

Gone With The Wind Is Screen's Finest

By ALFRED E. MCGINLEY

GONE With the Wind is the most remarkable picture Winnipeg has seen. It fully merits every word of praise that has been said or written of it. Undoubtedly the most faithful picturization of a novel attempted by the film industry it does full justice to Margaret Mitchell's story of the Old South. It has been but very little changed, and has not been cut, and although much longer than any picture should be, yet the time does not hang heavily on one's hands for the romance of Scarlett O'Hara is always interesting, and at times tragically filled with suspense. It will live as one of the greatest pictures ever made, and will undoubtedly richly recompense the producing company that invested a fortune in its production.

Long before the time for starting the picture on Friday night the Capitol theatre was filled by an eager crowd. The picture is presented with a ten minute intermission and while the first portion is exceedingly good, yet the most dramatic part, as in the story, is in the latter half. At the conclusion it was greeted with applause, an unusual tribute to a screen performance.

The story of Gone With The Wind is so well known that it is not necessary to detail it here. Also the picture itself has received so much advance publicity, as to the lavish manner of its staging and the huge number of extras employed in the realistic big scenes that there is little need for more than passing reference to that phase of its excellence. It is enough to say that every promise as to magnitude of production has been kept to the letter, and that the Technicolor employed enhances rather than detracts from its entertainment value.

Naturally most interest will centre on the merit of the individual acting. Some critics have said that Clark Gable, as Rhett Butler, easily captures the acting honors. He was a natural for the part and in it probably does the finest work of his career. Always cynical, bitter and hard, he becomes by turns brutal and tender in his treatment of Scarlett but through it all gives a perfect presentation

of the character as Miss Mitchell conceived it.

The performance of Vivien Leigh, as Scarlett O'Hara, rises to heights. More than once she completely dominates the action. Possibly a little light and casual in her earlier scenes she develops with the story and is dramatic when the action calls for it. A beautiful woman, endowed physically with the attributes of Scarlett, she also successfully takes on the mentality and character of Miss Mitchell's heroine and in all gives a wonderful performance. Whether it will be regarded as sufficiently good to win the Academy award over such competition as Bette Davis has provided in Dark Victory and other films of the year is a question on which this reviewer would not care to pronounce. Certainly she plays her present role as well as Miss Davis could have played it, and probably better than others who were named. For instance it is not possible to imagine Norma Shearer as a successful Scarlett.

Leslie Howard, as Ashley, appears to play with restraint. The role calls for this to a degree but Howard overdoes it a little, although in one scene with Scarlett he is superb. Olivia deHavilland is properly sweet and sympathetic as Melanie, while there are any number of fine characterizations among the supporting roles. Hattie McDaniel is outstanding as Scarlett's Mammy, while Thomas Mitchell does a fine job in the role of Gerald. A famous actor of 20 years ago on the speaking stage, in the person of Laura Hope Crews brings Aunt Pittypay vividly to life.

But it is on the shoulders of Miss Leigh and Mr. Gable that the burden of the work falls and they assuredly win high honors. Such a performance was to be expected of Mr. Gable but Miss Leigh amazed her Winnipeg audience by her general excellence in the role. It does not meet the case to use the usual phrase that this actress is "going places," for she has arrived at the peak of her career and thoroughly merits the general commendation she has received.

Gone With the Wind is a great achievement. It is hardly sufficient to say it is the greatest picture Winnipeg has ever seen—it is probably more nearly true to predict that it will be a long, long time before its equal appears.