

Enter The Vamp: 1937 Model

WILL H. HAYS has been Hollywood's censorship dictator for 18 years, come last March sixth. One of his major tasks in and always has been to keep vamps out of the movies. He began throwing them to the lions after Erich von Stroheim made "Foolish Wives" and he's been fairly busy ever since, with an eagle eye out for them tucked away in a script or hiding in the closet of a master bedroom on some isolated set.

Alarming howlers with tiger skins on the floor, transparent portieres, luxuriant divans covered with soft, Persian brocades, velvet cushions and ornate, lacquered ladies have frowned on—these many years.

Crisp, smart, modern are the watchwords of the moment. Pearlines must get their wiles into words since voices are heard on the sound-track. It becomes more difficult every day to be naughty—and talk about it.

NOT being a member of the Hays staff, I'm coming right out in meeting and say I miss the vamps. They amused me, entertained me and gave me a lot of pointers on what not to do in order to hold a man.

For, mind you, the vamps of old always pointed a moral. They didn't get away with a thing. The pure young sweetheart or wife invariably triumphed and the ardent siren became "a rag and a bone and a hank of hair" before she was through with it. If she stole a spouse, she had her taken away from her at the end of the picture.

And she was marvelous. Excuse me if I insist that Marietta Dietrich is a male counterpart of such gorgeous

AND it was some such thing as this that brought Mr. Will Hays out of his law offices and political potentialities onto the Hollywood scene, with banners flying and a loud wail from a far-flung public.

ERICH—vamps, booms, thighs, slinking, innuendo, sex, temptation, sirens, allure, Lorelei, Lilitha, Circe, Bella Donna, leopard skin tiger rugs, rose petals, incense, moonlight, "Three Weeks", "Avant—Bogone"—and let's clean up the debris!

Where they expected us girls to learn about life I've never been able to figure out, any more than I know what the present feminine generation does about its vamping, with no vamps to guide it.

Along with the sweetness of the young man on the fly; trapeze, the girl-who-dares-to-take-her-man-came-in-to-being, in the way of a dress—less dress. Visits to the local library brought suggestions from the world of flora, fauna and the sea. Reptiles came into favor as decoration over a snowy boom, while portraits exposing lovely ladies of the middle centuries were in great demand.

Today a leg means nothing in a bathing suit or a pair of play shorts, but when Nita Naldi appeared on the

or shall we say "undressed"—those wicked women of the silent! Adrian would have been baffled by the diaphanous garments, the lack of material, the scanty lace, the paucity of ruffles, frills and Gainsborough hats. How much to leave off and still be decent, was the cry of the dressmaker and designer. Keeping them dressed, and yet undressed—this was the problem confronting producer and public when negligees and décolletés were the vamp's delight. A pellucid scarf sufficed when Louise Glaum appeared in her spider-web gowns.

How to be daring in diaphanous caused brows to corrugate and nerves to snap like raw spaghetti when the big seduction scene unfolded from the script. Everybody, including the office stenographers, strained the imagination in an attempt to think of something breath-taking in the way of a dress—less dress. Visits to the local library brought suggestions from the world of flora, fauna and the sea. Reptiles came into favor as decoration over a snowy boom, while portraits exposing lovely ladies of the middle centuries were in great demand.

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how she fell through a mirror in her spider-web gown? There was a scene, with teeth in it!

"But I never got away with a thing," Miss Glaum admitted the other day. "I was the moral in the piece and from me young girls were expected to learn what not to do."

TIMES are getting tougher for Mr. Will Hays. The vamps are sneaking up on him, but he will have no trouble with their subtleties. They are as obvious as sunlight—with the exception of Lily Loach. Lily put on a dance exotic in "The Garden of Allah" which kept the audience silent as the grave, but inwardly excited. She is a lotus blossom, if ever there was one. Her hands have more sex appeal than all the implied nakedness of an earlier generation. That dance is still the talk of the town and probably the country.

As the alluring second wife of Paul Muni in "The Good Earth" she was a perfect Vietnamese, but, heavens, how she vamped him! She was Oriental in feeling, if not in look, and her dancing was again an undulating dream set to mysterious music in a Chinese setting.

She is our most deadly Circe at the moment and, given half a chance, she will mow down good husbands and devoted fiancés like wheat before a reaper. Auburn hair, gray-green eyes and a saffron look combined with a graceful, perfectly proportioned body and a dancing gift, along with a charming speaking voice—these will prove high explosives to the good girls of the screen.

REMEMBER when Myrna Loy was a vamp of Oriental extraction—with a face as secret as

all her sinuous meters may well consider before they attempt to out-beguile her, especially when she wears a low-cut gown.

Binnie Barnes is another who almost got her man, in "Three Smart Girls". She is moving into first position as the up-to-the-minute lady who captures the great lover, if he isn't careful. Binnie is a blond at the moment, clever, amusing and witty and her modern methods of vamping are becoming extremely popular at the boxoffice.

THEN there's Maria Shelton, a sultry young miss from Oklahoma, who has a sinister, arcane appearance and a captivating manner, which slays men, as Edmund Lowe in "Under Cover of Night," and sets M-G-M agog in hopes of another great feat—done in the modern manner.

Miss Greta Garbo likes a vamping role now and then, although such roles must be sympathetic and hot cut on the DeLilah pattern. She is willing to love her man to distraction, inside or outside the moral codes, but her wiles must be those of a lady. An exception, of course, is "Kathie", but "Kathie" has been an exception for every actress from Bernhardt to Jane Coward.

Queens are allowed a lot of latitude also, it seems, as, for example, Garbo's Queen Christina and Dietrich's Catherine of Russia. Both Dietrich and Garbo like Continental stories—hence it must follow that their characteristics do not belong to the Ladies' Aid Society.

YES, Will H. Hays has been trying to keep the vamps out of pictures for 18 years, but he had better look alive. They're coming back in all their deadly, devastating devilish-



Louise Glaum—"How much to leave off?"

Betty Blythe—"A thigh peeping in genteel amusement from futed folds of chiffon."

Theda Bara—"He knew he'd been vamped."



"The 1937 vamp is laughing instead of languishing, but the methods of building up a triangle have not changed so very much."

And Where Are the Sleek Sirens of Yesteryear? Here's the Answer, with a Glimpse Ahead

By Grace Wilcox

LET'S take a look back into Theda Bara's past. When she vamped a man, he knew he had been vamped. She was as languorously beautiful as Schtebraade, as seductive as Cleopatra. Her great dark eyes smoldered like live coals, her night-black hair piled on her head in thick coils formed a startling frame for her ivory face; her slithering garments were molded or swept about her luscious figure, concealing or revealing, as the role called for. She must have vamped her way through a couple of hundred Fox pictures; in fact, Theda Bara and Tom Mix practically founded the Fox fortune and paved the way for Bimbo Simon.

Men are not so exacting as they used to be. The schoolgirl gets them with a Peter Pan collar instead of a divan of gardenias or a shirt of moonlight.

An Mrs. Charles Brabin, Theda Bara is today going social in Beverly Hills. Evelyn, well known director and artist, seems happy and content, while Miss Bara is putting up for her years of concealment by becoming one of the film colony's most popular hostesses. She is still lovely, with a warm, bright smile and with



Maria Shelton—"A sultry young miss from Oklahoma," a 1937 type.

Tilly Loach—"She is our most deadly Circe at the moment. Her hands alone have quantities of appeal."



herself on the screen any more. "I just take the money and buy linoleum for the kitchen floor," she said. She is the wife of Paul Scardon, a director in the silent days, and they have a ranch near Fortuna, where Betty declares she is happier than she has ever been in her life.

AND what about "The Wolf Woman" Louise Glaum, whose undressed vamps were the envy of all the other vamps? Remember

the Sphinx and a manner as ingratiating as a sing-song girl? Today, she is as modern as a Noon light, with a manner as crisp, brittle and sophisticated as a Park Avenue debutante.

Margot Graham is a blond vamp who must be reckoned with. Her charms are deadly and when she turns the blaze of her fancy man-ward, the poor guy weakens like a fish out of water. Her role in "The Three Musketeers" and in "Michael Stragoff" puts her high, so far as I can remember and

streets of Los Angeles without a pair of stockings, many were heard on all sides, even though her dress was not very short and sandals exposed her nice, wide feet on which the toes were painted.

A thigh, peeping in genteel amusement from the futed folds of a chiffon tea-gown, was as alluring to the populace as a French diva to a Boston school. "What is the world coming to?" inquired shocked humanity from coast to coast, including Flatbush.

Naturally, the screen can't lag behind. Even if Mr. Hays hadn't put thumbs down on the vamps, life would have killed them. Girls of today can't be bothered to lure. They would rather swim or play tennis, or they have a pretty nifty line, at that, and their love poems more profaned by Lucretia Borgia. Flattery is still the way to a man's heart, regardless of his stomach, and the young things of today can buy it on their own.