

The "Voodoo Woman" Speaks

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an able director.

"You see," she explained in her soft low contralto voice after preliminaries were over, "I didn't expect to take a role in the picture. I was there merely to help direct my chorus. It was a heavy role and I didn't feel equal to it for it had been written for Madame Sul-Te-Wan, who, before the present influx of eastern actors, was considered our greatest actor. Then there were two white artists, each quite a famous person, who made up and tried out for the part, but none of them were satisfactory.



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"I told Mr. Sloane that I had not the slightest idea what a Voodoo woman did or said and there were just five minutes left before they would shoot the scenes. But after he had given me his idea of how it should be done I worked hard to lose my own individuality and give an accurate portrayal of a Voodoo woman.

"I was censured severely for playing that part by some of the members of our group, yet I can't see why. A Voodoo woman was as much a part of the 1870 period group picture as the old-fashioned dress and the Nellie Bly. Our race has a way of shying at truth. We will never overcome faults that way. And after all, the Voodoo woman is not confined to 1870. In many of our communities the Voodoo woman is still known. It is true that the number of people who know and fear her is smaller, but she is with us today. Even in this modern and up-to-date Hollywood, it is reported that there are Voodoo cults.

"The talkies have revolutionized the movie industry. In silent drama the two essentials were beauty of face and form, but brains are necessary for Movietone work. There can be no coaching or prompting from the director. Not a sound can be uttered unless it is essential to the play. The cost of picture production had always been enormous, but the talkies have increased the cost four-fold. The slightest mishap will cost thousands of dollars.

"I see a very definite place in the movie world for our people. That is, if we will prepare ourselves and be ready for our big chance when it arrives. We have made a substantial entrance into the world of Movietone but how will we follow up?

"We have been too prone to blame the other fellow for our failures, but this is a day of a new psychology which every Negro should adopt and hold fast to, the psychology that 'No one can hurt us but ourselves.' We have been over-critical of the other fellow and not critical enough of ourselves.

"We have been taught by our leaders, to a large extent, that ours was a race nearly perfect, held back only because of our dark skins. But now the slogan of the world is efficiency. And in the future that is the thing that is going to count. It is time for young Negroes to stop bemoaning the fact that they are hindered by color and begin to become efficient along some line of endeavor. Not just get a smattering of knowledge but secure a thorough knowledge of whatever they hope to master.

Aside from her chorus work, Mrs. Bilbrew is equally as famous for her Ladies Minstrel which is a yearly affair on the coast; and her much known Bilbrew Quartette. This quartette has a two-year contract on the Orpheum Circuit. They were put on the regular bill for their tryout and they stopped the show. This quartette broadcasts over KNX and was the first and original "Do-Nut" company.

Mrs. Bilbrew's oldest daughter, Mrs. Robert V. Edwards, is an eminent pianist. Her two smaller daughters, who are twins, are under a five-year contract at Grauman's Hollywood Egyptian Theatre. They scored their biggest hit when they did the prologue with the Duncan Sisters in "Topsy and Eva." They are only five years old but they show a mentality far above that of the average child of that age.

Mrs. Bilbrew is also a poet in no small degree. Some of her best known poems are, "Call to Arms," "Volunteers," "Black Boys in Khaki," "We're Mighty Proud of You," "Punishment of Love," and "Eulogy to My Father."

As a writer of songs, one of her best compositions is, "Tribute to Roland Hayes."

As a tribute to her chorus, music teachers and directors from the famous Winn-Kearney studios and the Hollywood conservatory of music urged their students to attend "Hearts in Dixie" to note the harmony, Movietone caught and brought to the hearers.

Mrs. Bilbrew is a dark brown-skinned woman of medium size and height, yet she has a way about her that makes you want to use the word "cute" to describe her. She possesses a very charming manner and a pleasing personality. She is a charming hostess, a devoted mother, an affectionate wife, an able directress, a teacher of voice and piano, a poet and composer.

Upon leaving her, one wonders at the exuberance and vitality that she displays. Her success is not astounding, for she goes at whatever task she has to do wholeheartedly. She does not expect failure, therefore success smiles upon her.

KING PREMPEH AND THE GOLDEN STOOL

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Instead of money the governor shall have the white men's heads. The Golden Stool shall be well washed to the white man's blood."

Again and again they stormed the forts that day, but each time they were driven back by the cannon and the sharpshooters inside. Captain Armitage, one of the besieged, describes the scene as follows:

The White Army Caged

"The scene which was presented from the verandah of the Residency that night beggar's description. The blazing houses in the cantonment and the Pantli and Cape Coast lines, some of which the rebels had fired, cast a lurid light on the surging mass of humanity clustering around the fort walls from which arose the wailing of women and the pitiful crying of little children, who wept with their mothers out of sympathy with-

out knowing the danger realized by their elders.

"Behind all, towered the black wall of the forest which surrounds Coomassie, from which were borne the triumphant shouts of the rebels, who had at last caged the white man within the narrow limits of the fort. It was a night never to be forgotten."

Strange Ashanti Messages

Governor Hodgson tried to get a message through to Accra but it was weeks before he succeeded. The first week in May, he sent to say that he could hold out but eight or ten days longer. On May 31, relief had not come and provisions had been reduced to their lowest.

Kobina Cheri, who commanded the Ashantis, demanded the return of King Prempeh, and the abolishment of forced labor as the price of peace. In the meantime, the Ashanti warriors would beat out messages on their

drums from camp to camp.

First Camp: Do you hear the buffalo moving in the forest?

Second Camp: We hear him.

First Camp: We are like the buffalo.

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GRAPEFRUIT PRESERVE

Remove outer yellow rind and most of the white by peeling very thick. Halve the fruit, and with sharp knife cut out the core. Then slice across and place pulp in granite kettle with very little water and cook at moderate heat. When at boiling point, add three-fourths pint of sugar to each pint of fruit pulp and juice, then cook slowly 15 minutes. Seal in small jars.

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