

'Gone With The Wind' Has Too Many Insults

Critic Praises The Fine Acting Of McDaniels, Gable And Leigh

By AL MONROE

NEW YORK, Jan. 5—No race conscious person can see "Gone With the Wind," the story of the South starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable, without finding it sour, hard to down and all that but they are sure to admire the action in the process that produces the sour cord.

By this is meant you'll forget your hate for the plight your ancestors are tossed into to scream aloud (almost, I am sure) as you watch the masterly performances turned in by Misses Hattie McDaniels, Butterfly McQueen and Oscar Polk.

Did I like "Gone With the Wind"? No! No human who is identified with the minority group in the South can like such a story. Are there specific things to mention that contribute directly to this attitude? Yes, the very picture itself—but again I say not the acting. And here is an exception you haven't seen matched since Louise Beavers' performance in "Imitation of Life," called by some an epic, even though its very vehicle was built on prejudice.

Scenes and events that struck a sour cord with this scribe are too numerous to mention. Certainly the story was written to glorify the South and, the irony of it all is that the very victims of the brutality during slavery and the civil war were to serve as the glorifiers. Your correspondent having read the book went to the Broadway theatre expecting to see just what he saw and knowing all the time that his blood would be at high temperature throughout the four hours run of the screening.

Thus when we saw Miss McDaniels, Miss Butterfly and also Oscar Polk cast to portray, for cash, a role that some slaves enacted in order to lessen their burdens at the whipping block, we weren't surprised, however disturbed we may have been.

"Gone With the Wind" was written to star Rhett Butler, played by Clark Gable and "Scarlet O'Hara," portrayed by Vivien Leigh but here the director slipped. Not because the author didn't intend it so but because in casting a Race girl, Hattie McDaniels, they selected a show stopper who come very near causing you to like "Gone With the Wind," a thing neither Gable nor Miss Leigh stand a ghost of a chance doing.

To tell the story of "Gone With the Wind," as portrayed in the film is superfluous because of the large sale the book enjoyed. However, elaboration on certain phases is necessary to acquaint you with the evils of a picture that has caused almost as much commotion as the ill-fated "Birth of a Nation." Thus we tell you that where the book explains the loyalty of slaves and their devotion to the masters the film shows it in plain life and in a way that you are bound to resent. Frankly, even the fine acting of Miss McDaniels cannot erase your distaste for one scene wherein she makes public approval of everything that is done to her and actually resents interference by the Yankee soldiers. You start to condemn Miss McDaniels and even while you are screaming praises of her acting, you find yourself ready to refer to her as a silly fool. We make no suggestion for you to see "Gone With The Wind," even in this signal praise of the acting of Hattie McDaniels.

As to Butterfly McQueen, she was the excellent "silly" actress on Broadway in plays that were written for her Race, so when she carries her "odd" performance into "Gone With the Wind," we are only partially displeased. But wasn't Billy Burke "silly?" And wasn't she loved for her acting!

As for Oscar Polk, his kind in the film has been portrayed by numerous others about whom we have raved in pictures of the past. Certainly we did not care for Stepin Fetchit being asked to pick insects from the body of an animal but we laughed just the same. Thus although we condemn "Gone With the Wind," as a film we cannot help remembering that things almost as bad have slipped our attention in other films that cast members of the Race. The main difference is that those films failed to glorify the South as a haven for slaves and show them off as opposed to "meddling by those yankees" as does "Gone With the Wind." Thus, my belief and yours will be, once you have seen the picture, is that our battle is not with the authors or producer of "Gone With the Wind" or its actors but the South itself. Certainly we do not care to view a recapitulation of days of slavery but we do not deny that they existed almost as badly as depicted in the picture. Frankly, our disgust is that Hollywood should waste the talents of three performers like McDaniels, Polk and Miss McQueen on a picture that insults millions of folk who support the theatres about he land.