

# At the Reel by Mac

## WHEN IS A PHOTOPLAY NOT A PHOTOPLAY?

WHAT went with me to the picture show that night fidgeted all during the evening, but said nothing until we were outside. Then he burst into speech, thusly: "I hate to be made a fool of!"

I turned and met a pair of fishy cold eyes set in a scornful face.

"Well," said "and who has been making a fool of it?"

"I don't know his name, but believe me, if I did I'd write and tell him a thing or two—the chap who directed this picture. Ridiculous! A good plot spoiled by so many incongruities I wouldn't attempt to name them. It didn't cost me much money to be fooled, but it did cost me patience and time that I couldn't afford to lose."

I agreed with him because, I had to. He was right. The leading woman in the picture we had just seen—"Out of Darkness"—had been permitted to overact, mouth, and gesticulate outrageously. One suspected that her contract held some clause specifying that no director should be present when a scene was being taken, for it was hard to imagine any man in such a position standing calmly by and watching what should have been an intensely dramatic production made a caricature of. So much for the acting. Judging from many of the scenes, it was the director's fault after all. For instance: In no factory, however insanitary or ill-ventilated, would the hands be allowed to go home leaving their materials and implements lying just as they dropped them when the bell rang. The factory in question was a canning works, and, at the end of a 13-hour day, the employes slammed down the

which I was one, noticed and commented.

In "Tribby" it probably made no difference to some people, but there were others who commented loudly at seeing a New York policeman and a New York hotel lamp in a Parisian street.

There was a sweet little scene in "The Bigger Man," featuring Henry Kolker, in which the lead, while showing a woman over a bridge, in some marvellous manner managed to wear two different suits of clothing.

Mrs. Leslie Carter, in "Du Barry," was radiant in comparatively modest evening gowns, while the rest of the cast were in costumes a la the period. In dealing with Mrs. Carter I know it is necessary to handle her with gloves, but the director of this picture should have concealed a horseshoe in the glove he wore when the question of décolleté came up.

Did you see "The Iron Strain" with Dustin Farnum? If you did, I want to know if you recognized in the man—presumably in love with his wife—who allowed her to enter a low dive, fight with a woman of the demimonde, and smile—any human you have ever known? It seems to me there could be no provocation on earth an innocent little girl could offer that would goad her husband to such a means of punishment. And did you notice that as she entered the place not a man looked up—not a woman passed a comment, as she rushed affrightedly through the smoky room? In a city cafe, this might be too far overdrawn, but in a mining camp, where there is so little diversion, anything the least out of the ordinary creates a furor.

In "The Man of the Hour" Robert Warwick, a college man, and supposedly a gentleman to the manner born, sloughed his breeding and refinement as he donned a flannel shirt, and displayed table manners that would have made piggy sigh with envy.

Take "The Resurrection." Here you have a picture with a Russian theme. How interested the people owning cottages at Saranac, N. Y., must have been to see their costly homes depicted on the screen as supposed, abodes in the country of the Czar! Then, too, the sleighs were as non-Russian as could be. More details, probably, but noticeable ones.

It has come to the point now where a director must be a man of learning as well as a wizard of adjustment. The people who go to see pictures are too well informed to have their intelligence slightly treated.

When every detail in a photoplay is not correct, the photoplay is not a photoplay. It's an amorphism!



"Of course, he might—but I don't believe it."

pineapples they had been cutting, together with their knives, grabbed their hats, and walked out, leaving, presumably, the pineapples to exude precious juice all night long, the knives to rust, etcetera.

I don't believe that colored and white people mix promiscuously in any factory in Florida. I may be mistaken, but I think not. In the picture in question, however, they were all the same as one.

Plotlers against the management plotted in a saloon. When the young woman rushed by and she tackled the same place! and out came brawny law abiders.

The "big boss" of a factory may be susceptible, but I doubt he, no matter how soft his heart or how confiding his tongue, if he would, on the first day a beautiful new "hand" came to work, sit down beside her on the cutting bench, look into her eyes, show her a telegram he had just received from the woman owner of the place, and tell her just what he thought of said woman owner. Of course, he might—but I don't believe it.

So much for this picture—though this was not all the fault that could be found by any means. As we discussed it I thought of others I had seen that had had incongruities so marked it seemed impossible such directors as we have nowadays could have passed them.

In "Max's Mother-in-Law" the dear old lady wore a turban with a long, thin feather standing upright. She stood on her head in the snow, did double somersaults down a mountain, and everything else in the world while out skating, but to stand on her feet. Notwithstanding all this, the feather neither bent, twisted, nor was broken. The bird that invented that plumage should get a patent on it—that's all I have to say.

In "The Puppet Crown" we are treated to a view of the actors and actress kissing the hand of a King. No reason in the world why a King shouldn't have his hand kissed, only it isn't done. The director may have thought this a minor detail. Or he may have thought that such an incident would add to the picturesqueness of the scene. Or he may not have known. Anyway, he was wrong, and at least 50 per cent of the audience, of

THE "Thanhouser twins," aged 14, were born in New York City, where they were educated in the public schools and by private teachers. When quite little girls they were on the stage under the direction of Winthrop Ames. About three years ago the Thanhouser company prevailed upon their mother to permit them to enter motion pictures. This she did, thinking that the hours would be regular and the work therefore more helpful to her girls. The twins are so much alike that they keep even the directors guessing when a picture is being taken. They have light brown hair, dark hazel eyes, are 4 feet 10 inches high, and weigh 80 pounds. When not working their lives are much like the lives of other well-cared-for and well-brought-up children. They read, grow flowers, play with their Angora cat, named Billy, and enjoy long, delightful hours with the family of dolls that has been increased from time to time by friends and mother. They say their favorite books are "Little Women," "Little Men," Kate Douglas Wiggin's books, Longfellow's poems and Shakespeare's plays. Can you tell which is which?

## MOVIE LAND

### CRANE WILBUR GIVES ADVICE.

MY ADVICE to any one set upon a motion picture career is to begin at the bottom of the ladder," says Crane Wilbur, of Mutual. "Start at the extra. Don't try to do a part the first day you are in the studio. Here is where most newcomers make their mistake. They sit back in a cozy seat in a comfortable theater, watch the players on the screen and say, 'Oh, I know. I could do that. It looks easy. All you've got to do is look natural. Of course, the reasoning is logical to one who doesn't know, but to the experienced player such a statement is ridiculous. There are so many things to be learned before any one can act, and the camera, with any degree of finish in its work, will pick up all the tricks of pantomimery one must learn would require hours of time and pages of space to relate.

"To illustrate my point I will cite an incident which happened in our studio only a few days ago and which is a direct example of the soundness of my advice. For several weeks a pretty girl came to the studio every morning, accompanied by her mother, and inquiring if there was a possibility of work in the day's scenes. A place as extra was offered, but she insisted that she must have a part, though she conceded that the part did not have to be heavy—for a start. Of course, she was not considered. She was a courageous girl with that spirit which knows no obstacles. As regularly as the morning rolled around she arrived and made customary inquiry. It began to feel sorry for her and her lack of luck. Finally, one morning her patience was rewarded. We were about to start the rehearsal of a scene when our director noticed that a girl he had engaged to play a maid in a small part—had not reported. Being being disconcerted, he immediately decided not to await the tardy girl's arrival, but to select the

### THE "THANHOUSER TWINS"

most likely substitute from the group of applicants. The girl in question was chosen.

"After some time she was made up and the rehearsal went on. Our director had rather a difficult time teasing her what to do and what not to do. At length he thought she understood her part and acted it sufficiently well to photograph the scene. All was in readiness, lights went up, the camera man focused his lenses and the director yelled instructions to begin. Then our little girl fell down badly. She forgot how to register her emotions, walked over the lines (which indicate the focus) and got out of a picture at times when she was needed in it, and did a dozen different things that she had been told must not be done. Finally, exasperated, the director called a halt and sent the girl home, heartbroken.

"The incident is not unusual, but happens every day. Had this girl started in as an extra, it is quite possible that after learning the requirements of motion picture acting she would have succeeded. Furthermore, she would have had an opportunity to study the methods of experienced players and gain a great deal of knowledge that way.

"Beginners will do well to start as extras. If he or she has talent advancement will come, but if, at the end of six months, one has had sufficient chance and is still an extra, I advise the young man or woman to quit, by all means."

### TOPIC OF INTEREST TO MOVING-PICTURE FANS

DON'T call them "movies!" begged Anna Held, after she had signed a contract to appear on the "The Frame of Public Favor" picture, the first of a series of late and in my opinion this is certainly deserving a more dignified name. Several months ago the motion picture appeared to me merely as "the poor man's entertainment," as many people still call it—cheap form of amusement. However, when such people as Geraldine Farrar, Fritzi Scheff, Cyril Maude and others became connected with this wonderful industry I was forced to realize that it was more than what I had usually supposed it to be. I became more interested in it every day and now that the production of pictures has been greatly hampered in my own country, we draw largely upon the American field for our supply. I have seen several wonderful American photoplays and feel that I will be able to work as effectively on the screen as I have on the stage. In fact, I have become so enthusiastic over it all that I can hardly wait to begin work before the camera.

Myrtle Reeves is Balboa's premier diving girl. But the first time she was called upon for an aquatic stunt she was "green." She hesitated to jump 40 feet down into the briny deep. What to do? When her chief was on the point of backing out Miss Reeves said "nothing doing." She wanted to get ahead as a picture player and realized she must show a willingness to do her part. She did and is today headed toward the top of the ladder.

Victor Moore was hit on the foot by a wad from a revolver recently while taking a scene for "Chinmie Fadden Out West" at the Lasky Paramount studio. Several cowboys were trying to make the Easterner dance in true Western fashion, when a misdirected wad landed just astern of the star's pet corn. Mr. Moore contributed to the film a number of neat and nifty but unrehearsed dancing steps.

The Gaumont Company is going to introduce an innovation in the way of comedy. In the near future the Gaumont Comedy Company, releasing the "Famous" comedies in its regular Mutual programme, will produce a series of original burlesques. These burlesques, instead of parodying well-known plays and books, will be amusing and overdrawn takeoffs on the serious dramas which the Gaumont Company has already released. Edward Middleton is at the head of the Casino comedies and will be responsible for the burlesquing of the dramas. There is one story—not a Gaumont drama—which Mr. Middleton wants to burlesque. That is the time-worn and honored story of "Red Riding Hood." This will probably be done in the near future.

### ADVENTURES OF THE SILLY GALLILIES IN MOVIE LAND.



nine lead opposite Henry Walthall, in the Balboa production of "Beulah," when she more than acquitted herself with credit. Having graduated from the English stage, Miss Moore is thoroughly trained in her art.

"The great actor of the future, I believe, will be the one who can do well both on the stage and in the pictures," says Eddie Foy.

"But it's pretty hard being anything but serious even in the Triangle comedies. Makes a burglar's business look as safe as a crown contest. This circus picture I did in 'A Favorite Fool' has been a real test of my versatility. I chipped my nose on the sidewalk, stole a menagerie, killed a policeman (that was a pleasant job) and stayed under white curtains half an hour.

"Think I'd trust my \$10,000 head to a sincere lion with a thirst for human life and no sense of art! Not so! I want to live to make a lot more pictures for my children to look at after I'm gone. More than that, I want to see the picture myself. In my own best interests, I'll go further—in the pictures Mack Sennett has devised for me, I admit that I am funny. Wait until you see me."

Charles Hartley, the well-known character actor, who is now working in the production "Barbara Fritchie," at the Popular Plays and Players-Metro studio, in Fort Lee, N. J., has just received word that a distant relative in England died leaving him \$15,000. Although Mr. Hartley was completely surprised when he heard of the little fortune left to him, already he is complaining about the English income and war tax.

A new Lubin studio has just been opened at Coronado, Cal. This completes a chain of Lubin studios that reaches across the continent. The Lubin enterprises are under the direction of Ferdinand Singhi and Ira Lowry.

Several friends asked Marie Dressler why she went to the theaters so often when screen plays in which she participated held the boards—or, rather, the curtain—screen curtain.

"Well," she replied, "I like to see myself work."

Fans who have seen her uproariously funny pictures will agree she has lots of opportunity to see herself in action! "Fille's Tomato Surprise," took three months of hard rehearsal, an army of seven folk and thousands of dollars in real, ready cash to film a riot of fun.

In the company supporting Miss Dressler are Tom McNaughton, the costar with Christie MacDonald in "The Spring Maid," and with Jose Collins in "Sue"; Colin Campbell, the noted Scotch comedian; Sarah McVickar, Eleanor Fairbank, Clara Lambert and James, the world-famous Lubin monkey, who can talk the deaf and dumb language and eats peas with a knife.

The matrimonial bee continues to buzz about and sting Balboas with surprising regularity. The latest member of the studio force to "go and do it" is Alden Willey, an assistant director. His bride was Miss Inez Wysonske, of Long Beach, who had appeared in a number of Balboa productions. According to rumors now current the month of November will see

Miss Myrtle Stedman caused many regrets when she left the operatic stage for the screen, for she has a voice of great beauty and power. In a pinch she could accumulate a bank account by her dancing and she is as good a speaking actress as on the screen. She does everything well.

She plays the "ideals" for Jack London parts, with the Bosworth Incorporated Company. She has shown a marked ability for comedy parts and as an actress and singer in former comic opera and musical comedies was a noted success.

Like all of the screen actresses, Miss Stedman considers screen work more fascinating than any other line of stage work.

Miss Stedman has had a very varied career, for she has been a dancer, a minor, a singer, an actress on the legitimate stage and, finally, one of the most prominent actresses on the mimic stage, on which she is adored by her companions.

Apart from her screen work she has but two fads. She reads every chance she has and she adores a matinee.

The \$2 motion picture theater is a new venture. The film plays have progressed so rapidly, both commercially and pictorially, that the possessors—the bold ones who have the courage of their convictions—have deemed the times ripe for a high-priced picture playhouse.

The heads of these companies deny that they will keep the price at an excessive rate. They declare that with a top price of \$1 outside of New York the high-priced motion picture house is bound to pay and that it will in no manner interfere with the profits of the 10-cent houses.

The outcome of this new venture will be watched with interest. If the high-priced motion picture play succeeds it means seven mighty lean years for the spoken drama.

E. F. Sullivan, who plays the leading role in "The Black Crook," has played the same part 500 times in the stage version of the play. Mr. Sullivan, who is one of the veterans of the theatrical world, has had a wide experience and his reminiscences of the "good old days" are very entertaining. Those who have seen the parts of this new feature which have been completed unhesitatingly have declared that he has equaled his stage character.

Edwin Carew has just signed what is possibly the biggest contract given to a director of his age, with the Hefetz-Metro Company. Mr. Carew, though but 23 years old, has had extensive experience. He has played leading man for Laurette Taylor, and later appeared with Otis Skinner, Nat Goodwin, Chauncey Olcott, Mattie Keane, Hal Davis, Augustine McHugh and Kitty Gordon. Three years ago he had his first motion picture experience with the Lubin.

Nance O'Neil, the American emotional actress, has abandoned her contemplated theatrical tour and signed up with Lubin Company.

The Paragon Film Company, Inc. is on the market for scenarios.

### ANSWERS TO MOVIE FANS

BUNETTE—Address Irving Cummings in care of the American Company, Santa Barbara, Cal. Yes, Lottie and Mary Pickford are sisters. "White's" picture has appeared in the "Frame." Cleo Madison played the part of the twins in "The Treys' Hearts." Grace Cunard was Lucille Love. It has been no trouble at all to answer your questions. I am awfully glad you wrote me. Write again, some time.

INGEGNE E.—No, John Bunny and Flora Finch were not married. Mary Normand and "Patty" Arbuckle are not married. Beverly Bayne is single. Yekkuum.

KATHERINE C.—Mr. Costello is with the Vitagraph Company, East Fifteenth street and Locust avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y. Since you say you must have his picture, I hope you will succeed in acquiring it. I have made out that the gentleman will be highly honored by your request and will mail you his photograph promptly upon receipt of a quarter for same. He is married and is of Irish-Spanish descent.

GOODIE—Murdoch McGuire is in his 25s. Q. Goodie, of course, Universal City is a dry town. I am afraid there wouldn't be much work done if it were wet.

LOUISE J. E.—Mary Pickford is Canadian. Edward Earle is with the Edison, 328 Deceatur avenue, Bedford Park, N. Y. No, Grace Cunard and Francis Ford are not married to each other.

CURIOSITY—The beautiful child who took the part of little Roman in "The Eternal City" was Kittens Reichert. She is about 5 years old.

C. L. V.—I am sorry not to be able to give you the information you wish, but the man in whom you are interested was an "extra" and the company says it has not record of his name. Don't worry, though; if he has ability he'll come to the top and you'll probably meet him on the screen in your favorite motion picture theater some day. Here's hoping you will.

Helen E.—Beverly Bayne is with the Metro Company, Los Angeles, Cal. She has no brothers or sisters.

ONE SENSIBLE PERSON—You say that if you had your way there wouldn't be a moving picture actor, a theater, a publication in the world. Well, as they say in Kankakee, "You should bicker to bark and snicker to snort," which means "You should worry." If you don't like motion picture actors, or theaters, or pages, you are not compelled to have anything to do with any of them. I am thinking, though, you may find it necessary to purchase a pair of blinders. They are to be had at any harness shop.

M. M. G.—Thank you, m'am. Marguerite Snow has gone with the Metro Company, Los Angeles, Cal., not the Eganey.

CURIOS—J. Warren Kerrigan is not with the Keystone Company—he is with the Universal. Ella Hall is not married. Most of the Keystone comedies are taken in Los Angeles. Little Billy Jacobs, of the Universal, is about 4 years old now. No trouble at all. I am mighty glad to be of service.

X. Y. Z.—I am glad to be able to tell you that in the Vitagraph production, "Two Women," Earle Williams was the leading man, Anita Stewart was "Anita of the Woodland" and Julia Swayne Gordon was the wife. The Vitagraph Company is located at East Fifteenth and Locust avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y.

F. K.—Little Julie Kruse is the only child of Marguerite Snow and James Kruse. Yes, Creighton Hale is to be seen often in "The Exploits of Elaine." Helen Badgley, better known as the "Thanhouser Kidlet," was the little flower girl in "The Million Dollar Mystery."

A Fan—In the Majestic production, "Out of the Air," Signe Aulen played the part of Dot. Shorty Hamilton was Shorty in "Shorty and the Fortuno Teller."

Polly—I am sorry you have had to wait for an answer to your letter, but the mail is heavy, you know, and queries must be taken in their turn. Cleo Madison is in her 20s and is not married. In "Alias Jimmy Valentine" John Hines took the part of Red. A letter addressed to him, care of the World Film Corporation, 130 West Forty-sixth street, New York, will reach him. Robert Warwick is not married. Norma Phillips is 13 years old. She is not married. I have no information regarding Mr. Wilson. Sorry.

E. L. D.—My dear, I should worry what kind of paper you use when writing to me. Any old kind will do, just so you write. William Russell is with the American Company, now at Santa Barbara, Cal. Antonio Moreno is not married. Neither is Mary Fuller, Lottie Briscoe, Earle Williams or William Russell. Wallace Reid is the husband of Dorothy Davenport. The beard of the great Mr. Kerrigan was not real in "Sampon." I should say I'm not a bit tired of hearing from you. I am awfully sorry you don't like the place we print the Right Off the Reel page, but I am afraid it will be impossible to keep the other side of the page clear. That could use up too much valuable space. Bye-bye.

Thanhouser Fan—The parents of Helen Badgley are Mr. and Mrs. Badgley.

Old-Timer—The man to whom you refer is Max Linder, and he is still with the foreign Pathe Freres Company. He joined the French army and was reported killed, but the report was a false one and I understand that he is still working. Thank you for your words of appreciation.

"His Letters," which are the splices from a moving picture actor in California to his lawyer friend in Chicago, will appear from time to time on this page. In the intervals will appear various articles of timely interest.