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BLACK MAGIC IN VERSE

The difficulty of the verse-play idiom, in which few of either the greatest poets or the greatest dramatists have been successful, acts as no deterrent to authors. In "Deep Midnight," F. E. Gladwell's angling in the stream of inspiration netted but small Fry.

In justice be it said that, very occasionally, the quality of the verbiage was so unstrained as to give a thrill of pleasurable anticipation to the thought of what this author might achieve were he more concerned with his own talent and less with the sincere flattery of another's.

The drama, too, tended to become obscured by the words and did not come to life until the beginning of the third act, in which there was a scene of excellent characterisation and absorbing intensity.

The plot set in a haunted house, concerns a man who so firmly believes in black magic that he thinks no shame of bringing modern science to its aid. He has other less pleasing tendencies, and is altogether too reminiscent of the decline and fall of **Alastair Crowley**.

There are immense and brilliant possibilities for drama here, and on several occasions the author captures them, only to lose courage and relinquish them, finally, to an ending of utter banality.

The author was not helped by the fact that the cast had little idea of the technique of verse-speaking and appeared embarrassed by it; but Charles Turner, as the maniac magician, had moments of good, poetic delivery and was at all times remarkably convincing in movement, gesture and facial expression.

Margaret Brogan overcame the difficulties of the idiom by ignoring them, and concentrated upon giving an integrated characterisation, and Terence Greenridge succeeded in bringing credibility to a noticeably unco-ordinated role.