

MAKING FILMS SAFE FOR KIDDIES



FLORENCE MALONE in 'THE MASQUERADER' by JANE STANNARD JOHNSON.

Tell me just how you did it and all about it," said the reporter of THE SUN. Of course, he was speaking about the special Saturday morning motion picture performances for children, but in answer I would say that it sort of seems to me they did themselves. Everything was ready, here, there and elsewhere, and all I did was to go out and put the wheels in motion.

You see, it's rather odd about children and motion pictures. There's almost everything else in the world made and prepared at no end of expense solely for the little ones; but in motion pictures the children have been expected to go to see the same things their elders see on the screen, whether it is the vampire "ramping" or the dance hall drinking and dancing, or the festive bachelor party with its ballet or the faithless husband or wife, or perchance sweet Mary Pickford, who never offends. But there's about one Mary to a large number of the other kind.

The more I thought about this condition the less logical it seemed, for all motion pictures aren't suitable for children any more than all books and all plays or all companions, nor can they ever be. Indeed, an afternoon or evening film may be a very undesirable kind of companion.

I knew children's performances had been tried in various parts of the country, and even in New York, but I had a desire to try it myself. So one day last year I approached J. W. Brandon, owner of the Bunny Theatre, 147th street and Broadway, and after much persuasion induced him to cooperate in trying out the idea.

Then I went to the principal of the parent school for his cooperation, and here the response was most cordial. I learned then, and have been learning ever since, that teachers and principals, and so far as I have observed all of those interested in the education and moral training of the young, are convinced that the motion picture is a grave problem. As this particular principal expressed it, "We do want the children kept out of the picture shows at night. Practically all of them go one, two, three, four, five nights, and I have one child here who admits going to see pictures every night in the week. Now, these children come to school too sleepy to study and their lessons are not well learned. More serious even than this, they see many subjects discussed in films that they should not see, and the result is their minds are excited and strained, and this reaction is a nervous condition that is unhealthy both mentally and physically. So you may be very sure," he added, "that I will gladly do everything in my power to have my pupils go to these performances where they will see the best of films."

This principal also presented the matter at the mothers' meeting of his school, and at once a substantial number of mothers volunteered to cooperate, and these were the women who

'THE MASQUERADER'

did the work of caring for the children at the theatre on Saturday mornings. I needn't go into all the details of handling that first performance, but it was a huge success. Thereafter performances were given every Saturday for six months successfully. Also a second theatre further uptown was interested, and performances were given there every Saturday for five months, again the schools and the mothers affording the cooperation and the workers.

"But how did you get the children to come?" asked a caller one day recently. "We tried these performances in my neighborhood, and this incident will tell the whole tale. A mother prominently active in arranging the shows took home to her son, age 8, tickets for a series of six performances. He looked bored. 'Why, Johnny,' she

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exclaimed, 'you don't seem to be pleased about these tickets.' 'Well, mother,' he replied, 'I've seen birds until I know every bird there is, and I've seen flowers grow until I never want to see any more flowers long's I live, and if you want to see those pictures, all right, but I don't,' and my caller laughed as she finished. 'And that's the way with most of the children around here. They won't come.' She looked to me for explanation.

"Do you think that is what a child wants to see when he goes to a picture show?" I countered. My idea is that he has a right to expect to see a better show than his parents see at the regular performance, if the thing is to be arranged especially for children. The child must be amused and entertained first, and the education must be imbibed unconsciously. My plan is to select the superior films suitable for children from regular releases and then make up a programme of fascinating variety and interest, just long enough—say seven reels. I put in patriotic pictures—soldiers and flags and marching and drilling and all that sort of thing; also animals, travelogue scenes, birds, fishes, industrial cartoons, and always the feature story. I never heard a child say he didn't have a good time at these shows, and hundreds of them came every Saturday—that is the answer.

The special performance is the only method I know of at the present time for giving children the right sort of pictures. Occasionally a picture is produced that is particularly attractive to children, "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm," for instance. The grownups like such pictures just as much as the children, and the producer can make them profitably. But the great majority of weekly film releases are far removed from this type. So it becomes necessary to select a programme for the children. The advantage of the regular Saturday morning performance is that mothers have a place where they may weekly send their children with the assurance of imbibing right ideas and standards in the film subjects. Ethically, morally and culturally the regular film performance is quite as impressive and as interesting as any lesson learned in school. The love of beauty, literature, in homes, in all of life's activities; patriotism, industry, courage, loyalty, honesty, a proper sense of humor—a thousand and one factors of education and character building are being absorbed by children at their performances of well selected films, when seen regularly.

The number of children who attend the special show is steadily increasing, which means that parents are increasingly recognizing the undesirability of having their children see film subjects unsuited to their years, however interesting these subjects may be to adults. That the children's morning makes a considerable difference to the neighborhood teachers is certain, yet the interest at present represents only that proportion of the public that may

THE BUNNY THEATRE.

Beatie Love in the Triangle production, "The Sister of Six," will entertain the children at the special performance at the Bunny Theatre, 147th street and Broadway, on Saturday morning, December 15, under the direction of Mrs. Jane Stannard Johnson. This picture shows wonderful views of California scenery and treats of the time of the early settlers when it was necessary to protect one's ranch claims against the trespass of Mexican usurpers. The story has plenty of action, in which Beatie and her six little brothers and sisters play a con-

John Sawyer's "Paradise."

Preparations are being completed for a record crowd on the occasion of the New Year's Eve festivities in John Sawyer's "Paradise," Fifty-eighth street and Columbus Circle. Besides the gala holiday festivities Miss Sawyer will appear in several new dances. A special supper will be served on this occasion and it is destined to afford an atmosphere of artistic bohemianism. "Sunday Night in Bohemia," under the direction of A. Baldwin Sloane, continues to please.

Justine Johnston Making Plans for New Year's Eve.

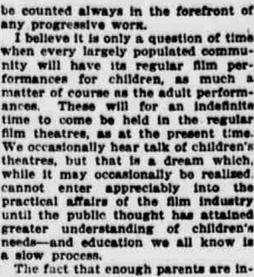
If it isn't one thing it's another, according to the old saying, and this time it's another, in the form of a New Year's Eve entertainment in "Justine Johnston's Little Club." And the fair Justine is to do an entertaining. Every evening at the conclusion of "Over the Top" on the roof of the Forty-fourth Street Theatre Miss Justine goes down stairs to her Little Club and entertains the scores of after-theatre diners. The Little Club is always in the center of social and recreational activities, and New Year's Eve will be a banner occasion. A startling programme will be announced later.

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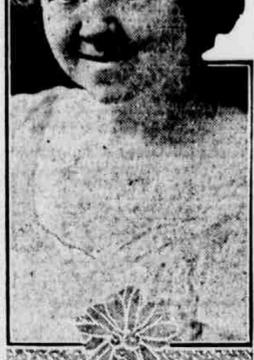
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JEWEL CARMEN in 'LES MISERABLES' at the Lyric Theatre.



MISS J.S. JOHNSON

be counted always in the forefront of any progressive work. I believe it is only a question of time when every largely populated community will have its regular film performances for children, as much a matter of course as the adult performances. These will for an indefinite time to come be held in the regular film theatres, as at the present time. We occasionally hear talk of children's theatres, but that is a dream which, while it may occasionally be realized, cannot enter appreciably into the practical affairs of the film industry until the public thought has attained a greater understanding of children's needs—and education we all know is a slow process.

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flourish stuff on the way down," he said. "Lina told me the first four words and I got the rest from my English-French-German series, vest pocket edition. 'Vive la France!' including Italy and environs. I like our allies; I liked 'em before, but I like 'em better now. Cause why? I've had an interview with Lina at Fort Lee. "She finished her first Paramount picture to-day. 'The Eternal Temptress,' or something like that. Sounds like Laura Jean, but it's not. It's by Mme. Frederique de Gressac. She's the wife of Victor Maurel—you know—the internationally famed tenor, voice doctor of the Metropolitan Opera House. Artistic stuff, eh what? And Muratore was virtuosissimo. And Emile Chautard, her director—eh, bien, monsieur, certainement!—and Victor and a few additional artists. And me talking to the folks in Paloma! "Lina arrived in an eight cylinder limousine, four ropes of real pearls and two extra dividends worth of dia-

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mons. I struck up a conversation with Muratore almost at once. "Cigarette, monsieur?" I said. (I've got the 'monsieur' down cold—he couldn't have done better himself). "Merci, bien," he said. 'Ah cela je vous l'ai toujours dit; je ne suis pas sûr. Il y a des femmes, a ce qu'on dit, qui peuvent répondre, d'elles.' "I didn't get it very clearly, and the conversation languished. 'Do you speak French?' asked Chautard. He was leading man for Helene in Paris and the head of the Theatre Royal in Brussels for many years, so I was honored to have him address me. "Non," I said, and he understood me. "How does it feel to be going into pictures?" I asked Lina. "Mon Dieu, que je suis heureuse!" she said. "Do you like the movies?" I asked. (I always try to get an original touch into my interviews.) "Hotel de la Grande-Bretagne, Lungarno Accioli," she responded. "So we had our pictures taken, me receiving her as she stopped from her car. Sweet cookie! It was a wonderful interview." "And gracious! Goodness gracious, how gracious she is! 'Oul, monsieur, Ah, yes indeed. So charmed! That's the way it was all afternoon. What if she didn't know any more English? She was gracious in Italian too, for I asked the Italian camera man what she was saying when she began speaking in pidgin wop, and he said, 'Voila, muchacho!' which is Spanish for 'Oh, boy!'"

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tures is to be shown at Low's New York Theatre Wednesday, December 13, in "The Fringe Society," the Hoffman-Foursquare picture written by Pierre V. R. Key, the eminent music critic and magazine contributor, and the lineal descendant of Francis Scott Key, the author of "The Star Spangled Banner." It is the initial production of the George Backer Producing Corporation. "The Fringe Society" contains a theme of daily interest to every human being in this country, the attempt and suppression of a food staple manipulation, the keen struggle between a patriotic newspaper owner and editor, and a political trust vandal. The settings are of unusual excellence, a charming and wholesome love interest runs through the plot. There are many comedy situations and not a few stirring scenes. Co-starring in the cast are Ruth Roland, Leah Baird, Milton Bills and J. Herbert Frank.

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To-morrow night, "Spanish Night," at the Palais Royal promises to be a night long remembered by Broadway. In addition to the elaborate revue "Venus on Broadway" now current, Seviliana, the Spanish dancer who took Broadway by storm two weeks ago, will introduce some new native dances. Several other Spanish artists will also make their initial bow before a Broadway audience.

Among the prominent New York Spanish people who will be present are Quinto Valverde and the Velasco

"Cafe Intime" in Moulin Rouge.

Broadway has gained its first "Cafe Intime" in the Moulin Rouge. In both atmosphere and mode of entertainment it recalls the cafe of yesterday. Manager Gaillard T. Bong has assembled an array of artists peculiarly adapted to an establishment of this kind, and who keep the entertainment whirling from opening to closing time—interrupted only so that the patrons may enjoy dancing in the splendid ballroom.

Murray's Roman Gardens.

The guests at Murray's Roman Gardens during the last week have been greatly surprised on either entering or leaving this popular restaurant to be suddenly stopped by M. McGilvray and presented with a handsomely bound big box. Upon opening it was found to contain a set of six novelties, by O. Henry, H. E. Munro and other popular authors, are neatly shown in the "pocket edition" bookcase. The box can be carried in one's pocket, and will make fine reading for commuters, out of towners and especially for the habitual night reader. The first page of the O. Henry stories is devoted to an interesting line from Pat Kynes, manager. It partly reads as follows: "It was my great privilege to have enjoyed the friendship of O. Henry. Most of us have read his gripping and romantic life story. Or few could it more truly have been said—his life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him that nature might stand up and say to all the world, 'This was a man.'" These books will be distributed for the next two days in all papers at the luncheon hour and again during the evening.

Brooklyn Vaudeville.

Gus Edwards and his annual song revue are to be at the head of the Orpheum Theatre's programme this week. The Cameron Sisters, Emmet Devoy and a long list of popular actors are to be seen in addition. This is to be carnival week at the Bushwick Theatre, which means that the programme will be just a little bit better than it usually is. Mme. Doree and her celebrities, Harry Carroll, Dorothy Toye, Frank Stafford and many others will add the carnival spirit to the week. "The Auto Girl, which is said to be one of the most laughable burlesques on the road, will be at the Star Theatre this week. In addition to the guarantee that there will be a laugh a minute for every spectator there will be a wrestling bout under the direction of George Bothner.

Hotel and Restaurant News

Biltmore Ice Gardens.

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