

EDITH STOREY PLAYS HEROINE, RIDING, WALKING OR FLYING

Star of Filmdom Only 22 Years Old, But Has Defied Death for Three Years Before Camera to Entertain Movie Patrons.



Miss Storey, As The Young Wife, In "The Strength of Men"

THE eye of the motion picture camera—which represents the eyes of the millions who fill the "movie" theaters everywhere—has been following Edith Storey persistently for the last three years. Eclipsing in aeroplanes, falling over cliffs, riding bucking broncos, she has given the camera men many a nervous moment keeping her in focus. Last summer she was a barefoot "moonshine maid" amid the peaks of the Great Smoky Mountains, the center of turmoil of a feud full of thrills and heart-throbs. Just now she wears the robes of royalty, and as a stately, gracious princess wins new empires in the light and shadowland of the screen.

It is all in a day's work. Being a star of the "movie" is an arduous occupation. It requires strength and health and youth and talent. Versatility is essential also. The "bill" must be changed continually. The demand for something new is incessant, insatiable. The "first run" film that is the big attraction today is "junk" tomorrow, as dead as yesterday's newspaper.

Actress, Age 22 Years.

If Miss Storey should write her autobiography it would be surprisingly interesting. But she is only 22. One has to be in the 30s or 40s to get a perspective. The film drama and its stars are too young as yet for history. The play and the players are too youthful to bother with recollections.

In Miss Storey's bedroom, in a towering apartment-house on Riverside Drive, overlooking the magnificent sweep of the Hudson, hangs a word picture, "The Salvation of the Dawn." It was written in Sanskrit long ago and translated into English by Sir Edwin Arnold. Miss Storey knows it by heart, but she reads it every morning. It has been her inspiration, the spur of each day's work. It says:

"Look to this day. For it is life—the very life of life. In its brief course lie all the verities and realities of your existence: the bliss of growth, the glory of action, the splendor of beauty. For yesterday is only a dream, and tomorrow is only a vision; but today well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope. Look well therefore to this day. Such is the salvation of the dawn."

Adaptability Is Natural. Some motion picture stars have stepped from the prosaic workaday world to the stage of the silent drama without any previous experience. That they have made good has been due to their natural adaptability to their new surroundings. Others, like Miss Storey, have gone from the dramatic stage to the stage of the screen.

Edith Storey was born in New York City and made her first appearance on the stage when she was years old. Until she was 16 she divided her time pretty equally between school and the playhouse. From a "child actress" she grew to be a favorite in bigger roles. Long before the motion picture camera, first transferred her to the plays of filmland, she had delighted audiences all over the country in "The Little Princess," in "Miss Wicks of the Calabash Patch," in "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm," and other productions that won a large measure of success. In those days she was simply a girl of industry and talent. She was not counted among the stars, but she was regarded as a stellar probability. She had all the necessary qualities: the health, good looks, ability and industry. Genius is well, but playing a part a little better than is expected if one counts for more in the long run.

She Always Makes Good. Miss Storey always could be relied on to take any part that was assigned to her, no matter how short the notice, and to "make good." That is the sort of theatrical talent that never is without an engagement. Genius has its little day, but the steady "peg" of persevering intelligence is the kind that lasts for 40 weeks—the full theatrical season.

Opportunity Is Seen. Early in her career as a motion-picture actress Miss Storey saw a great opportunity in the drama of Western life. As a matter of business in her profession, she passed her spare time in studying the manners and customs of the cattle ranchers and the cowboys. She had found that the stage depictions of their lives and actions differed widely from the actual, and that the average run of motion-picture plays of Western life were not much closer to the real thing.

It is easy enough to clothe the players in the correct garb of the men and women of the mountains and plains, but unless the actors know and feel the life they are trying to represent they lack the something that is necessary to get the spirit of the action across the footlights and into the hearts of the audience. Also, there are a thousand and one little details of gesture, of facial expression, of movement, of foot or horseback, that are characteristic, but that the careless student fails to notice. It is the sum of these things, however, which makes the picture and the story convincing.

Miss Storey studied the people of the West—those who dwell in the great open spaces—so closely as an enthusiast

linguist would a new language. She became as much Western in spirit as if she always had lived beyond the Mississippi.

There was one detail, however, that Miss Storey, for the lack of time, had to leave to the last, and only one. She never had ridden horseback in her life. She acknowledged an instinctive distrust of horses and cows.

Thoroughness Is Secret. One secret of Miss Storey's success is thoroughness. She tries for 100 per cent in everything. She was only 18 when she made up her mind to become a star in Western film dramas. There are scores of "riding academies" in New York City, but they did not appeal to Miss Storey. She knew just the place where she wanted to go to riding school—the "Laxy-O" ranch, down in New Mexico. She packed her trunk and announced that she might be away two months.

The cowboys of the "Laxy-O" treated Miss Storey at first as they would any other young and pretty woman from "back East" with bashful politeness and almost mute admiration. They could not understand anyone not knowing how to ride horseback. With them jumping on horseback to go anywhere is as natural as it is for a city person to board a trolley car. Therefore, Miss Storey's first riding lesson was an event which attracted the attention of everyone about the ranch who was not otherwise engaged. The quietest horse in the remuda was brought out, a plump, gentle little pony whose favorite pace was a dog trot. Miss Storey appeared in a divided skirt.

Riding Soon Learned.

Miss Storey was helped onto the horse's back. She was nervous, but she resolved to stick, no matter what happened. Accompanied by a cavalcade of cowboys, she set out across the plain. The rest of the horses started to canter off, and hers followed. She got the "hang of it" quickly.

She became, after six weeks of constant practice, almost as much at home on horseback as any man on the ranch. She tried nearly every horse in the herd before she went back home. Of course she had a fall now and then, but that was part of the game she was there to learn. It was only a few days before the cowboys quit calling her "Miss Storey." They called her as "Billie." That name has clung to her. She likes it better than "Edith." It is as "Billie" Storey that she appears on the film scores of Western scenes where, as the heroine, she leads the rough riders in pursuit of cattle rustlers or other evil-doers—pictures that thrilled the audiences from Albany to Aden.

For about two years Miss Storey "worked" in the West, most of the time with a company of Vitagraph players. She became the big star of the film dramas of the plains and mountains. She learned to handle a big revolver and to shoot straight and quick in the cowboy fashion. She can "rope" a steer and has ridden the range in parching heat and in winter snow. Some day she says she is going to buy a ranch of her own and do all the riding she wants to, with never a thought of keeping within the range of the camera's eye or the public's.

Eloquents Are Reproduced.

Miss Storey has figured in many elopements in filmland, but never in real life. She is still unmarried. Out West the young Lechner used to come on horseback. In the East, Miss Storey's eloping has been done mostly by aeroplane.

"My first airship elopement wasn't as exciting as some of my horseback runaways," says Miss Storey. "I've never had any accidents up in the air, and I have on horseback. When your horse is on a dead run and stumbles and you go over his head, it's like one of these auto accidents you read about, only more so."

The time that Miss Storey "came a cropper" in this way the camera was not close enough to make it show up effectively on the screen. She was crushed and shaken by the accident, but it did not prevent her finishing her day's work. When she saw the film run off, later, she begged to be permitted to do it over again. The stage director refused. He himself was an ex-cowboy, and he told her that there was about one chance in five of her escaping without broken bones. He wouldn't take such a risk himself and he wouldn't let anyone else.

Air Experience Tame.

The film dramas of the air look like the most dangerous of all, but they are not any more risky than riding at breakneck speed down a mountain trail that overhangs a precipice. Miss Storey has done this time and again. She prefers it, in fact, to being out in the Great South Bay in a gasoline launch which explodes. In this act she goes into the water and is struggling in the waves when an aviator who happens to be flying overhead sees her plight and swoops down. The hydro-aeroplane rocks on the surface of the ocean while the aviator rescues Miss Storey. Then they got aboard the airship, the propeller begins to whirl, the machine rises like a giant



"Billie" Storey, A Cow-Girl. "Billie" Storey The Marksman. "Billie" Storey In The "Laxy-O" Ranch. She Is An Expert With The Lasso.

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bird and off they go together. Another time the two young persons start on their rush to the nearest Gretna Green in a biplane. Father pursues in his automobile. The picture is a motion picture star. At any rate, each of these acts is a part of the film story that is based on actual occurrences that are traditions of that region.

It would be quite impossible to describe Miss Storey except by telling what she has done and what she hopes to do. She is as many-sided in her artistry as Sarah Bernhardt. If Miss Storey has an ambition as yet unfulfilled it is to be the Sarah Bernhardt of the silent stage.

Change Is Explained. The reason that Miss Storey has said goodbye to the film dramas of Western life and lately has been appearing in the gorgeous gowns of royalty and "society parties" in film dramas, although she had had some experience in them on the regular stage. She acknowledged some misgivings about being able to manage a gown with a train after having worn divided skirts so long. But she has become as famous with her audiences as the cowboy as she was in the old. Aside from her experience and natural talent, this latest success of hers is due as much as anything to her charm.

Some of the local women's clubs, which started the ball rolling at an indignation meeting at the Hotel Astor. This gathering appointed a subcommittee to arrange for a public dinner, to which city officials are to be invited, the idea probably being that by the time dessert is reached some way to improve conditions will be decided upon.

At the original gathering Coroner's Clerk Le Brun was, appropriately enough, the principal speaker. He laid stress upon the fact that out of 142 killings by autos, only 29 arrests had been made, and not one man had been sent to jail. Fifty thousand automobiles on this expedition should be pushed over, fall off or leap from several of the most cloud-aspiring peaks



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