

STAR DUST

MOVIE AND RADIO

By VIRGINIA VALE

A FAVORITE question of the moment is "Why is Marlene Dietrich?"

She has made three bad pictures, one after the other. But she has just signed a new contract with Paramount to make two pictures a year, for \$250,000 a picture. However, she will not be directed by Von Sternberg in these pictures; he has held the megaphone on all of her American pictures but "Song of Songs"; Rouben Mamoulian was responsible for that one, and pretty bad it was, too.

Perhaps it's the memory of "Blue Angel" and "Morocco" that is responsible for that new contract. Perhaps it's a conviction that a director who won't let her stand and do nothing for long stretches of time, and will permit her to use more than two expressions, may turn out something that approaches those two successes of her earlier days. Whatever it is, she's all set to make more pictures, and let's hope they'll be good ones.

She did some shopping while she was in New York. For example, she bought fourteen pairs of shoes. Claudette Colbert bought hers in a department store famous for its shoe department, but Dietrich went to a high-class shoemaker and had hers made to order. Her friend, Elizabeth Bergner, the German actress who has made some pictures in England (remember her as Catherine of Russia, playing opposite

young Fairbanks?) and who is now jamming a theater with her performances in "Escape Me Never," saw the Dietrich shoes and promptly ordered some for herself. Looks as if the lovely Marlene may have started a new style.

Incidentally, she went to the very successful play, "The Children's Hour," and loathed it—thought it the dirtiest play she had ever seen, according to report, which seemed pretty strange.

Those amateur hours on the radio are rapidly becoming a menace; the tryer-outers bob up somewhere on the dial at all hours.

Borah Minevitch is going to take a hand in turning some of the amateur harmonica players into professionals; beginning soon, he'll hold auditions, and hopes as a result to find some new members for his "Harmonica Rascals."

James Barrie, the famous playwright, has been responsible for a lot of name changing. There's Wendy Barrie, the English actress, and of course Betty Bronson remained "Peter Pan" Bronson to the end of her movie career, and now it develops that Grace Barrie, whom you've probably heard warbling, switched to that name from her own, Grace May Rogers, when she grew fond of Peter Pan as a stage hero.

Miriam Hopkins went to a party in New York, a big ball where people wore beach costumes and made very, very merry. Society and stage folk mingled, and all was gay. But Miss Hopkins, in high necked, long sleeved amber pajamas, and looking very demure, stayed out of the excitement. These Hollywood girls have a way of playing lady when they get to New York, perhaps because they feel that every one will expect them to toss their hats over the chandelier and break into a dance on the nearest table.

If that exodus of movie-makers to the East takes place, the charming Miriam will be prepared for it. Last year she bought a beautiful little house in New York, with a garden that runs down to the East river, so she won't have to indulge in any mad home-hunting.

The censorship trouble over "Black Fury" is still raging, which is grand publicity, even though it does keep the new Paul Muni release out of some states.

Samuel Goldwyn startled everybody when, in discussing the possibility that the movies would move, he announced that he would go to England to make pictures.

Meanwhile there's a regular exodus in that direction. Helen Vinson is on her way to London to work for Gaumont, and Madge Evans will sail soon. Richard Dix leaves before long.

Helen Vinson bids fair to become one of our really big stars. She's refused to be put into the same sort of roles everlastingly; doesn't want to go on and on playing unsympathetic parts—and what a lot of them she's done, and done well! Her work in "Private Worlds" is exceptionally good; audiences like her even when she's being disagreeable.

But it does seem as if the girl ought to be given a break before we all hate her in spite of ourselves.

Janet Gaynor is taking a lesson from Mary Pickford; she's determined not to go on playing young-girl parts until, all of a sudden, she's too old for them. So now she's holding out for real roles, which will give her a chance to do something more than be wistful and sweet. See how you like her in "The Farmer Takes a Wife."

ODDS AND ENDS . . . Gary Cooper's father-in-law is a big, big man on the New York Stock Exchange . . . Frank Capra, ace director, is very ill . . . Maybe a change from that California climate would be a good thing for a lot of these movie-makers . . . Florida claims to be free from sinus trouble, at least, and that's one of the California bugaboos when the winds come off the desert . . . Charles Boyer ought to be one of our most devastating leading men, if he's given a chance . . . No more Max Baer pictures; star athletes are out, so far as Hollywood is concerned . . . Rosamond Pinchof, society girl who made a name for herself years ago in "The Miracle," has just finished sitting out a contract

without making a picture . . . The excuse is that Metro couldn't find a story for her . . . Impartial observers said from the first that the company was goofy when she was signed . . . She had fun high-hatting Hollywood, however.

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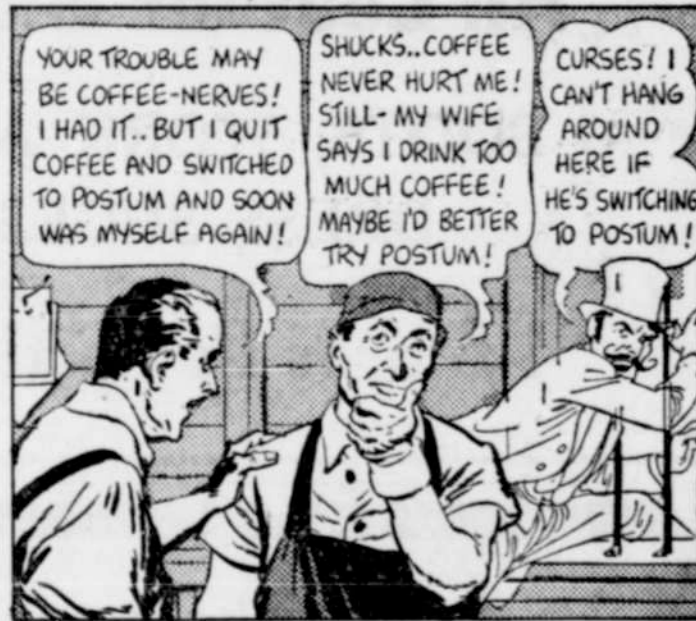
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