

# The Shadow Stage

(Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.)

*A review of the new pictures*



## BLOOD AND SAND—Paramount

**W**E foresee a highly popular career for this screen version of Vicente Blasco Ibanez's novel, "Blood and Sand." There are several obvious reasons. One is the presence of Rodolph Valentino in his most decorative role since his Julio in "The Four Horsemen." Another is the color and swiftly unswerving movement of the story.

Ibanez wrote "Blood and Sand" as a lasting indictment of the bull fight and its cruelty. As far as the film is concerned, however, we fear that the Spaniard's message has gone to the Dead Letter Office. The bull fight, as the silver-sheet catches it, is highly attractive. The film follows the original tale fairly closely, tracing the harum-scarum peasant lad who grows up to be the matador idol of Spain, and who comes to know fame and temperamental vanity. His haunting love for his wife becomes hopelessly tangled in a mad, consuming passion for a philandering young woman of birth and wealth and he comes to know the fickleness of the public before he dies, mangled and broken, a hero toppled from his pedestal. As the toreador breathes his last, from the bullring drift the cries of the populace, cheering a new hero.

All this is told admirably. Mr. Niblo's direction is sane and now and then stirring. There are flashes of a glowing Zuloaga background. Valentino's matador is rife with sex and passion, with a breathless touch of brutality here and there. Indeed, it is this note of savagery recurring through "Blood and Sand" that lifts it, stark and palpitating, above the sugary, milk and water tales of our screen.

Valentino's toreador lacks subtlety but it is as real in many ways as Joseph Schildkraut's *Liliom* of the foot-lights. We place it well in advance of his *Julio*. And Nita Naldi's *Dona Sol* is quite unforgettable.