

ON THE TRAIL OF THE FILM MAKERS

By THOMAS T. HOYNE.

given a chance to draw conclusions concerning the difficulties of directorship by S. Rankin Drew.

We even examined several dozen "extra people" during the luncheon hour at a restaurant near the studio. We noted many odd eating motions and learned several new and intricate cutlery grips.

"Extra people" are, for the most part, persons who take minor parts. They become juries, mobs, armies, audiences and crowds. These supernumeraries are paid \$2.50 a day, and they love their art.

Lest the stipend of the super should lure the reader to make application for work as a single portion of an army or other gathering for screen purposes, I will explain that there are no vacancies. On the contrary, there are long waiting lists at all studios. The competition for these places is extremely keen.

There was a time when the owner of a palpably broken nose or a pair of well arched legs could secure work at once as a super. He was a "type." But that day has passed. Even a man with so distinctive a property as a glass eye would probably find that hundreds of persons just as well off had already put in applications stating their qualification.

Every one who seeks opportunity at the Vitagraph studio is listed. His name, height, weight, previous condition of servitude, imperfections and finger prints are indexed on a card which is filed for reference.

"We have hundreds of applications on file," said Mr. Shaw, whom we met at the studio. "All kinds of people want to work in the 'movies': Democrats, chauffeurs, Baptists, writers, Socialists, artists—even messenger boys."

"Great life," I suggested.

"Full of action," said Mr. Shaw, "and all that sort of thing, you know."

Mr. Shaw introduced us to Mr. Bacon, one of the galaxy of press agents; and Mr. Bacon took us to lunch at Avery's restaurant, just across the street from the picture plant. It was here that we saw the "extra people." Also we saw a number of directors.

The life of a director must be particularly exhilarating. Imagine teaching a company how to act in a grand banquet scene at the palace of the Czar, and then going over to Avery's for a couple of eggs, face up, and a cup of coffee!

"If this were only breakfast," said Mr. Bacon genially, as we sat ourselves at a table, "we could begin with a serial."

We thought it best to make no comment. During luncheon Mr. Bacon told us all about studio conditions. He got all wrought up about the morale and the morality of picture players.

"A lot of untrue stuff has been written about 'movie' actors and actresses," said he. "To read some of the pipes that are published one might think that 'movie' stars did nothing but kick for cocktails and strive for speed."

"This, then, is not the truth?" said I, with a rising inflection.

"Certainly not," said he. "It may be so in some studios, but here in the East the morality around a picture plant is 'way up in the .300 class.'"

He then told us a number of "she's-awfully-good-to-her-folks" stories about actresses so prominent on the screen that one wouldn't suppose they would even speak to their parents.

I must say that the greatest delicacy prevails in handling the film. The greatest prude could not bicker about that. It is given



The trials of a movie heroine do not end with the camera.

its baths of developer, "hypo" and water in a dark room so dark that one need feel no shame at rubbering with the naked eye.

While we were in the drying room on an after-luncheon tour of inspection we received word that Mr. Drew was going forth into the heart of Brooklyn to take some open-air pictures. We were invited to go along, and we hurried down into the courtyard, where a covey of taxicabs and motor cars was about to take wing.

Going out to get open-air pictures is not so simple as it sounds. It requires an enormous amount of preparation, and there is much extra expense attached to the work. The item for taxicab hire alone must be intensely annoying. About the same number of vehicles is required as for a modest funeral.

In the first car rode Mr. Drew, Mr. Hill and myself. A taxicab followed us, in which were seated two camera men, with the camera and batches of film. On top of the taxi a collapsible platform was tied with rope. This was to be set up when needed as a pedestal for the camera and its operator.

In the third car—her own—rode Anita Stewart, one of the queens of the fillums. With her was Julia Swayne Gordon. Next came a taxicab inclosing Anders Randolph and Frank Wupperman, made up as a man of years and a youth, respectively. Behind them came a taxicab containing the assistant director and two actors made up as policemen.

During the ride to the scene of action Mr. Drew explained that the two great difficulties about outdoor work are the light and the innocent bystanders. The latter gather by the gross whenever a motion picture camera is set up.

"But the crowds in Brooklyn," said Mr. Drew, "are more considerate than they are in Manhattan. Here they seldom refuse to stand out of the way of the camera."

"The light gives us most of our troubles. It is as uncertain as the weather report."

The cortege drew up at the curb in front of a brownstone house in a side street. Before the photographers could unlimber the camera innocent bystanders began to stand by. They represented all ages. On the outskirts of the

crowd I counted no less than six baby carriages, three of them packed to capacity with twins.

The innate desire to rubber, which stretches the curiosity in all of us, is the only explanation for the gatherings of innocent bystanders around a "movie" camera. Nothing can be poorer as a spectacle than the taking of outdoor pictures. The innocent bystanders see only bits of uprushing, dramatic climaxes that culminate days later in the studio, beyond their range of vision.

Revolver in hand, a "movie" actor may dash wildly into a house while the camera grinds. But that's all the bystander sees. It is very unsatisfying. Such scenes are no more than promissory notes in melodramatic thrill, which do not come to maturity until thirty or sixty days later, when they are paid in full on the screen.

The scenes which were made there in Brooklyn concerned the doings of Diana Pearson, heroine in a newspaper melodrama. Mr. Randolph is the villain in the piece, posing as the father of Frank Wupperman, who has never seen his real (fine opportunity for a pun) father.

Mr. Randolph is the Paris manager of a newspaper. He comes to the United States and to this very house in Brooklyn, in front of which the bystanders have gathered, and enters it.

Julia Swayne Gordon is the woman who has been foully deserted in Paris. She follows Mr. Randolph to this house in Brooklyn, and she enters it. I am told that when she enters the house she is seized by the wicked Mr. Randolph, bound hand and foot and hurled into the cellar. This would have been worth standing by to see, but it will not be done until next week in the studio.

Anita Stewart, who is a reporter, then comes to the house; she enters. I am told that she also is bound hand and foot and hurled into the cellar and hurled also will be enacted next week in the studio.

Mr. Wupperman was to arrive and do some rescuing. However, he didn't. He told me confidentially that he had been riding around in the taxi for four days, ready to do the rescuing at a second's notice when the time was ripe.

Before the camera men had their machine ready the whole street was filled with innocent bystanders. A fatal accident could not have drawn a more interested or critical crowd.

"Annie!" cried a fat woman in the front row. "Annie! Quick!"

The crowd was shaken from its outer circle, and Annie, who looked like a whole neighborhood herself, broke through the lines. "Pooh!" she sneered. "They had a patrol and eight policemen here a couple of weeks ago."

A woman appeared suddenly in the parlor window of the house next door to the house of mystery. She was within range of the camera. "Get out of that window!" shouted the assistant director, waving his arm violently at her.

The woman folded her arms and looked the camera indignantly in the eye. She knew her rights as a householder to look out of her own window.

The director decided to go ahead in spite of the fierce woman in the window, and nodded to the photographer, who began to turn the crank of his camera.

One of the taxicabs drove carefully up to the curb, stopping so that his front off wheel



"Oh, look, Emma! She's one of them movie actors!"

just reached a chalk mark that had been drawn by Mr. Drew. The innocent bystanders gasped with excitement. Mr. Randolph got out of the taxi, paid the chauffeur and went up the steps into the house of mystery.

That was all. The camera was readjusted, and Miss Gordon drove up in a taxi. The innocent bystanders strained forward incredulously. She got out, paid the chauffeur and went into the house.

That was all. Paying off chauffeurs is the web and woof of "movie" drama. Thousands of dollars change hands in this way on the screen.

The camera was reset, and Anita Stewart showed how a young lady reporter, in motion picture land, calls at a private house. Her demonstration was rich in suggestion for a bill collector.

First she wrenched at the doorbell like mad. Then she tried to force open the door. Then she wrenched at the bell again. The butler opened the door and stepped out to refuse her admittance. She listened furtively. Suddenly she started by the butler into the house.

I expected to see her come flying out through a window, but she didn't. The photographer stopped grinding at his camera.

That was all. An enthusiastic crowd of boys applauded heartily at the conclusion of the scene and crowded around Miss Stewart's car.

"She don't get no salary like Charlie Chaplin," yelled one.

"Aw, what do you know about it?" cried another.

"I guess I know! Ast her!" "Aw, ast her yourself!" Miss Stewart cowered in her car and looked as if she felt that even popularity can pall.

It had become very cloudy, and Director Drew decided he would attempt no more pictures that day.



Frank Daniels rehearsing.

MOTION pictures may not seem to have anything whatever in common with chess matches, but they demand the same high order of patience on the part of the players.

As a matter of fact, the life of a chess player is less trying. Between moves he can go home, hoe his garden, sprinkle the lawn and read a couple of volumes of history. There are no such recesses for the "movie" actor. From dawn until the whistle blows he must remain at the director's call, dressed and made up for his part.

Every husband who has stood painfully poised in evening clothes, waiting for his wife to complete her toilette, has felt his patient blood slowly come to a boil. But suppose he had to stand around for hours, instead of minutes, before setting out for the ball at the home of George W. Oudlesodo, the wealthy millionaire. What then?

This is what the "movie" actor has to do. He may be cast for the part of the Grand Duke Makeabetsky. He pastes heavy, warm whiskers over the southern hemisphere of his map, applies a thick coating of yellow roach powder to the northern regions, dresses himself in the furry regalia of Siberia, and then waits for his call in a bright, sunshiny studio constructed on the same lines as a horticultural hothouse.

He may wait all day and never be called upon to steal the heroine or knout the peasants. He may wait several days. Under such circumstances even Job himself might feel that he had been jobbed.

It is a difficult thing to get an opportunity to look behind the screen—to see motion pictures before they begin to move. Mr. Hill and myself were offered this rare chance the other day, and we pounced upon it eagerly. We went out to Flatbush to the studio of the Vitagraph Company, where material for the "movie" camera may be observed in large, raw chunks.

We laughed at the silent jest in the gesticulations of Frank Daniels; we studied the slow smile of Edith Storey; we took a look at the tamed troubles of Hughie Mack, and were

The Hamlet of W—

Continued from page four.

pa, crrraaa, papapapapa. Sharp outcries and commands reach us confusedly.

We hasten along under the cover, taken with that nervousness which the approach of combat always brings on and which we try to quench instinctively in a hundred ways—a piece of grass which one chews, a mustache mechanically twisted, a cigarette maladroily rolled, a biscuit at which one nibbles or a piece of tobacco which one masticates.

Not a word. Each one thinks of himself, of his gun, his cartridges, his bayonet. As to M—, he establishes to his own satisfaction, by testing it with his finger, that his bayonet has not lost its edge.

We run against our line of skirmishers, which has stopped at the edge of the woods. Ahead of us is a field of beets—a bad stretch of about 100 metres; then a curtain of trees and then the village. The German sentinels on their knees behind the trees turn their heads uneasily in the direction of the battle, the tumult of which increases from minute to minute.

We deploy, ready to charge. Relying on their captured patrols, they have no suspicion that we are so near and we shall have crossed half the space between us before they recover from their surprise. We shall fire one shot apiece and then make our dash.

Knee on the ground, finger on the trigger, we wait. The captain, sword drawn, revolver in his fist, also waits, pale and nervous. The tempest breaks. A thousand voices howl at death. Every tenth of a second brings a cannon shot and twenty rifle shots. Clouds of dull smoke hang heavily about the houses; our ears boom, our nerves are put to a rude test.

What is he waiting for? All of a sudden an enormous clamor echoes and re-echoes. From the village comes the tacatacata of the machine guns. It is the charge, the assault, the onrush of our comrades.

The captain makes a gesture. "Aim! Fire!" A single detonation. "Forward!"

We are in the beet field, yelling. Two or three slip and tumble. What is going on in the curtain of trees? It is not that which concerns us so much as where we plant our steps. Ah! the foul terrain—soft, miry, gripping and slippery!

Ten metres, twenty metres, and not a shot fired at us! Are we going to reach the village so easily? Thirty metres; the trees draw near;

one could almost get there in a jump or two. The more agile press slightly ahead; our line breaks, is dislocated. Already breaths come short and lungs are panting.

Carraa, patapatapa— It is for us. What a shame! Everything was going so well. "Ah, the swine!" curses the furrier at my right.

Is he wounded? But no; with a regular movement, his teeth clenched, controlling his breath, he runs on and I follow three yards behind. He has pulled down his cap over his ears and has thereby given himself a more terrifying aspect.

Carraa, carraaa— We bend our heads low under the squall. The bullets sing about our ears like a swarm of angry hornets. By what miracle can one stand erect in such a storm!

The adjutant falls, rises and runs off limping; no doubt he is wounded in the leg. The lieutenant has his arm pierced by a ball, but marches on, nevertheless. Men fall without one seeing what hits them.

But our spirit is not broken. The captain, superb, keeps crying with a hoarse voice: "Forward!" Five men run with him; two of them are trumpeters.

Only twenty, fifteen, ten metres. We are there—shouting demons, furies unloosed, darting like fate. But they have not waited for us. They flee toward the houses.

Halted, stretched in their places, we shoot them down like rabbits. Some of them leap over the walls of the gardens. Most of them run down the street facing us—a street perpendicular to the two principal streets of the hamlet—and rush into the open houses. From the windows, the embrasures, the angles and the doorways they fire at us. We reply.

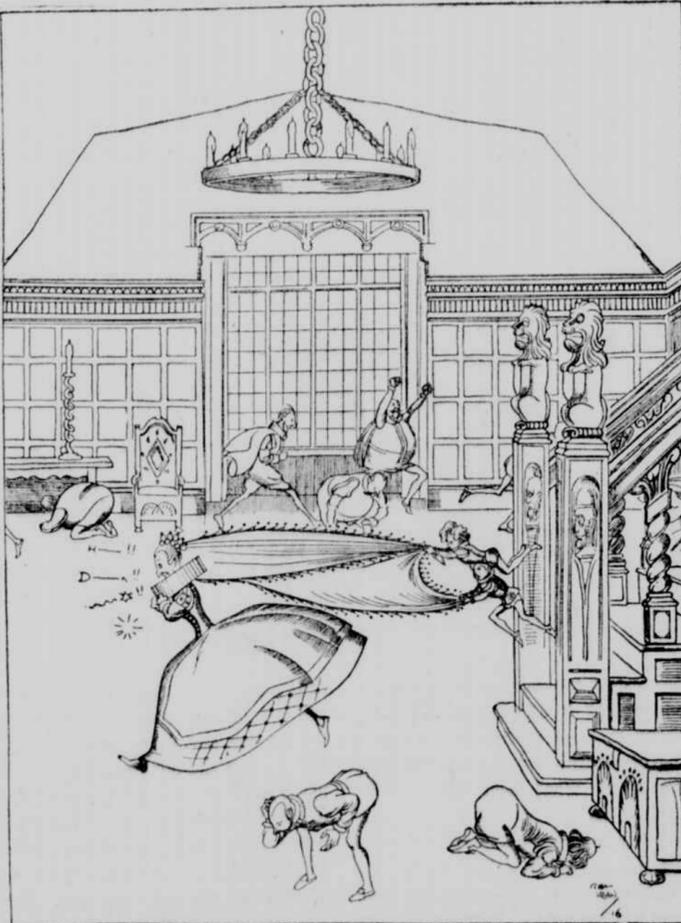
No more feverishness now—an astonishing calm, the clearness of action. The reflexes of our physical efforts guide our movements and give them precision. Forty bodies at least are spread over the open space before us; some of the wounded seek cover from which to fire again. Our bullets stretch them in the mud.

Little by little we regain our breath and rally, in the shelter of the trees. At the end of the street a German company debouches. A hellish fire receives it; it advances, nevertheless, dropping its dead by files.

We manoeuvre our pieces more rapidly. Their first ranks are wiped out. They go under; those who follow fall; but they keep coming. Finally their chief falls, a tall devil of an officer who almost scraped the house walls with his gestures. A new volley falls seven or eight men. This time they stop, hesitate a second and retreat under our fire.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

By Rea Irvin



Queen Elizabeth Loses Her Collar Button, June 4, 1571.

"Advance! The bayonet!" shouts the captain.

We rise, arms up. Then the two trumpeters, the veins of their necks standing out, stir our hearts with the ardent notes of the charge. A fury, an heroic intoxication, mounts to our heads. We run like a waterspout up the narrow street, in the buzzing of bullets, toward the clamors which reach us.

Into the low houses, into the wide-open stables, into the gardens our men rush by twos and threes. They come out with red bayonets, themselves covered with blood. One hears cries of terror, cries of death. No longer gun shots—harsh oaths, stampings, the noise of overturned furniture, the crashing-in of doors, clashing of steel, heavy collisions, rapid calls and warnings—and dominating all the strident notes of the charge, causing down there a panic which we divine.

Without his coat, his cap torn, his eyes bulging from his head, oozing with sweat, his hands full of blood, M— appears at the door of the house, stops a second, unloosens his canteen and drinks eagerly, supporting himself on his gun.

We have just imprisoned three Germans in a little building—some men of my squad and I. As I pass him he says: "It is good going. I have just smashed three in there. Listen to me! They squeal like pigs. They don't know how to die!"

From all the houses where silence now reigns our men emerge, some wounded, without kepis, without knapsacks, without coats. One of them even has stripped off his coat and works with his shirt sleeves rolled up to his elbows.

Making our way among the corpses which encumber the earth, leaping over heads, backs and legs, we reach the end of the street, when a German machine gun section arrives with its mitrailleuse.

"Pechere!" as M— says. They have not time to turn their piece before we are on them. Two minutes of hand-to-hand fighting and twenty men fall, disembowelled or crushed, at the foot of the upset machine gun. Two or three Germans escape, astonished that we do not even try to kill or capture them.

Some corpses strew the street into which we debouch. A house is burning and sending out a dense smoke. The frightened pickelhaubes flee into the alleys, into the stables and among the walls of the gardens. An irregular fusillade extends on all sides.

Far down in the village, behind a barricade of upturned wagons, harrows, mowers, barrels, some Germans still hold out.

"Fire! fire! Fire at will!" cries the captain. The enemy fall like flies. Some turn, kneel on the ground, and reply.

"Forward, children! With the bayonet! The trumpets there, the trumpets!"

Where are those soundrels? We launch a new attack. At the same instant from a window which is opened violently appears the figure of Lagazue, the trumpeter of the 3rd, a Cottois of the purest strain, who starts blowing a desperate charge.

All the obstacles in front of us are split, smashed, swept away or turned with their claws toward the open country. Scaling, demolishing the barricade, our comrades join us, with cries of joy. In groups formed at hazard we penetrate everywhere. There is not a nook or corner which is not visited. Every one who defends himself is killed; those who surrender are quickly brought forth.

One sees now only blue legs (French). Having completely scoured it, we arrived at the end of the village, where some shots still resound and some cries from the depths of the houses.

A few Germans, without arms, run into the open fields, pursued by our bullets. Our officers try to rally their men in the midst of the confusion and pile-mole of the battle.

In the court yard of a farm are already collected more than three hundred prisoners, livid, trembling, dejected. They are entrusted to a guard—the furrier and twenty men. They will be well guarded!

I bring him three from a little side street. My mouth is parched. He hands me his canteen.

"Don't you think," he says while I drink, "don't you think we got them? The pigs! Look at them! Are they stuck up now?"

But what is that? Vrrr, Vrrr, haum! The shells which reply. They are firing on our village, parbleu!

The captain arrives on a run. "Corporal, what are you doing there, Nom de Dieu? Find the commandant and get orders!"

I start on a run, but where? The commandant! Where is he? Corpses, corpses, at each step; wounded who groan; helmets, haversacks, canteens, guns; blood everywhere, on the walls, on the doors, on the pavements, on the earth in brown streaks; lamentations, appeals, commands, names hurled into the air; comrades who bind their wounds, who seek for the surgeon, dragging a leg, an arm in a sling.

A trumpet sounds re-assemble. I hurry; I ask everywhere: "The Commandant? Where is the Commandant?"