

# THE SCREEN

**THE MAN FROM BEYOND.** By and with Houdini. Directed by Burton King. Adapted by Cooldidge Streeter. Houdini also appearing in person. At the Times Square Theatre.

Houdini fighting the rapids of what is said to be and certainly' looks like Niagara River, Houdini climbing the outside wall of a building, Houdini releasing himself from binding cords and sheets, Houdini struggling with another man on the edge of a precipice—such things provide what interesting stuff there is in "The Man From Beyond," which opened at the Times Square Theatre last Sunday evening.

It is a stunt picture, but the trouble is it is not all stunts. It tries to be a dramatic composition and doesn't succeed. It starts out promisingly, though, with the assumption that a man incased in a cake of ice for a hundred years may be resuscitated and brought back from the Arctic to civilization to find his sweetheart of a century ago reincarnated in a girl of identical appearance. Many things might be done with this fantastic conception.

But none of them is done in "The Man From Beyond." Mr. Houdini's imagination seems to have run out at the inception of his idea. For the photoplay almost immediately drops into conventional melodrama, and, except for the isolated stunts, follows a well-worn course to a customary ending. And, although its photography is good, it shows practically no acting at all. Its players merely register certain stereotyped expressions.

Mr. Houdini also appears in person to perform in his usual manner. He causes a girl and an elephant to disappear and gets himself out of a straitjacket. He also appears to swallow four packages of needles, several yards of thread and a drink of water, after which the thread is pulled out of his mouth with the needles strung on it. This trick is mystifying.

**SISTERS.** Directed by Albert Capellani, with Seena Owen and Matt Moore. Adapted from a novel by Kathleen Norris. At the Cameo.

"Sisters," the photoplay which opened at the Cameo Sunday, is long drawn out and tediously verbose in many places, but it has its moments of genuine pictorial and dramatic strength and deserves to be especially commended for its sincerity. It is a preachment, and almost invariably sermons in films are tiresome, but it is possible for a photoplay to be interesting and have a moral at the same time, and it goes far toward acquiring this double, if doubtful, value, if it is sincere, as most cinema homilies are not, but as this one happens to be.

The subject is marriage, and the photoplay defends the institution, of course, but it does not manipulate puppets to show how blissful the married state can be if people will just be as adaptable as scenario writers can make them. It lays down the proposition, rather, that marriage imposes obligations on those who enter into it and that the least a man or a woman can do before declaring his or her particular marriage a failure is to give it a fair chance by meeting the imposed obligations. Otherwise, the marriage hasn't failed, but the married person has. He or she is simply a quitter.

Three of the characters in the photoplay are quitters. The fourth, a woman, accepts the stated view of marriage and when the story ends the three delinquents, one of whom is her husband, the other two being her sister and the man she had left, are being brought around to her way of thinking. Circumstances somewhat artificially arranged contribute to the final adjustment, it must be confessed, but the woman's argument is forcefully presented, nevertheless, and strengthened by the concluding scenes, in which no sudden change of character is revealed but instead the simple and natural determination of three people to try again.

Seena Owen, in the principal rôle, is effective, except in some of her close-ups, when her excessive make-up is disconcerting, and Mat Moore, as her husband, though too studiously "natural" at times, is more often persuasive. Gladys Leslie, as the second wife, has a number of good scenes, and some that are not so well done. The photoplay is generally excellent, and the direction of Mr. Capellani is undoubtedly responsible for many of the best things in the picture. It is a pity, however, that he permitted the film to become so long and so verbose.