

However, it must be remembered that this is only one factor in the career of that ill-fated currency. Imports of raw materials, purchases of foreign currencies by German investors and business men, stop-loss sales of marks by foreign speculators: these are only some of the items which must be taken into account before definite statements about German exchange are essayed. Food imports alone, while important, are not decisive. Furthermore, it is a question whether the exchange débâcle itself, disastrous though it has been, has not had too much prominence in discussions of the German economic situation. Like the grain imports which are among its causes, the continuing depreciation of the mark should perhaps be regarded as but one element, though an extremely significant and disconcerting element, in a complicated series of economic movements not all of which are directed toward disaster.

The loaf itself, its composition and the sharing of its slices, are at all events among the most dramatic features of German life today. To the peasants the loaf and the grain quotas which make it up represent a species of taxation on behalf of the general population, in a year of short bread-grain crops. To the industrial workers they mean an unsatisfactorily small but assured daily ration at a price anchored against the torrent of paper marks. To the financier and manufacturer each cargo of foreign wheat forecasts a potential slump in exchange. To the Food Ministry and the Cabinet the problem is one of combining conciliation of the proletariat with propitiation of the peasants. Nobody is satisfied, but even that does not in this case prove that everything is splendid.

It is because nobody is satisfied with the loaf that the loaf has assumed proportions in dispute beyond its value in calories and pounds. That is why it is cut, portioned, sliced, weighed in scales against paper marks, measured, labelled with figures and percentages of costs, diagramed and charted—lithographed in colors to hang upon the wall.

JOHN LOWREY SIMPSON.

Battery Park: Sunday Afternoon

Under bluff bows the saucy tugboats hiss;
 Out Bedloe's Island way a siren drones. . .
 What right have I to dream of Argolis,
 Here in the North, with Winter in my bones!
 Steamers from ports immemorable churn
 Sour bilge and mud. I think such men as go
 Down to the sea in cargo ships return
 Knowing much less of marvel than we know.
 The skipper of the Sea Gull, taking toll
 Of many a dirty freighter limping in
 From hard-fought battles, full of English coal—
 I can imagine how he'd spit and grin,
 Hearing us idlers at our foolish tales
 Of old, lost harbors and their purple sails!

LESLIE NELSON JENNINGS.

Big Game in the Movies

THE most absorbing and satisfactory film we have ever seen is *Hunting Big Game in Africa* (at the Lyric Theatre). We have gone back over our trail, and, finding few superlatives lying across it, we repeat that these pictures of animals are simply not to be compared with the faked up adventures of bipeds. For a good long while now we don't want to see a human movie, nor anything on the screen remotely resembling a eucalyptus tree, an exclusive home, a beautiful daughter, a broken heart, a faithful dog, a cabaret scene, a tear, a curse, a revenge or an Alaskan sunset complete with snow and shoes for same.

So startlingly genuine are these pictures that they make even the best handmade human "realism" look like a cigar-store Indian. They show up mere human imagination as a poor feeble thing. Who could ever have imagined the at once comic and imposing spectacle of regiments of silly, decorative penguins, marching down the shore of a deserted South African island into the sea to bathe? It is easy to understand how poor old Father Maël made a mistake and baptized them. Individually grotesque and trivial, they are all together like a dramatization of human "mass-movements," in their thousands, their millions driven irresistibly forward, downward, into a sea which washes them back, or drowns them, or rocks them safely on its surface, in a unanimity which gives them dignity. There is no more solemn or more moving buffoonery than that of penguins on the march.

The penguins are apart from the rest of the film, which records animals surprised, chased, overtaken or killed in the long trek from Capetown through Bechuanaland and Zululand northward. The greater part of these animals are of that kind which an inexpert calls cattle when they are ugly and antelope when they are delicately formed. Thompson's gazelle is a shy, breakable little beast, infinitely swift, more like a shadow than an animal. At the other end of the scale is the Hartebeest, whose horns and ears together would make an uglier hatrack than is to be found in any boarding-house. There are all manner of quick-hooved, grass-eating, lion-fearing beasts in between. The gnu, when photographed very dark against the light grass of the plain, has queer lumps and curves, gargoylish proportions and excrescences—the kind of animal, part cow, part dragon, which Herodotus loved to talk about but luckily never saw. Best of them all are the small herds of Impala, jumping thirty to forty feet over thorn trees.

Across the screen comes a herd of some species of these beasts, elegantly goatlike, rocking from north to south. They are tired, no longer swift and bounding. The reason soon appears: a small ridiculous Ford shoots into the picture. The herd veers as the Ford tacks in a cloud of dust, and the whole audience roars at something obviously but inexplicably ridiculous: a black toylike machine chasing ownerless animals up and down Africa's thousands of fenceless miles. We all roar even louder as the solitary wart-hog, pursued by the Ford, turns and rends its radiator. Perhaps we are glad that the wart-hog was allowed to live. But nobody is sorry at the death of the hyena. A mean, shapeless beast, loping wearily, woodenly, now like a cat, and now like a dog, a solitary, sinister, tired monster pounding along alone on the plain, the least likely animal of all to boast of a pedigree.

The King of Beasts comes off badly in this film. He is called the king of sneaks, a huge evil-faced cat who never attacks in the open, but slinks along on his belly until he

is within springing distance. Here he is characteristically not in the open, but behind some low bushes over the top of which you see menacing eyes and a long back hovering undecidedly. The next minute he is dead and propped up on the ground like the harmless rug he will soon be. The rhinoceros, on the other hand, earns your respect. Not only on account of his size, or his 22-inch horn, but for a certain frankness and hearty intolerance. The thrill he gives you is almost prehistoric. We go back a good many thousand years when we see those two small black figures on the horizon, against the light grass. The grass waves, but those monsters, too powerful to seem ugly, are motionless—sentinels of disaster.

There are many extraordinarily well-composed pictures in the film, and this is one of them. Perhaps the finest of all, for its values of light and dark as well as its lines, is an oblique procession of laden camels at close range, against the background of one bare sun-baked rock. Most of the pictures, however, are more striking on account of the subject than the photography. One of the very strangest, yet far from a good photograph, is the expedition of the baboons to the watering hole. Perhaps the music heightened the effect of the halting, punctuated stride of these beasts, mistakenly walking on all their limbs. A long stride, as if alien to the ground it covered, the stride of neither biped nor quadruped, yet dignified, secure. One could form no picture of it unless by imagining the progress, on all fours, across volcanic slag, of graceful undertakers dressed in black poodle's fur. From the naked rocks at the water hole they plod slowly, mysteriously back into the recesses of a jungle as fascinatingly tangled as the jungle in the old pictures of *Swiss Family Robinson*.

I don't know much about animals. I don't even know what I like. But the giraffes will probably be the hardest of all to forget. The Ford chased them for days through the sparse high grass, scattered with those thin, flat-topped little trees which look as if they were turning their only two dimensions toward you; trees which might once have been trained by a Japanese, but are now a little ragged. Higher than the grass, ankle deep in the grass; higher than the trees, shoulder high to the trees, the giraffes are running slowly away. So slowly, with stiff legs, alert ears, and an infinitely weary undulation right in the middle of their necks. They are broadside now, and one can almost see their spots. Now the light changes, the plain is still a pale gray, but the giraffes are suddenly dark. Like a fleet of nightmares, the long, painfully bending and unbending necks soar above the trees. They are broadside to us still, pathetic, silent, tired, loping nightmares, but yet of this world. All at once they turn away from us down hill and we rake them fore and aft, beasts in a second become unbelievably thin and narrow, creatures all neck and legs rocking with awkward dignity down a hill that no longer belongs to this world. Queer dark cardboard cattle cantering on the plains of Mars.

How much more beautiful they can be than men, these animals, and how much uglier, and more tragic, and more absurd. How much stranger than anything of man's are the giraffes, and how much more terrible than man's terrors are the black ears of the African elephant fanning in anger above the branches of the jungle.

Less than ever are we interested in Hollywood, in California. Let's go out under the great African sky where a baboon is a baboon; into the great open spaces where a wart-hog can breathe.

ROBERT LITTELL.

Queen Elizabeth's Play

Will Shakespeare, by Clemence Dane. National Theatre. January 8, 1923.

MR. NORMAN-BEL GEDDES' setting for *Will Shakespeare* has somewhere between his studio and the theatre run into a mishap. As the scenes progress we get the curious impression that they were created by an artist of much invention and then lighted by a stagehand. One has only to look to see that the lighting used could not have been intended by the designer, who obviously would have spared himself the trouble of devising this remarkable variety of planes and structural lines if he could have known that his work would be half wasted in that wholesale, meaningless glare. In the scene backstage, for example, the glowing spot on the wall that the lantern throws, where Anne's mother will plead with Shakespeare to come to his dying son, where Marlowe and Mary Fitton will talk, and where later Shakespeare and Mary Fitton will be so passionately swept together, this glowing spot and its dramatic point is all lost in white light. The scene in Shakespeare's cottage is lit to the very top; its fire on the hearth, the day fading beyond the window, everything is lost in a paperish daylight proceeding from nowhere but drying up all. And so on, scene after scene, this electrical platitude proceeds. In cold blood one can see that Mr. Geddes' idea is striking and carefully searched, one can see the fine doors and recesses and subtle nuances of varied spaces; but over most of it the confusing and idle light spreads like a flock of geese turned on a garden. And so the performance, save where Miss Wright takes it in hand, is cheated of its mood.

In an odd sort of way this use of light on the production is a parallel to Miss Dane's use of the poetic style on the play.

Will Shakespeare is strictly an invention, Miss Dane is careful to remind us—not wholly the facts even as we know them. The story of the play is tepid, arbitrary and weak. *Will Shakespeare* on his farm at Stratford-on-Avon is married to a woman seven years his senior. He has never loved her but has been betrayed into marrying her by a lying tale of the coming of a child. Meanwhile we get the refrain, familiar in the weaker type of English poetry, of hedgerows, birds, spring and the may. Henslowe, quaint Elizabethan that he is—played with such conscientious quaintness by Mr. John Shine—comes by and entices Shakespeare with tales of the Queen and fame and fortune up to London. Shakespeare discovers his wife's trick and is free to rush away. Then we have London. The queen wants a great tragedy of this young poet. She sets her Mary Fitton to snare him and to rule his life into greater depths of creation. Romeo and Juliet is played. When the boy actor gets a fall Mary Fitton takes the part of Juliet. She rushes out into Shakespeare's arms. Afterward she forgets him again for her own light ways. She loves Marlowe. Shakespeare and Marlowe have a struggle in the Deptford Inn; Marlowe falls on his own dagger. Mary Fitton is banished to the country, the queen sets Shakespeare to work, for the glory of England.

There is moment after moment in this play where Miss Dane shows the same theatrical sense that she brought to her *Bill of Divorcement* last season in spite of that play's forced situations and frequent hollowness of dialogue. Some of the first scene, where the poet is drawn away from his old ties, has a good dramatic thrust to it. The