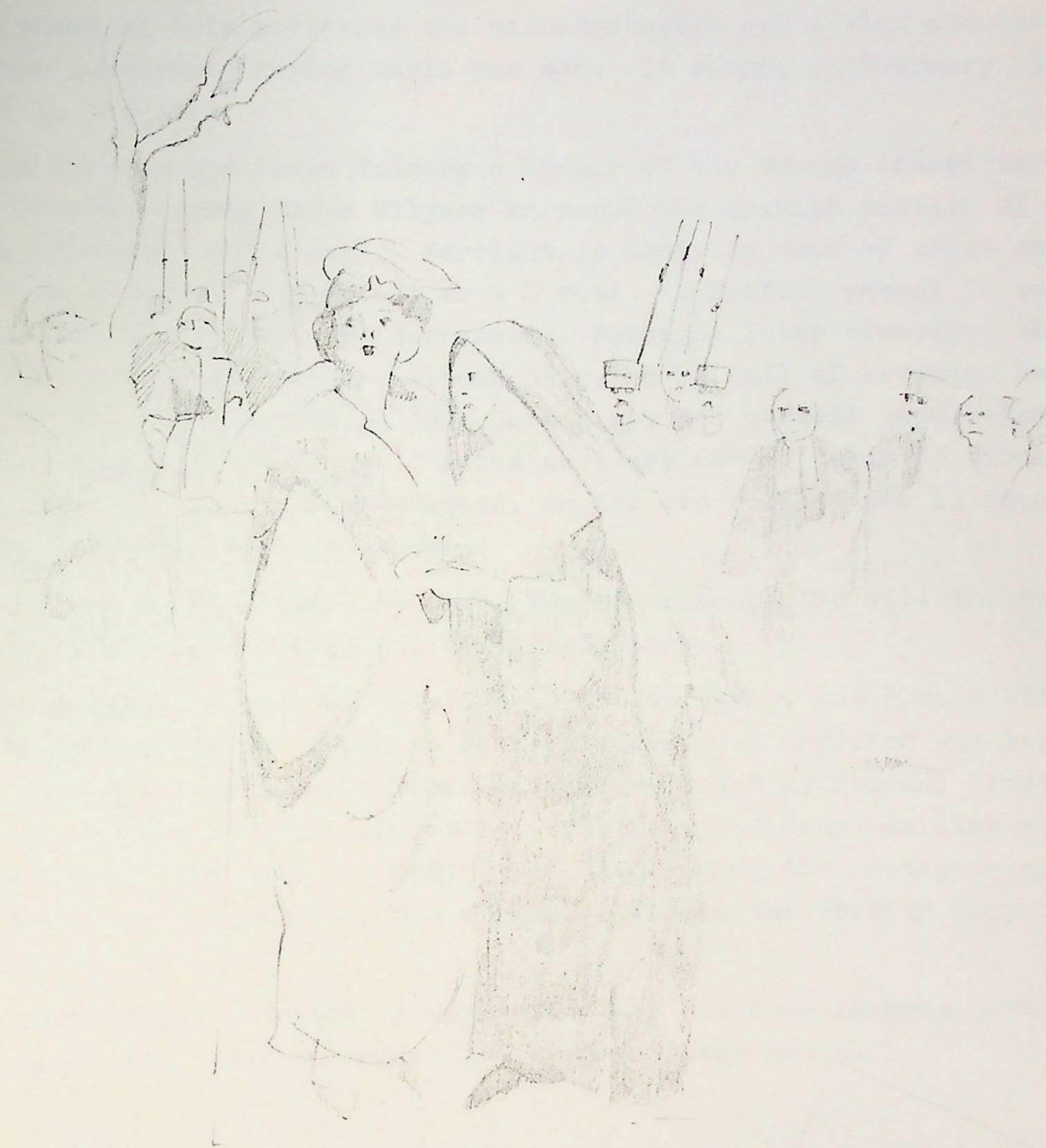
While living and working in France Ingram had many well known personalities of the twenties visit him. These famous people included George Bernard Shaw, the Scott Fitzgeralds. Crowned heads and those in the acting profession such as Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplin. Mattise also made the journey to see Ingram. Ingram became an internationally famous personality who attracted many artistic visitors.

During this time Rex maintained his interest in athletics and boxing, and took pride in his physical appearance. In looks he compared well with any of the matinee idols of the day.



The Ingrams, who had no family of their own, decided to adopt a young Arab boy in the hopes of completing their lives. Unfortunately, the arrangement did not work out and was discontinued.

All in all, the Arab lifestyle and culture was attractive to him, he became a Mohammedan. His work in sculpture and drawing continued.



Mare Nostrum (1924-26)

This film from Blasco Ibanez's story was Ingram's personal favourite and starred Alice Terry in her greatest role.

The theme of this movie was the Wilhelmstrasse spy system and the German submarines during World War One. It opened on February 15th 1926 in New York.

Alice Terry plays Freya Talberg a member of the German secret service and Antonio Moreno plays Ullyses Ferragut the Spanish captain of the "Mare Nostrum" his vessel. Ferragut is badly in need of cargo and ferries a German officer out to a U boat. A British vessel is sunk by a submarine in the Mediterranean. Ferragut later discovers that his son was killed on the British ship, he is full of revenge, but has fallen in love with Freya. The German spy has herself been betrayed by her countrymen. Freya is arrested as a spy and is taken to Vincennes where she is shot by firing squad, on her own request she is executed in furs and expensive clothes.

By the end of the film, the hero, the heroine and the villains have all died. There is no happy ending to this tale.

Mare Nostrum was shot on location in Spain, Italy, and France with fine acting from Antonio Moreno as Ferragut. Andrews Engleman was impressive as the U boat commander. Other parts were taken by Michael Brantford, Rosita Ramirez and Fernand Mailly. The film had many exciting scenes, particularly the ones concerning the handling of the deadly German U boats. As for example, the submarine stalks the British ship and sinks her.

The film closes with the special effect of nebulous figures beneath the sea which gives an impressive ending to the movie.



26. THE MAGICIAN

The Magician (1926)

The Magician opened in October of 1926 as part of the Seventh Anniversary celebration of the Capitol Theatre of New York.

The screenplay taken from a story by Somerset Maugham was staged admirably by Rex Ingram. Critic Merdaunt Hall had this to say - "One appreciates that a story might be dull and ordinary, but in Mr. Ingram's hands it appears on the screen with subtlety, polish and spark".

The film tells the story of a surgeon Dr. Haddo who believes that the blood from the heart of a maiden will bring life to a dead body. The mad doctor does not consider that in order to achieve his aim he must murder the girl. He discovers that he can hypnotise Margaret Dauncy, whom he marries and decides will be the object of his experiment. The couple, after their marriage, go to Monte Carlo where Margaret, following her husband's instructions, wins a fortune on the gambling tables.

Dr. Arthur Burden pursues the girl but Dr. Haddo's cunning is too much for him. Alice Terry, as Margaret Dauncy and Paul Wegener as the blood-hunting Dr. Haddo, took the main roles, while Ivan Petrovitch played the part of Dr. Burdon. Ingram's direction of the film added a lot to the story. He always went in search of realistic props and researched the background to his movies. To quote Mordaunt Hall - "The accuracy of the little ideas in this film is enough to make one marvel", and noted - "his keen attention to detail".

Among these details he insisted on for The Magician was a hooded cobra in a side show of a carnival, real French bank notes and telegrams, and high value square, mother of pearl gambling chips.

The overall combination of Ingram's direction and Somerset Maugham's story was a cinematic success.



27. THE GARDEN OF ALLAH

The Garden of Allah (1927)

This production was Ingram's last for M.G.M. and entailed over six months work on location in Algeria and the South of France. All of the cast but, for Ingram's wife Alice Terry, were European, but this did not impede his getting good performances from them.

The novel by Robert Hitchens was given the cinematic treatment by Ingram and opened in September of 1927 in the Embassy Theatre, New York.

The story set against an impressive and exotic background, is one of the love affair of Domini Enfielden and Boris Androvsky. Boris is in reality a Trappist monk who has forsaken life in the monastery, and whose real name is Father Adrien. The real identity of Boris is discovered by Count Anteonio who remembers him from a visit to the monastery.

The film which Ingram directed proved to be a beautiful piece of work, with scenes of the desert caravans crossing the sands, and his crowd scenes and those of Biskra. Ingram visually conceived the story artistically in the composition of his exteriors, expressing the vastness of the desert and the beauty of the mosques and minarets of the city, and its pretty gardens.

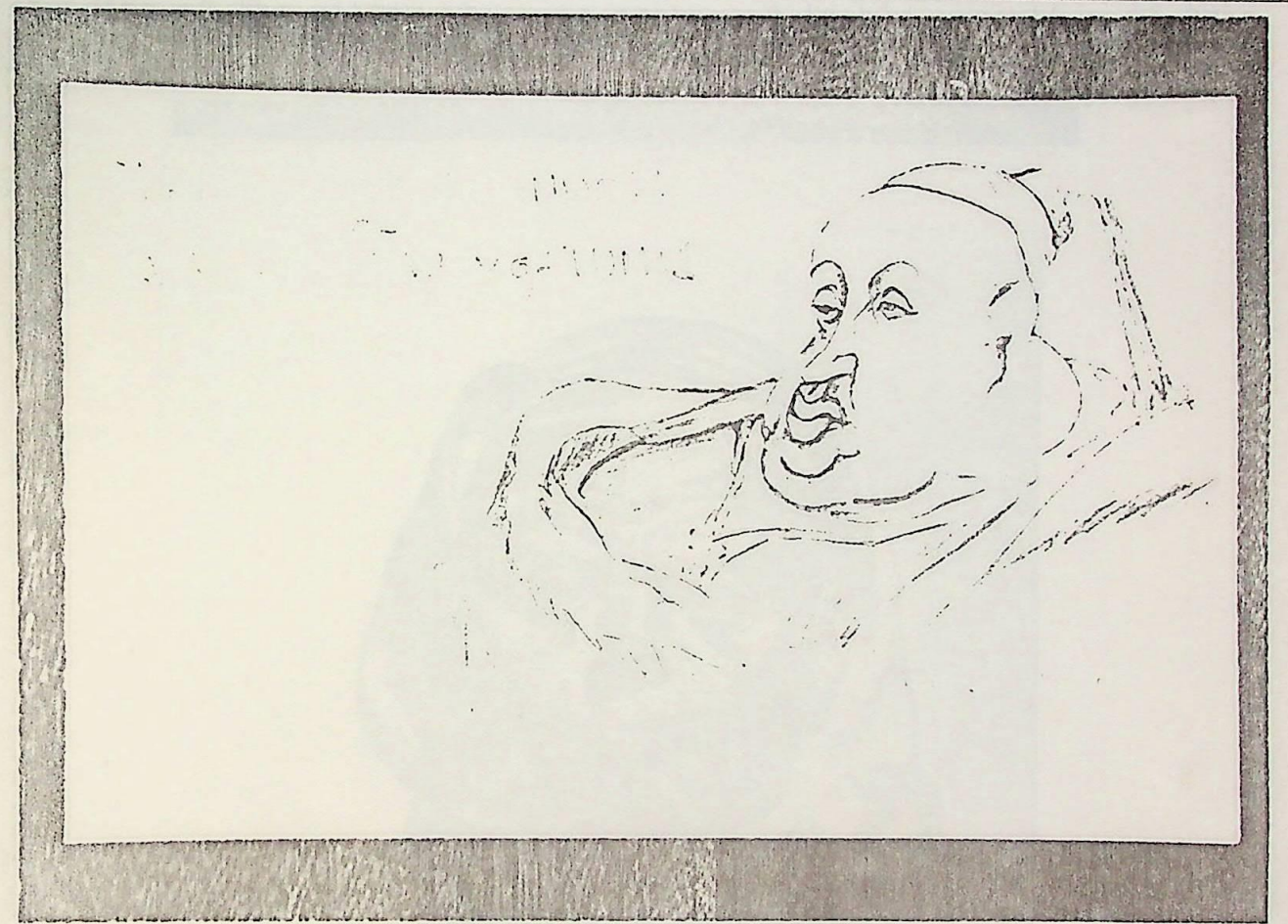
The lovely Alice Terry played Domini Enfielden to Ivan Petrovitch's Boris. Ingram got good performances from his cast in their various roles and succeeded in relating the episodes of this movie with style and dexterity.

After this film Louis B. Mayer had his revenge on Ingram and had him fired.

A Selection of Ingram's Fine Art Work from the 30's on:
The Chief Eunuch of S.E. the Bey of Tunis

The wash and pencil sketch of this member of the court of the Bey of Tunis, expresses the sleepy eyed and languid character. The use of flowing line and bread wash treatment along with shading moulds the pendulous flesh and drapery of the subject.

This drawing is only one of many which Ingram executed during his period of association with the Tunisian court. In fact Ingram's varied work and achievements were to be rewarded and acclaimed with his receiving the Order of Nichan Iftkar from the Bey of Tunis.



Head of a Jester ("Shorty" ben Mairech)

This bust is of the jester who was presented to Ingram by the Bey of Tunis. "Shorty" ben Mairech, a midget, was to remain with, and entertain Ingram at any time. In this piece Ingram tried to express some of the character of his small friend. The head once again as in other sculptures by Ingram emerges from the base which is inscribed in Arabic. The folds of the man's head-dress drape over the sides of the base softening the shape. Ingram gives the features of the subject a certain sternness which one would imagine to be out of character with a "clown" theme. Perhaps Ingram had penetrated the subject's character to show another side of the man. Ingram's handling shows an understanding of the sitter which is expressed in his execution of this piece.



African Head

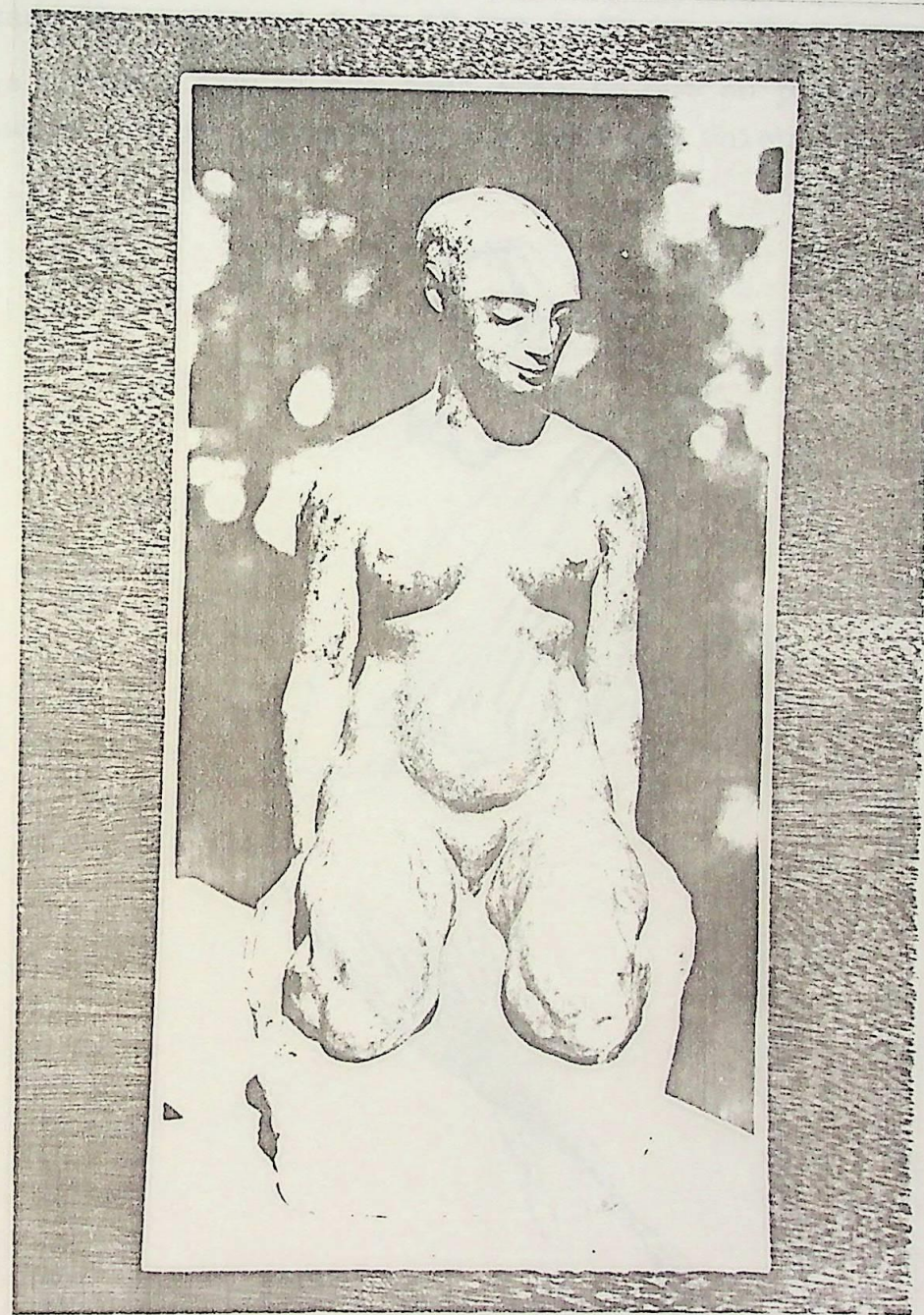
This piece of sculpture shows the influence which Ingram's stay in Africa had on his work. The head combines the simplicity of both Art Deco and traditional carving styles in one.

The head which is balanced on a slender neck has a noble expression. The features having been sensitively formed add to this effect. The smooth texture is shown throughout with the forehead stretching back to a contrasting, slightly decorated hairline. Overall there is a serene quality about this subject which Ingram has brought out in the piece.



Mother Earth

In this piece Ingram has taken the theme Mother Earth and has used the female human form to express it. He has used this figure to communicate the benign quality and fruitfulness of the earth. The sculpture has a very relaxed yet, aware, feeling about it. The figure itself is soft and expressive, the hands grow from the stone providing a link between the earth and life. The outdoor setting is very suitable to the subject which illustrates nature.



Papa Thomopoulos (1932)



This is I think my personal favourite of Ingram's sketches, which was drawn in Morocco in 1932.

It is a marvellously lively piece of work, reminiscent of such spontaneous work by Toulouse Lautrec. It shows Ingram's great ability to capture the fleeting expression of a particular personality.

The rotund subject appears to be almost bursting at the seams, his pose is almost threatening. The loose treatment is expressive and effective in its communication of the subject. His face is drawn with a sure handling of line, while the use of shading which moulds and shapes, expresses the mass and form of the body.

In this drawing Ingram has been able to put on paper a character who had caught his eye, stressing the features which made him memorable.





Ingram's penultimate film from a novel by Cosmo Hamilton, released by United Artists.
Alice Terry, Ivan Petrovitch and Andrews Engleman starred.
This year marked Alice Terry's retirement from the screen.



34. BAROUD

Baroud/Love in Morocco (1933)

Rex Ingram's first and only venture into talking pictures was a production for Gaumont British called Baroud (meaning "tribal warfare").

The film was based on a story by Rex Ingram himself and Benno Vigny, dealing with two officers of the Spahis regiment. One officer was a Frenchman and the other, the son of a Berber Chieftain. When Hamed the Berber, discovers that his friend Duval has fallen in love with his sister, the Moorish custom requires that he kill the infidel.

A bandit chief violates a treaty with Hamed's father and there is war between the tribes. Duval and his Spahis help fight off the bandit and in gratitude, the old chief gives the infidel his daughter in marriage.

Ingram himself acted the role of Duval effectively if, somewhat self-consciously. Andrews Engleman as Si Amarok the bandit gave a memorable performance. Rosita Garcia was Zina and Pierre Batcheff played Si Hamed with Felipe Montes as Si Allah.

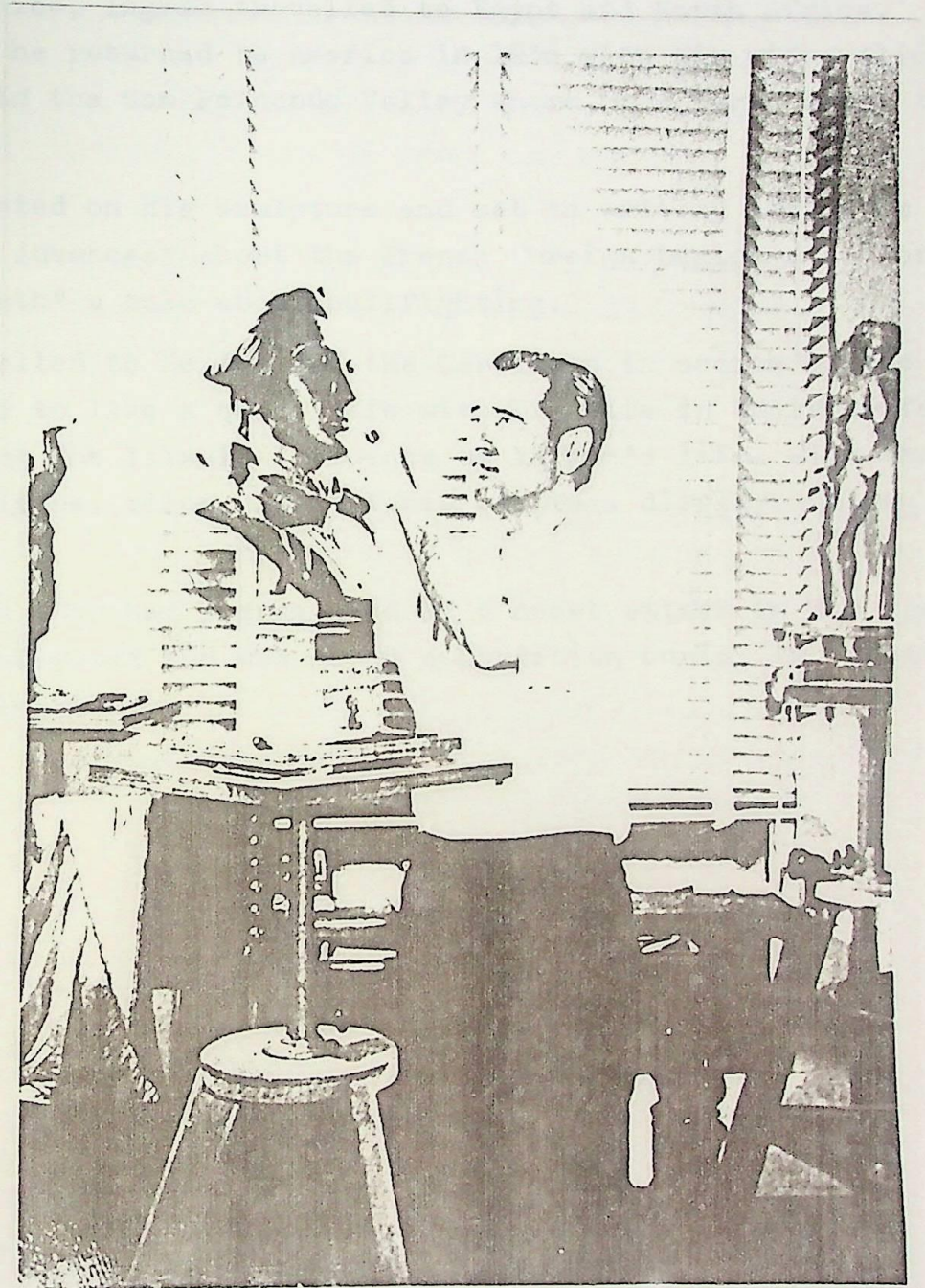
Andre Sennwald of "The New York Times" commented on the pictorial qualities of Baroud - "A charming recreation of Moroccan atmosphere and dark beauty of its people as idealised by Ingram's camera". On Ingram's eye for the atmospheric details he says "The picture is flooded by picturesque types, Spahis, African serving women, beggars, dancing girls, bandits from the desert and sinister Europeans".

Ingram's photography was as ever, beautiful, forming the ideal background to the action.

Baroud was the second of Ingram's independent productions but was to be his last.

Sound films did not suit Ingram who was so absorbed in what movie-making is all about - the visual expression. In an interview in 1939 he said - "In the old days the director and the cameraman put on the whole show. I had one cameraman, John F. Seitz, all the time. Today, you're dominated by sound equipment".

35. Ingram at work in his studio on a bust of the Chevalier de Johnstone, the aide of Bonnie Prince Charlie and ancestor of Ingram.



Retirement

After Baroud was complete Ingram lost his studio. He fought a court case against Eduard Corniglioni-Molinier, his partner, but Rex lost.

The studios in Nice went on to work under its old name of La Victorine, to the present time. Many famous films were made there including "Les Enfants du Paradis".

The studio itself was featured strongly in Truffeauts film about the making of a feature film "Day for Night" ().

On leaving Nice, Ingram travelled to Egypt and North Africa. After some years, he returned to America in 1936 with his wife, Alice Terry and stayed in the San Fernando Valley where Miss Terry lives to this day.

He concentrated on his sculpture and set to writing two books - "The Legion Advances" about the French Foreign Legion and "Mars in the House of Death" a tale about bullfighting.

Ingram travelled to Mexico and the Carribean in search of the exotic. He continued to live a quiet life with his wife in their comfortable home, showing the Islamic influence on Ingram's life, with the carved inlaid furniture, tiles, and Islamic writings displayed along with his sculpture.

On July 22nd 1950 Rex Ingram died of a heart attack in The Park View Hospital, Hollywood and was given a Christian burial in Forest Lawn on July 26th, 1950.

C O N C L U S I O N

In conclusion I would like to quote from a letter, written by Lee Lawrie to Ingram's father on Rex's death.

"Sometimes we hear someone spoken of as a "shining light". Reginald, wherever he happened to be, whether in the classroom, in a gathering of people, or at work, radiated the fine elements of his personality. I believe he had more abilities and finer grace in exercising those abilities than I have seen in anyone else I have ever known. His discerning judgment on the Fine Arts used to astonish me, even when I first knew him he could see the best points in a work of art, and this same gift allowed him to see the good and the best in whatever came within his consideration".

From what I have learnt of Rex Ingram while writing my thesis, I think that this description by Lawrie must encapsulate the essence of Ingram's character. He appears to have been an all round artist whose talents brought new qualities and insights to whatever he worked on, not least of all, cinema.

His contributions to the field of cinema work in the early days of the moview brought a Fine Art approach to film as a visual medium. This was apparent in the highly praised qualities of his films. His work has been recognised both by his contemporaries and modern film critics.

Ingram has been honoured by Yale University in receiving an honorary degree from that institution, he was awarded the Order of Nichan Iftkar from the Bey of Tunis and the Legion of Honour from the French Government.

Ingram as an artist and man realised many ambitions through his love of his work and his dedication to visual art.

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