ties it all up neatly in the end, in a lovely little package. Tony marries Joe's boy; Joe and Elliott shake hands over a bottle of red wine; Elliott gets back his drive to work, is going to marry Carlotta, and the desert, it is implied, will blossom like the rose.

Only the Okies, driving by in their tin-can cars, are left to rot, the prey of the dust bowl, the banks, the vigilantes, the Associated Farmers, whose role in despoiling the American scene is never touched upon at all.
the play would not be worth this much space, despite its literate (and very talky) quality, were it not for the fact that the playwright shows definite ability to grasp serious material and transmute it into dramatic terms. This material, and a handful of good characterizations, could have been turned to more vital purpose had Miss Treadwell spent a little more time, a little more thought, on exactly what it was she meant to say, and examined more deeply the causes for the tragedy she
portrays. Then she would have understood the basic reasons for Elliott's chauvinism; for the horrible, uprooted existence of the Okies; for the facts of starvation and demoralization in the face of plenty.

In the major roles, the Guild has cast a host of fine performers: Fredric March (as Elliott) offers one of his best characterizations; he is even better on the stage than on the screen. His wife, Florence Eldridge, has womanly charm and a fine sympathetic quality as Carlotta. I was particularly impressed by the performance of young Judy Parrish as Elliott's daughter, Tony. She was exactly right; she possesses vitality, intelligence, and a quality of intensity that is stirring to watch. Alan Reed (as Joe de Lucchi) was cut more in the conventional stage-Italian pattern, but had moments of real conviction, especially in his long speech about the land. The reliable Doro Merande was very amusing in an extraneous role of job-seeker.

Alvah Bessie.

## A Rake Reforms

Alfred Hitchcock's production of "Suspicion". . . . A seasick elopement.
A film like Suspicion deserves serious consideration, although not serious praise. Here is an attempt at a screen translation of an authentic masterpiece. Francis Iles' Before the Fact is one of the few great murder mysteries of the world, excellent alike in characterization and in construction. A tale of a pleasant murderer and a woman born to be murdered, it moves to a supremely satisfactory conclusion-the heroine's sticky end. No book better deserved faithful reproduction; and none has been more grotesquely distorted by the movies. For, to make a Roman holiday and allow the girls to go on loving Cary Grant, Francis Iles' beautiful plot has been butchered. Suspicion moves grimly toward its inevitable cli-max-and then, in a shamefaced and hurried



# art to aid the defense in oklahoma BOOK TRIALS 

(Above) Pictures by Peggy Bacon and Harry Stromberg, (left) by Edith Glazer, (right) by Ella Poll.
Four of the pictures included in the art sale and auction, which will be held at the Puma Gallery, 59 West 56th St., New York, from December 3 to 7. A long list of artists, whose work has been donated to aid the defendants in the trial (they were imprisoned for the possession of books), include Bacon, Biddle, Curry, Davis, Fiene, Gropper, Groth, Walkowitz, Young, Gellert, Ishikagi, Jones, Kent, Lozowick, Matisse, Richter, Refregier, Schreiber, Spivak, Tschachasov, and others.


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two minutes, tacks on an innocent and quite impossible ending. It seems he really wasn't a murderer, only a thief, and he's now completely reformed anyway. And his droopy wife, far from dying of an undetectable poison, goes home to live happily forever after. Not all of Hitchcock's directional skill can make that ending hold water.

More's the pity. The rest of Suspicion is little short of magnificent. You believe in that murderer. You shudder when Cary Grant smirks at his wife; and when the delicate and wistful Joan Fontaine is terrified, your heart and lungs fairly wilt in sympathy. The study of a young girl impulsively falling in love with which the film begins is admirable. Never descending into sentimentality, Hitchoock and Miss Fontaine achieve the height of appealing helplessness. Poor Lina is a predestinate victim. And even so trite a matter as a first kiss becomes, in Suspicion, a brilliant stroke of characterization.
As usual, Hitchcock makes brief shots tell a great deal of story. An elopement is managed subtly in the heroine's unavailing attempt to say goodby to her cheerful and oblivious parents; a whole background of shiftlessness, in the hero's casual dismissal of a bill for his new house. Compelled to resort, for his silly ending, to a wild motor ride along the edge of the cliffs, the director has made something rather startling out of that old standby. Did you think a wild drive in a film could ever scare you again? It can.
The actors are admirable too; unnecessarily so. Fine performers need not be wasted on trivial parts, and Cedric Hardwicke, reduced to a mutter and a mustache, is practically thrown away. May Whitty, similarly, has about ten lines. On the other hand, Nigel Bruce comes into his own with the most lovable and fatuous Englishman he has yet portrayed, a caricature with a heart. Nor was it fair to Cary Grant, after so incisive a study of a murderer, to degrade him into just another reformed rake. Miss Fontaine's Lina, though perhaps too reminiscent of the nameless heroine of Rebecca, is an exquisite blend of love and shudders.


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with skylark, let me analyze its pretty story in relation to the life we all know and inhabit, the real problems and agonies of real human beings. Here is a film made from a successful play which was made from a successful story. A lovely lady has been married for five years to an advertising executivegrounds for divorce in itself, that. He works hard, he supports her in luxury with butlers, he is faithful and reasonably fond. But his wife has a tragedy. Not until the last minute does he remember their wedding anniversary. Worse yet, the wife has to cringe before nasty people, so that hubby can get another million dollars' worth of business.

So she gets a divorce, not without a bird in the hand in the shape of a lawyer-gigoloyachtsman who wishes to marry her and take her out on the bounding wave. Unfortunately, her first taste of the bounding wave makes her seasick. In this condition she not unnaturally remembers the advertising man, cries out for him, and eventually follows him to South America.

Obviously, the only way to make such pap tolerable is to dress it up in so much erotic and comic excitement that the audience doesn't notice the story at all. Skylark is very nicely dressed indeed. Claudette Colbert is a honey and wears lovely clothes;. Binnie Barnes portrays an amusing tramp and wears lovely clothes. Funny, or almost-funny, things are always happening. The gentlemen grit their teeth and grind out wise cracks like hamburger. Here and there you get a real belly laugh, as in the inspired non sequitur of the subway scene. The seasick episode, moreover, does much to redeem Skylark. In extended pantomime Miss Colbert goes through the agonies of a small lady in large oilskins trying to make coffee she doesn't want in the undersized cabin of a wildly tossing boat.

Joy Davidman.

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