

# THE TEAR BEHIND THE LAUGH WINS IN THE CINEMA

### That's the Reason for the Delightful Children of the Screen Who Live Happy Child Lives in Spite of Fame and Earnings

By BETTY SHANNON.

I SAW three motion picture dramas at one sitting the other day. None of them boasted more than the time worn plot, ordinary photography, mediocre acting. And yet in watching the audience, a typical motion picture audience, I observed that the pictures were "getting across." In each picture there was an abundance of incidental detail—a baby kicking lustily in its cradle; two children climbing to reach a jam jar; the sorrowful last look of a father at his sleeping small boy; a strong man feeding a squirrel; a dog looking knowingly up into his master's face—all entirely unnecessary to plot development. But all of these incidents brought forth a response, a tear, a laugh, a chuckle, from the people who sat before the screen. As they passed out these people shook their heads at each other, mentioning these scenes and chattering enthusiastically of the plays they had just seen.

I spoke of this the next day to a motion picture director when I was out at one of those great, clean, airy studios where the movies come to life. He was surrounded by an array of canaries, parrots, two dogs, a squirming baby and a group of lively children who were waiting their turns to appear before the camera. The narrow walled enclosure which formed the background for the scene on which he was working was arranged to represent a room in a poor tenement.

"We call that 'heart stuff,'" he said as he ordered a baby's cradle placed by an open window where the rays of an artificial moon would fall on the face of the sleeping child. "Babies always get a laugh with a tear in it. You've noticed it in the theatres. It brings the play home to the audience. The people think they like to laugh, but they don't really appreciate the laugh unless there's a sob behind it. They're not satisfied until something touches their hearts and makes them weep a tear or two and feel tight in the throat."

At this juncture one of the littlest actresses fell to giggling. She saw a wonderful opportunity to tickle her bed partner in the ribs. She did it slyly, and then there was trouble which it took ten minutes of the director's patience to straighten out. It was only because the littlest actress was new and had not learned that acting is a serious profession. The older children never think of indulging in frivolity while at work.

"But how about the kiddies themselves," I asked, after the scene had been finished and the players sent away. "Are their parents not sacrificing them for the sake of a little money and glory just now?"

"Where do you get your sacrifice?" asked the surprised director. "They are as carefully guarded as any children. Their work is play to them. How many parents in moderate circumstances and with talented children would feel warranted in refusing a proffered engagement which would pay enough money to let their youngsters go on with their education and lay up money for the future, all the time they are learning more than the average child from the 'school of life'?"

There are hardly more than 100 children in all of the picture studios, that is children who play with any degree of regularity. There are others who take small extra parts from time to time. All of the children are painstakingly chaperoned, usually by their mothers. All of them who are seven years of age or older receive instructions either at school or from private tutors. In New York city a school for stage and motion picture children is maintained at the rehearsal club, an organization of professional women. There are about seventy pupils in this school. The studies and hours correspond closely to those of the public schools. The pupils are allowed to be absent for work only on permits issued by the Gerry Society. At Universal City, in California, where there is an entire company made up of children players, a special school is maintained all the year.

"I have never seen children so eager for education," said Miss Hazel Hunt, the teacher in charge of the Universal City school. "Every child has a definite ambition. Their diligence is remarkable. They bring to their studies more certain and coordinated ideas of life and the meaning of things than the average children. They have to be absent, of course, when they are needed for a picture, but they come back all the more eager to their studies after they have been away for a few days. They make up their back work without a murmur."

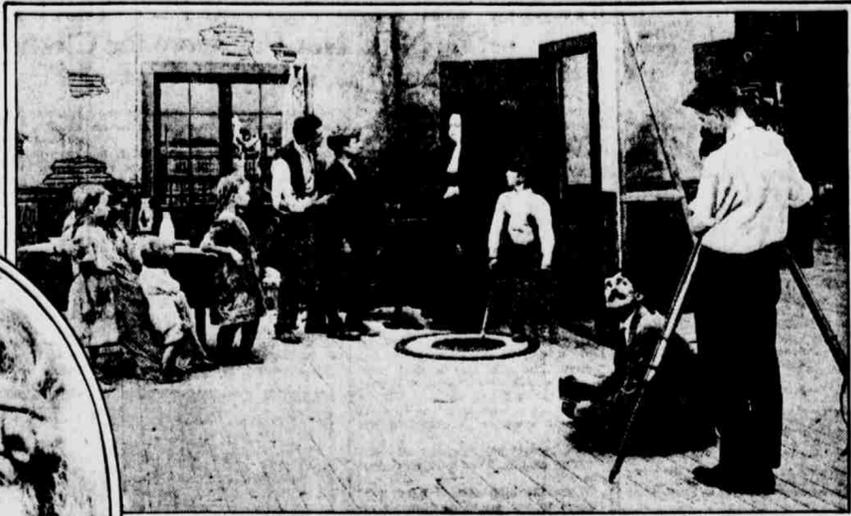
The usual salary of the child featured in film productions ranges from \$20 to \$50 a week. Children so paid are nearly always under long term contracts made by parents or



VIRGINIA MYERS DANCER.



ETHELMARY OAKLAND, WHO APPEARS WITH FREDERICK WARDE IN 'SILAS MARNER'



THEODORE WHARTON (SEATED) DIRECTING A STUDIO SCENE.



"CHILDREN IN THE HOUSE" WITH NORMA TALMADGE.



LILLIAN REED, THE CHILD IN 'CIVILIZATION'



LILLIAN REED, THE CHILD IN 'CIVILIZATION'

guardians. Juvenile players who take smaller parts but who are on the salary lists are paid from \$15 to \$25 dollars a week, while those who play only as extras are given from \$3 to \$10 a day. Out of this money the children's costumes must be furnished. Where the children live at a distance the company's automobiles carry the youngsters and their chaperons back and forth—unless the child actor travels in his own motor. In many studios luncheon is served. Not a few of the children in the films are sons and daughters of professional folk, although many of the juvenile stars are the precocious youngsters who made their first public appearance in Sunday school or lodge entertainments.

Clara Horton, a sunny haired, blue eyed child, who belongs at a Western studio, became so popular in amateur theatricals at her home in Brooklyn, N. Y., when she was a tiny maid that she was sought by a New York manager. She was given an important contract which finally led to her engagement in pictures. She is one of the most fearless of all the children who play before the camera. Only the other day she was required to kneel against a log and let two leopards jump over her. She did it without a quiver.

The career of Ethelmary Oakland, the charming girl of 7 who plays *Effe* with Frederick Warde in the screen version of "Silas Marner," was decided for her by the friends of her mother.

"Others saw that Ethelmary had talent before I did and urged me to take her to a theatrical manager," said Ethelmary's mother, who always accompanies her little daughter when she works. "In the two years she has been in professional work she has

never been idle. She has been both 'Madam Butterfly' by the Boston Opera and on the stage and in the pictures. Last season she played the part of the Japanese baby in the presentation of

her mouth as she labored. She did not look up until the last button was put through.

"I'm six," Katherine explained when she did look up, "and Jane is only four, so I have to take care of her." Ethelmary is under contract to play in a series of pictures supporting Frederick Warde. In her dressing room is her whole family of dolls, six, including Dianah, the black rag doll which she totes everywhere. She can leave an intensely complicated scene and take up again without the least difficulty. This is an interesting trait of the motion picture children. They work quite as seriously as adults when it is time for work, but they are only children when "off stage."

Two of the most famous children in pictures are Katherine and Jane Lee, who are constantly attended by their mother. Katherine, she herself admitted, is saving money for Jane's education. "A child with such talent," she once remarked, shaking the golden curls, "ought to be given every opportunity which protruded from the corner of

her mouth as she labored. She did not look up until the last button was put through.

"I'm six," Katherine explained when she did look up, "and Jane is only four, so I have to take care of her." These two well-behaved children had just returned from Bermuda, where they had taken part with Annette Kellermann in her newest spectacle, "A Daughter of the Gods." Katherine's education has been placed in the hands of a private tutor, while even little Jane, who is too young for school, is being taught mostly by the diligent attention of her older sister. Together the two children make a salary of about \$200 a week, but they are exceptional. They are constantly attended by their mother. Katherine, she herself admitted, is saving money for Jane's education.

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### Close Up Views of the Youngest Stars Who Help to Supply What the Directors of the Silent Drama Call "Heart Stuff"

and kewpie dolls in the hand to a career in the dim, uncertain, growup future.

These children, together with Kittens Relcher, a charming brown eyed child with a sturdy little body and soft, playful manners, and Miriam Battista, a newcomer in child screenland, are the "heart stuff" in many dramas in which Theda Bara, Virginia Pearson, and Robert Mantell appear. The deeper meaning of the dramas passes over their heads, as conversation with them proves. There is a great deal of romping around in the big studio and games of tag and ring around the rosie when the director does not need them.

It was largely to anticipate the demand for special programmes of motion pictures for children, now fostered by the General Federation of Women's Clubs, that Lulu Warrenton, an able actress of many years experience, was put in charge of the juvenile company at Universal City. Miss Warrenton is producing a series of juvenile pictures with her young company. At the same time the children will continue to supply many of the effective scenes for the dramas for grownups with Mary Fuller, J. Warren Kerrigan, Violet Mercereau and other adult stars. Zoe Du Rae, the most widely known of these children, has been before the camera five years—and she is only 6 years old now. She can weep copiously at will. No horrid accident—the truth behind most of the grown-ups' tears one sees in the movies—for Zoe, when the director orders "weeps,"

"I ask for a mirror when I have to cry," explains Zoe. "An' then I look just as sad as I can, and then when I think how sad the little girl in the mirror feels I cry for her."

Lena Baskette is the dancer of the child company. Lois Alexander is the girl who insists on playing boys' parts and plays them better than the boys do. Then there is Ella Hall, Harry Depp, Antrim Short and numerous other children who play smaller parts. Miss Virginia Richdale Kerrigan, niece of J. Warren Kerrigan, now six months old, is called upon very special occasions. Lena Baskette has the distinction of having danced before Pavlova at the special request of the Russian artist on the occasion of a Western visit.

Virginia Myers, daughter of Jerome and Ethel Myers, New York artist's wife, has appeared in the pictures. Virginia is a dancer of unusual ability. The technique of her dancing has astonished the critics. But that concerns the graceful little girl far less than the Angora kittens which feast on pulling her thick brown curls. Her training, being the daughter of talented artists, might naturally be expected to be interestingly unusual. She has never been to school, not for a day. Her education has been in the colorful life of the studio, where she watches her father at work on his etchings and paintings. Virginia was starred in a special dancing picture in which she appeared alone and was paid at the rate of \$200 for seven minutes. In the near future she will be featured in similar films.

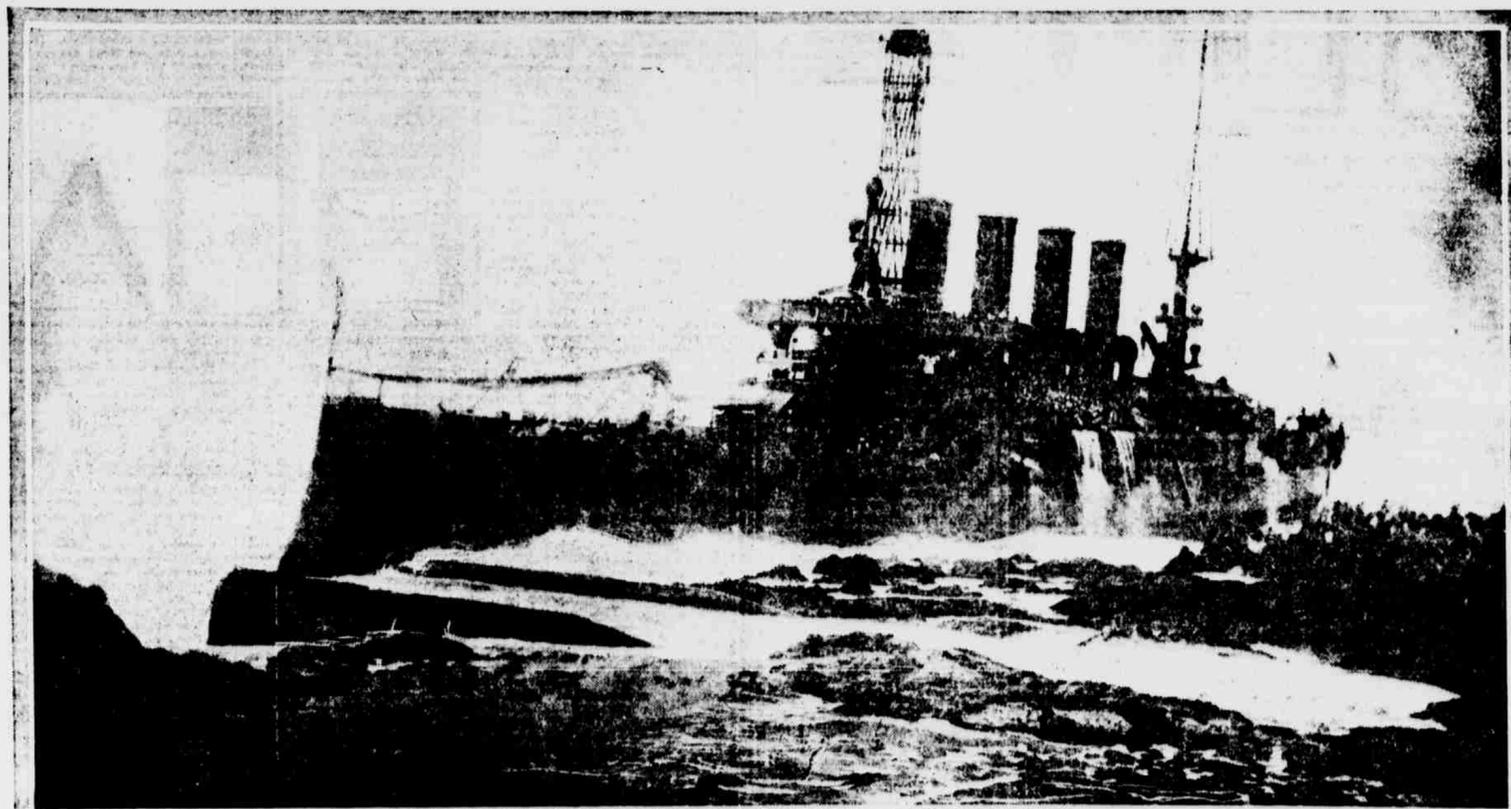
There are other children—equally talented, interesting and ambitious. There is young Billy Jacobs, who maintains his own automobile—a roundish, chubby motor car which goes very well with Billy Jacobs's round, chubby self. And there is seen in the picture "The Heart of Nora Fitzgerald" the role of Mae Marsh, the favorite of the "Birth of a Nation" who is so ready with money to buy a really truly beautiful out in sunny California, even if it does lisp.

There is Thelma Salter, featured in many of the picture companies who prefers to play newsboy parts and appears with Norma Talmadge in the picture "Bliss" and other pictures. There are Dorothy Gish and other famous screen players; there are Joseph and Janeth Monahan, brother and sister, who have a company of their own and take part mostly in comedies and farces on growing-up dramas. There is nothing of "Bliss" the "Bliss" picture, both of which receive the sufficient salaries of \$25 a week and bones every day while they are in the line.

Even "Civilization" that picture of the progress of the human race, directed by Thomas Ince, was made without its touch of the heart of childhood. The most popular picture of the picture is that of tiny babies, toddling after two weeks, howling in fits which made her picture famous. The scene was an afterthought, but it was just a momentary flash in the life of a drama of overwhelming importance, but this scene lingers in the memories of those who have seen the picture.

Much of the popularity of the picture is due to the presence of the little things, which are the most important things in the picture. The picture is full of "heart stuff" and the little things which are the most important things in the picture. The picture is full of "heart stuff" and the little things which are the most important things in the picture. We all like a smile with a tear in it.

## UNITED STATES CRUISER MEMPHIS ON THE ROCKS



Driven ashore by hurricane and tidal wave, the Memphis lodged among the rocks in Santo Domingo Bay on August 29. Forty of her crew lost their lives and many were injured.