

They Are Still Coming Over to the Moving Pictures



ELSIE FERGUSON
as a
Screen Star
AIRCRAFT



JULIETTE DAY
in
AMERICAN
FILM CO.



KATHLEEN CLIFFORD
BALBOA

BY A. H. GIEBLER.

THEY are still coming over to the movies. Every week brings news that another luminary of the regular stage has packed his or her make-up box and stepped over the thin line that divides the domain of the speaking drama from that of its silent sister, the movies.

Many of the stars of the regular stage come over to the movies as tentative guests. They take a whirl at the new game to see how they like it, and wind up by liking it so well that they stick.

Actors who have had engagements with traveling companies come over to the movies and forget the nightmare of "living in trunks," forget railroad schedules, railroad accidents, late trains, bad hotels and poorly equipped theaters that have been their portion, and revel in the newly found privileges of regular hours, and the possibility of living in their own homes.

Even those who have been fortunate enough to be cast in a big success that plays six months or a year in a big city, find the new work and new conditions a welcome change from the everlasting sameness of speaking the same lines, singing the same songs, smiling the same smiles month after month.

In the studio they find constant change and variety. One day they work inside the studio, the next day in the city streets, at another time in a beautiful park, then up in the mountains; by the seashore, anywhere and everywhere, but always in the most pleasant and congenial surroundings.

And last, but not least, by any means, there is almost always a father and fairer figure set opposite their names on the pay roll when the ghost walks. And it may also be said in this connection that, taking it by and large, the ghost walks with considerable more frequency and regularity in the movies than it does in any other field of dramatic endeavor.

Only the Applause Missing.

About the only thing the regular stage players miss when they come over to the movies is the applause of the stage. But when the fact that an audience can damn as well as raise with its applause is taken into consideration, this is not such a great loss, after all.

There is a great difference in the attitude of the regular stage players toward the movies today—and a few years ago.

When the pictures were new they were looked upon merely as a passing fancy and fit only for the cheap audiences. The regular stage players who were used to appearing in theaters where from 50 cents to \$2.50 admission was charged, thought they could cheapen themselves by being seen in a performance where the fee was one beggarly nickel or a dime.

They, like a great many other people, did not consider the possibilities of millions of people spending millions of nickels and dimes every day of the week.

In the early days of the films, actors were very hard to get. Only those who were out of work could be engaged, and many times even these

refused to work in the studios for fear their former managers would hear of it and hold it against them and refuse them parts when there was an opening.

Almost unheard-of salaries were offered by the early moving picture producers to actors of the regular stage, and in most cases where the actor had anything of a reputation the offers went begging.

Ralph Ince, a pioneer director, says he walked up and down the length of Broadway in the early days seeking histrionic help in vain. Many actors would listen to the proposition of working in a studio with great interest, and even those of them who were "at liberty" would turn the offer down with great reluctance, but turn it down they did—most of them—because they were afraid of losing caste among their fellow-players and the managers.

Affect the "Legitimate" Producer.

The legitimate stage producer did not look upon the films with anything like respect until they began making serious inroads upon his box office receipts; but when he did see the strength and power of the rival he did the wise thing by becoming a producer of pictures himself.

The late Charles Frohman was one of the first of the big dramatic producers to see the possibilities of the pictures. Oliver Morosco has been making movies for a long time. Adolph Zuker, William Fox, Jesse L. Lasky are up to their necks in the game, and William A. Brady, the hero of a hundred melo-dramas as an actor and afterwards one of the country's greatest producers of stage successes, has been producing pictures for several years, and this winter will see the august Mr. Brady himself in a movie part in one of the big features being made at the World-Brady studios.

The first pictures were crude and were shown only in the crudest theaters and oftentimes by men who had had no previous experience in the show business.

Gallery Gods Were Pioneers.

The regular stage producers looked upon them with gentle tolerance that was almost contempt. They did not think that such a simple thing as a pictured play could ever make any difference in their great business.

"It's a 5 per cent proposition," they reasoned, "and appeals only to the 5-cent clientele. There can be no danger to the regular stage."

But they soon changed their minds

about this. The audiences, hitherto sure and faithful, began going around the corner to the nickelodeon, where they saw wonderful pictures, which although crude, was such a great novelty and so fascinating that they could not resist them.

The gallery gods were the first to go over to the picture shows. The seats that had cost them 15 to 25 cents had been occupied largely by a class of people to whom the moving pictures had a special appeal, both as to price and theme.

The gallery god, who spent his quarter for blood and thunder plays at the theater, got a double dose of melodrama and five times as much of it at the picture show.

The other seats in the house began to show a yawning emptiness. Their occupants began going to see what the pictures were like, and in the meantime the movies were getting better. Instead of seeing a chase picture without rhyme or reason, the people began to see well-worked-out little comedies and dramas that were slices of real life.

In addition, the movies were the

most convenient as well as the cheapest form of entertainment ever offered the people.

The picture show was just around the corner from almost any house in town; the performance began early in the evening. You could go at 6.30 and be home again in an hour and a half; you could go at 9 and still be in the house no later than if you had gone to the regular theater. And all of this at a cost that was no greater than the car fare that was necessary to carry you to the regular theater.

When the dramatic producers saw the growing success of the pictures they began looking into the game a little closer. Their discerning eyes told them the people liked the cheaper and more convenient sort of amusement, and the first thing anybody knew they were making pictures themselves.

When the dramatic producers got in the game there was no longer any bashfulness on the part of the stage

players. They went in with a rush. Once in, they found that instead of being disgraced they had improved their work and widened their audience; they found that millions of people who never would have been able to see them on the regular stage saw their work and liked it in the pictures.

The pictures were a Godsend to the "small-time" actors, the players who made up the little traveling companies that played at the smaller cities and towns.

Many of these people were excellent artists, but so great was the competition of the regular stage that few of them ever got beyond the one-night-stand stage of the drama.

Most of the great players of the screen today came from the small stock companies and the tank-town troupes. These players were not as finicky as the actors of the large companies of Broadway reputations. They literally jumped at the movies, with their better salaries, shorter hours, absence of travel and the chance of living at home.

Whether the movies ever get this

classic or not, Maude Adams might some day be induced to come over to the movies and give the many thousands who have never had the opportunity of seeing her on the regular stage a chance of witnessing her rare art, if only in shadow form.

Answers to Picture Fans

HC.—Besides a strong plot, the story must have strong picture possibilities and must be written without any dialogue or description to be acceptable to the producers. Send direct to the scenario department. Do not address any particular person.

MAY—Tom and Owen Moore are brothers, but Victor comes from another tribe of Moores. Owen is the

husband of Mary Pickford, and Tom of Alice Joyce.

TULSA—You are not the only fan who thinks William Russell is a good actor. He is at the American Studio, Santa Barbara, Cal.

ANXIOUS—Philo McCullough played one of the leading parts in the recent Pathé serial, "The Neglected Wife." He is now working with Edith Storey in a Metro feature. Address him in care of Metro, 1476 Broadway, New York.

CENTAUR—Nearly all the film exchanges in St. Louis carry supplies for motion-picture theaters and can put you in touch with dealers who handle equipment of the heavier order such as seats, projection booths and things like that.

SEYMOUR—Charles Chaplin lives in Los Angeles, Cal., and he is still single. Anyone who can command a salary of \$1,000,000 a year seems to us to be very sound mentally. Chaplin has been on the stage practically all his life and was well known on the English stage before he came to the United States.

they were afraid of losing. Instead, the movies gave them a bigger reputation and following in a few months than they could have won on the regular stage in as many years.

There are very few legitimate-stage players who have not taken a whirl in the movies, and when the difference of hours, salary and other things are taken into consideration, there are few who have not liked it considerably better than the other form of dramatic work.

A Few "Holding Out."

Grace George, John Drew and Maude Adams are three notable exceptions of the great players who have not been seen in the films.

There are thousands who would like to see Mr. Drew, with his impeccable drawing-room manners and dress, working in the pictures.

Grace George, who in private life is Mrs. William A. Brady, has just returned to the regular stage after an absence of a season, and it is hoped

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