



Complete
Trade Press Opinions



of

“The **COUNT** of
MONTE CRISTO”



ALEXANDRE DUMAS'
FAMOUS STORY.

THE GREATEST
SERIAL OF ALL
TIMES.



Mercury Film Service,

FILM HOUSE, MILL HILL,

LEEDS.

WHEN the unbiased opinions of all the Trade Reviewers are unanimous, then you know you have a certainty!

"The Count of Monte Cristo" has called forth unstinted praise from
_____ them all, so _____

BOOK IT NOW!

"Kinematograph Weekly":

TRADE SHOWS SURVEYED.

SERIAL IMPROVEMENT.

Some of the best pictures this week are serials which break away from the conventional stunt melodrama. "THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO" is outstanding in this respect. It claims to rely on interest in the story and not on its stunts, and this claim is fully justified. It sets a standard in serials which must tend to make this class of film less abused than it is at present. It is every bit as exciting as those presented in the super-sensational variety.

The acting is good; it is a film which should really accomplish what a serial is intended to do, i.e., attract regular audiences.

REVIEW.

Without doubt "THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO" is a new kind of screen serial. Its claim that the interest is in the story, instead of in the stunts, is justified.

Judging from the episodes shown (Nos. 1, 4, 7, 11 and 12) the whole story has the attraction of true drama. There seems to be a consistent plot, with a unity of idea throughout.

As it is produced by a French Company, it may be taken for granted that the national atmosphere is correct, as that of the Napoleonic period also seems to be. Certainly it is a picturesque and impressive atmosphere.

It is an entertainment in every way superior to the ordinary serial.

Points of Appeal.—Though to some people the picturesque and romantic atmosphere may be the chief attraction, there is a well-developed and thoroughly interesting story. The characterisation is very fine, so that there is a strong emotional grip.

Production.—The people all seem life-like. The famous stunt from the novel itself, showing the escape of the prisoner by the means of the sack, is very thrilling.

The producer, H. Pouctal, does not, however (as an American or Italian producer probably would have) show the hero actually cutting his exit from the sack under water.

The sword duel in Episode 12 is another particularly well-produced scene.

Acting.—With the exception of Colas—who, as Danglars, is decidedly stagey and artificial—all the principal characters are taken by remarkably good screen actors.

Léon Mathot gives a very impressive, convincing and artistic study of the hero, who is a very different character at the end from the debonair youth at the beginning. The actor who takes the part of young Albert de Moncerf is almost equally fine. The actress who takes the part of the Eastern princess, Haidee, gives a fine convincing picture of passion; and Nelly Cormon, Albert Mayer, Garat and Dalleui (all experienced stage artistes) help to make up a large and good cast.

Photography.—While almost all the scenes are attractive in themselves, some of the interiors are specially notable as having the fine artistic quality of the engravings of the period.

Suitability.—Possibly devotees of the stunt serial will find "THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO" rather slow; but it is almost certain that better-class patrons who see the first episode will want to see all the others.

"The Cinema":

The screen has accomplished so much during the last few years that one is almost past surprise at anything new that it does. Still, the fact that a producer has successfully "serialised" Alexandre Dumas' great romance, "MONTE CRISTO," will probably startle all those familiar with the work. So intricate is the story, so numerous are the adventures, and so powerful is the literary characterisation that to film the story with anything like fidelity is indeed a task of some magnitude. **But the result of this endeavour to depict upon the screen the tragedy of the "Count" is little short of a triumph.**

It is difficult to say exactly wherein lies the secret of the success of this production, though much it due to a powerful French star cast, who have portrayed the principal characters with a remarkable degree of realism. **Léon Mathot**, who plays the leading rôle of the "Count," has justly earned the title of **"the French Henry Irving."** His acting is of the highest order, and in all the various characters in which Edmond Dantes appears, the impersonation is flawless.

There are many wonderful scenes which hold one engrossed by reason of their absolute realism. Thus we get a picture of the world-famed Isle of Elba, and its prisoner, the celebrated Napoleon, a magnificently staged incident. The characterisation of the Emperor himself is most effective. Then, again, all who can appreciate real adventure on the screen will be captivated by the scenes in the dungeons, which have been created with rare skill. Above all, everything is convincing, even to the throwing into the sea of the sack containing Dantes. Many of the incidents take place at sea, where again we get real and impressive atmosphere.

We have already spoken of Léon Mathot, whose splendid work adds much to the value of this screen epic. Amongst the supporting cast may be mentioned M. Colas (of the Post St. Martin's Theatre, Paris), who gives a clever portrayal of Danglars (one of the great enemies of Dantes), and M. Garat (of the Theatre Gymnasse, Paris), who represents Fernand, the other enemy, with great effect. Nelly Cormon (of the Paris Vaudeville Theatre, Paris), is thoroughly at home in the rôle of Mercedes, the lover of Dantes, and she infuses the character with a sweet charm and sympathy that is most acceptable.

The settings are at all times more than adequate, whether it be the Isle of Elba, the dungeons of the Chateau, the interiors of Parisian mansions—they are always in keeping with the spirit of the great work. The costumes, too, cleverly create the period of the action. **"THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO" can easily be regarded as one of the greatest serials that has yet appeared.** Its reception by the public should be one of enthusiasm and pleasure.

"The Biogram" (Cardiff):

I wonder how many thousands have read Dumas' famous novel "THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO"? How many thousands will want to see the serial? A good number, so book it now.

No. 2 Theatre at the Exchange was filled with an appreciative gathering to witness "THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO," which was pronounced on all sides to be a most excellent production. The photography is first-class; the setting superb; the descriptive phrasing concise and informative, and bespeaks a prosperous run for this photoplay of the ever popular novel. Don't hesitate or you may lose a real good thing.

"The Film Renter and The Moving Picture News":

"THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO."

A Wonderful French Film Version of Dumas' Immortal Story.

A Classic Romance produced with genius and portrayed by some of the leading players on the French Stage—Fifteen episodes of Strong Adventure and Mysterious Drama—a splendid proposition for Exhibitors.

Each episode, though packed full of dramatic incident, is part of a continuous tale, and we confidently predict that the vast majority of people who take it up at the beginning will not be satisfied till they have seen it through. The announcement that "MONTE CRISTO" has been booked should ensure to the fortunate exhibitor a certain week-to-week clientele, who are certain to get more and more absorbed in this production as it proceeds.

As we said in a preliminary notice last week the film covers every incident in the book, and the plot is faithfully followed. Opinion will be divided, no doubt, as to whether the setting of the story or the interpretation given it is the more remarkable. Both are of a high order, and worthy of the inspiration which such a classic was bound to give to the producers of the film version. Personally we marvelled at the finished artistry with which the scenes were marshalled and the actors brought on and off the screen. The French have a remarkable facility for presenting their film characters "in the round." They do not indulge overmuch in "close-ups," but at the same time they avoid the small, crowded background, and always endeavour to give the spectator a bold view of all taking part in every individual scene. This breadth of conception has never been seen to better advantage than in "THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO," which from start to finish is full of "big" scenes played in the grand style by people whose acting is perfect enough to show at close range.

The picture abounds in fine, striking studies, and Léon Mathot (who has been described as the "Henry Irving of Paris"), as the "Count," is only the foremost in a long gallery of splendid artistes, who make this old romance live again in a new form. A most beautiful and fascinating woman, in the person of Nelly Cormon, was secured to play the part of Mercedes, and she dominates—on the feminine side—every scene in which she appears. The supporting company is gathered from the ranks of some of the best known legitimate players of the French stage, and the public can certainly be promised a feast of histrionic talent when they go to see this film.

"The Bioscope":

"THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO."

Romantic adventures of a super-hero of Napoleonic days—Massive and artistic version of Dumas' famous novel—Splendid acting and superb natural settings in an unusual and superior serial.

Quite in a class by itself as a serial film is this elaborate and artistic adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' great romance. The famous novel lends itself singularly well to treatment as an instalment drama of thrilling adventures. It contains almost all the qualities that are looked for in this type of film—including even exciting stunts—but instead of being a string of mere sensations it is, of course, a magnificent story, constructed and presented with the craftsmanship and rich imagination of one of the world's greatest story-tellers.

The performance of Léon Mathot (who will be remembered as the hero of "In Old Alsace") as the super-adventurer, Dantes, is a wonderful piece of work, which, in its inexhaustible vigour and abundant geniality, would alone make the film worth seeing.

Staged largely in superb South of France exteriors, the film also possesses pictorial qualities of marked beauty and interest. The seascapes and rocky coast scenes around the Chateau d'If and the Isle of Monte Cristo strikes a note of wild grandeur, whilst such episodes as the arrival of the Pharaoh in port introduce an element of big-scale spectacle. The picturesque costumes and interior appointments of over a century ago help to enhance the charm of a production which pleases the eye throughout.

As a serial offering "THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO" is undoubtedly an attraction of a very unusual and distinguished type. It will appeal particularly to better class audiences, and should achieve a big success at theatres where serials are not generally shown. On the other hand, its wealth of action and incident is such as to counter-balance the supposed prejudice of "popular" audiences against period-costumes and Continental acting. A massive and artistic production, admirably preserving the spirit of its great original "MONTE CRISTO," is decidedly a notable contribution to the drama of the screen.

"The Trade Show Gazette" (Manchester):

"THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO."

Serial—Fifteen 2-reel Episodes.

Photographically perfect. Settings and technique excellent. Story from Alexandre Dumas' famous dramatic work. A faithful picturisation. Well done, and should suit any class of picture-goer. A certain draw.

"Films" (Birmingham):

"THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO."

A Remarkable French "Serial."

From the amount of publicity we have read in connection with the Film d'Art production of Dumas' famous romance, "THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO," we were led to expect something remarkable and something out of the common in the way of serials. In no sense were we disappointed. For it is a big attraction in the fullest sense of the term. The film covers every incident in the book; the plot is strictly adhered to, the acting is simply superb, and the "locations" have been reproduced with a fidelity and intensity which is but a tribute to the thoroughness with which the producers have accomplished a stupendous task.

Owing to the pressure of time, Birmingham exhibitors were only permitted to see four of the fifteen episodes of which the serial is composed, but they saw sufficient to convince them that in "MONTE CRISTO" they have not only an artistic but a business proposition which is bound to spell success. The acting is of the very highest order, and the picture abounds in striking character studies, magnificent scenes, superb settings, and many thrills of an unusual type. In the rôle of the Count, Léon Mathot—who has earned the title of the "French Henry Irving"—is simply magnificent, and in all the many and diverse characters assumed by Dantes he plays with an artistry that is as remarkable as it is convincing. M. Colas, as the arch-enemy of Dantes, and M. Garat, another of the same type, play with unflinching force, and in the eyes of the audience make themselves as much detested as they were by the Count himself. What higher tribute could we pay to their art? Nelly Cormon, of the Paris Vaudeville, dominates, on the female side, every scene in which she appears, and an admirable foil is presented by the lady who plays the part of Haidee, whose name was not on the synopsis. We regard "MONTE CRISTO" as one of the finest serials we have seen.

"Liverpool Courier" (29/6/21):

THE RIGHT TYPE OF SERIAL.

One of the most backward features of film progress has been the serial. We have always called attention to the bad influence this type of film has on the public. Therefore, we are more than pleased to record our pleasure on seeing a film serial which is something out of the ordinary, and which standard, we think, ought to be adopted by the film manufacturers. We refer to the Film d'Art serial entitled "The Count of Monte Cristo." This is in fifteen two-reel episodes, and, in the words of Sir Phillip Sydney, is "a story which holdeth children from their play, grown-ups from their work, and old men from chimney corners." Alexandre Dumas' masterpiece has been sympathetically produced and adopted by M. H. Pouchal. Léon Mathot, the French Henry Irving, take the title rôle of Edmond Dantes.

THE FOLLOWING REPORTS ARE AFTER
THE TRADE SHOW IN MANCHESTER
OF THE WHOLE FIFTEEN EPISODES.

"The Trade Show Critic" (July 8th, 1921):

ENTHRALLING FILM THAT FASCINATES.

An Appreciation of "Monte Cristo."

Writing immediately after the great Sunday trade show organised at the Manchester Kinema Exchange by the Dispatch Film Service for their big serial, "The Count of Monte Cristo," we feel that there is somehow something missing from the atmosphere of our present surroundings. We feel that instead of watching a film drama, we have been passing through the Chateau d'If and the wondrous grottos of Monte Cristo with Edmond Dantes, and it seems unnatural to have emerged from the theatre to find ourselves in modern England instead of the Napoleonic period in France. When a picture grips one's imagination so firmly as that, it may be taken for granted that it possesses some unusual power of fascination, and therein lies the attractiveness of this enthralling photoplay. It fascinates! We viewed this long film of fifteen two-reel instalments from start to finish, and never once did we experience the slightest symptom of weariness. Imagine it! Thirty reels at a sitting, and still asking for more. That is what Monte Cristo does!—keeps you deeply interested all the time, and then, when it's over, you rise with regret, wishing it would go on. The disappearance of that strange and powerful personality, the noble generous friend but grimly vengeful enemy who exacts such just retribution for his false imprisonment and the wreckage of his love dream, makes a sad parting. We feel that we have known him, grieved with him, triumphed with him, understood him—and then, when we like him most, he leaves us. That is symbolical of life—and death. As the image fades from the screen, so do our friends in time fade into eternity. It is a sad reflection. The only consolation is that the hand of death which touches our friends lays its inexorable grip upon our enemies as well. That is some satisfaction! The instinct of bitterness for one's enemies is a natural one. Civilization and conventionality curb our hatred, but so human is the sentiment that everyone can understand and appreciate the motive behind those astounding adventures undertaken by the immortal hero whom Alexandre Dumas so brilliantly created. We read the book years ago. Later, we read it again. And there are many parts of it that we have read many times over. It is full of emotion, thrills, and romantic atmosphere. So is the film. It is not customary for "The Critic" to devote exceptional space to Trade Show Verdicts, and under the usual heading we deal with this picture from the usual standpoint of a critic. But in the present article we feel a special tribute to this beautiful production is justified. We, in the film world, are so continually viewing pictures that it takes something remarkably outstanding in merit to kindle our enthusiasm, and Mons. Léon Mathot's impersonation of Edmond Dantes, is a performance unique and brilliant in every way. Frankly we went over to Manchester on Sunday with some reluctance. A full day snatched out of a busy journalist's week is a serious matter, particularly when Sunday happens to be our most busy day for Editorial labour. If duty hadn't called us, we should have preferred to remain at our desk. But when we saw unfolded on the screen that superb romance of Monte Cristo, we felt enthralled beyond expression to realise that here came to life before our eyes, with such

fidelity to tradition, the characters so long identified in our memory with the great French writer's greatest book. Had this film been indifferently acted it would have missed fire, and we should have expressed some measure of disappointment, but in no single instance is the characterisation lacking in artistry or impressiveness. The book lives under such treatment. It takes us back to the time of Napoleon's retirement at Elba, and his subsequent defeat at Waterloo. The Emperor himself only makes a brief appearance, but here again the characterisation is excellent in every detail. We consider "The Count of Monte Cristo" a magnificent representation of a magnificent literary masterpiece in fiction, and we assert with confidence that it will reflect real prestige on every theatre showing it.

"The Film Renter and
The Moving Picture News" (July 9th, 1921):

The seating capacity of the Manchester Kinema Exchange was taxed to its utmost on Sunday last when the Dispatch Film Service showed the full 15 episodes of "The Count of Monte Cristo" serial, the film that created such a sensation when it was trade shown in London, not only was the Manchester trade well represented, but parties of exhibitors came from Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, Liverpool, Blackburn, Accrington, and neighbouring towns.

A New Note in Serials. Undoubtedly "The Count of Monte Cristo" strikes a new note in serials, it is in fact, a serial story—not a mere succession of stunts masquerading as a story—which, as a literary work, possesses a universal appeal. It is many years since we read "Monte Cristo"—more than we sometimes care to remember—but as the story unfolded itself on the screen all those dramatic situations, those astonishing adventures, and those human incidents which made this masterpiece of Alexandre Dumas one of the most fascinating novels which has ever been written, leapt vividly to our memory, and we again enjoyed the thrills and excitement of our first reading in the days of our youth.

Its Universal Appeal. Everyone who has read the story (and who is there that has not?) will be eager to see the film version—and will not be disappointed. Léon Mathot, as Dantes, gives a wonderful performance, and although he naturally dominates the picture, is ably supported by a splendidly competent cast.

The Dispatch has put up some fine records in handling serials, but from the reception given to it by the very representative trade gathering last Sunday "The Count of Monte Cristo" bids fair to outstrip all previous records.

"Trade Show Gazette" (July 9th, 1921):

On Sunday last the Manchester Cinema Exchange was packed almost to suffocation with eager exhibitors from all parts of Lancashire, also a large contingent of Yorkshire exhibitors came to see how it is done. They saw and went away charmed.

The Picture. The occasion of the trade show was screening of the Dispatch serial, "The Count of Monte Cristo," which, as is now well known, is a picturised version of the book of the same name by that world-renowned and talented author, Alexandre Dumas.

The Interest. The interest of the story can be gathered from the fact that not before fully ten complete episodes had been shown was there any sign from the packed audience that a break was desirable, and then only the excessive heat consequent upon the smallness of the Cinema Exchange Theatre could be suggested as the reason for the interval.

The Final. Thereafter, the other five episodes were shown, and the interest was well maintained until the end, when a furore of earnest applause was accorded the finale of a "Real Tip-top Serial that beats the —— lot," as a well-known Lancashire exhibitor put it just before leaving.

The Film Itself. Now that we have had a chance of viewing the whole of this picture we are more satisfied than ever that those fortunate exhibitors who have booked it have secured a great and sustained money maker. Mind you, it is not a serial choked with irrelevant stunts dragged in to make sensational endings to each episode. No; it is just the continuation of a faithful and very true picturisation of a great and famous story of which Sir Phillip Sydney wisely said:—

"A story which holdeth children from their play, grown-ups from their work, and old men from their chimney corners."

Superb Acting. The acting of Léon Mathot as the Count is simply superb and natural. The staging is perfect and the photography excellent. A serial which can be booked at any hall in the land with utmost confidence of the management.

"The Manchester Evening News" (July 9th, 1921):

A new type of film which has real romance and not melodrama as a basis was seen at the Manchester Cinema Club the other day. It was a version of that fine romance, "The Count of Monte Cristo," and it bristles with well staged incidents which are absorbingly interesting without being at all glaringly impossible. The exuberant genius of Alexandre Dumas seems to lend itself finely to screen production.

This "Monte Cristo" picture has been issued as a serial by the Film d'Art concern. It is calculated to make the average audience eagerly responsive to the compelling care of pure romance. There is fine acting, too, besides well-staged incidents, and a big success is made by Léon Mathot, known as the Henry Irving of France.

"Liverpool Daily Courier" (July 6th, 1921):

A TRUE TEST.

One of the finest tests of the value of a film is to "Try it on the dog." On managers film plays have little impression, and unless the producer can offer something quite out of the ordinary his interest begins and ends in showing that film. Rarely will he trouble to see it through himself.

Over 250 exhibitors drawn from Liverpool, Leeds, and Manchester assembled at the Cinema Exchange, Orme's Buildings, Manchester, to witness a trade show of a film D'Art serial, "The Count of Monte Cristo." The performance began at 2-30, and without exception everyone present stayed until the finish. It is a wonderful production of Dumas's imperishable story which is known throughout the world. The episodes are all done in a masterly manner, and the acting of the French Henry Irving, M. Léon Mathot as Edmond Dantes, Count of Monte Cristo, is a screen study. This has perhaps never been surpassed by actors of any country. The minor characters were performed by other leading French actors.

"Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser":

Saturday, July 16th, 1921.

This new picture is a most enthralling serial based on the famous Dumas novel well-known to everybody.

If you know a

Super-Serial

When you see one

You'll Book

"The Count of

Monte Cristo"



Mercury Film Service,

Film House, Mill Hill,

Leeds.