

Let's Go to the Movies!

By MRS. GEORGE READ

Pantomime has never been a favorite means of communication or of self-expression among Anglo-Saxon peoples. Their earliest minstrels not only played—they had voices and lifted them up in song. Perhaps the old Bearer of Tales—tales which he delivered in a crude form, somewhat presaging poetry—inspired more ardent followers than the minstrels themselves.

Sign languages, songs and dances without words, so instinctive with oriental peoples, serve inhabitants of the western hemisphere but artificially.

The Ninth Symphony of Beethoven remains to date his most popular, chiefly because it is arranged to be given with a chorus of nine hundred voices. In cities where it is possible to get all or even some of the voices, the *Choral Symphony*, as it is called, is the inevitable Beethoven feature on Sunday afternoon popular concert programs.

Aren't musical revues, above all musical comedies, far more generally acceptable than Diaghileff's, the Swedish, the American ballet, or even the Morgan or Denishawdan dances? And more popular than the musical comedy is the legitimate melodrama or rapidly moving farce-comedy. The total absence of music, even between the acts, is not deplored.

A movie star who can appear before the footlights and actually *speak* to his or her audience, gives them the thrill of thrills, even though it is necessary to read the "dear public, this is the greatest privilege of my life," speech from a carefully printed page, and then be prompted now and again from the wings.

All this leads up to the remark that it was merely a question of time before a western movie-mad world would demand that the speechless drama be given a voice—or voices. It has demanded, and the screen has forthwith commenced to utter sounds. Not altogether pleasing, true enough, but at any rate the dreadful silence is now shattered—shattered by *The Lion and the Mouse!*

We mean by that that *The Lion and the Mouse* may be said to be the first successful talking movie. It opened at the Warner in New York early in the summer. Lionel Barrymore and Alec B. Francis, both well-versed in the art of voice projection, were excellent on the Vitaphone—Barrymore speaking often almost in a whisper, yet perfectly clearly. May McAvoy and William Collier, Jr., shouted and shrieked. However, the stimulation of hearing the silently moving figures on the screen speaking their minds made the episodes in which the Vitaphone did not function seem by contrast flat and unnatural. The difficulty now with most scenarios is that the dialogue is very poor and would best be left unspoken until some able penman can draft the screen drama with a view to Vitaphone synchronization. And the difficulty with screen actors is that, granted they have first rate voices, they have had little or no experience in the proper use of them, unless they have been well grounded in speech technique on the legitimate stage.

George Arliss is to appear soon in two Vitaphone *talkies*. John Barrymore is interested—

though it may be worse than difficult to synchronize his acting with his speech, due to that familiar penchant for leisurely close-ups.

It is rumored round the movie lots that Mr. Barrymore will be screened in *Hamlet* and Mr. Arliss in *The Merchant of Venice*, a most excellent way to preserve for posterity something of the art of these two actors for comparison with the dramatic art of the future. Also the dialogue will be left entirely to Shakespeare, so in these cases the Vitaphone may be employed with impunity.

Meanwhile, in Manila, we watch the current features and wait patiently for the 'innovation to descend upon us, too.

The Siren of the Tropics, Cine Palace, offers a weird movie locale of south sea flora, fauna, and pithcanthropus erectiana, as well as a brief biography of that successful vender



"Sweet Alice" Terry

of the Charleston, Josephine Baker, during her career in Paris. Of course the story does not follow, incident for incident, the bright yellow Baker's storming of the boulevards, but a good deal of the sequence of events is authentic.

Josephine Baker hails from Harlem. One might say from the Harlem of Corvarrubias, the Mexican caricaturist. She was the only person worth seeing in *La Revue Negre* which ran simultaneously with Anna Pavlova at the Champs-Élysées Music Hall for such a long season. The woman has power, physical power, to burn. She suggests a locomotive engine successfully making a steep grade, when she moves out before the footlights slowly, yet under full steam—the long neatly moulded body propelled by a muscular synchronization marvelous to see: arms and shoulders are as active as feet and legs, and when she gets thoroughly wound up

in the comic angles of the Charleston she is as wonderful as a piece of complicated super-machinery in operation. Smooth, is the word for her jazzing. Every muscle is in motion, a motion that suggests gradually an accumulation of speed that finally is breath-taking. It is apparently the most effortless process you can imagine.

No wonder Paris fell for Josephine, and forthwith packed the cabaret which was opened overnight as a special setting for her dancing. *La Revue Negre* reverted back to its original Negro Revue and Harlem, minus its one gleam of inspiration. But, subsequently, Paris was flooded with negro entertainers of every sort, kind and degree, flattered beforehand by the reception Josephine had gotten, and frightfully disillusioned at length because impresarios de luxe failed to open up elaborate cabarets for each and every one of them, and because Drian would not sketch them in idealized costume de rigueur making a triumphal entry into Ciro's or the Café de Paris.

The Siren of the Tropics gives Josephine Baker opportunity to display her well-oided agility as a dancer against a sketchy background of a Paris that is not synthetic. The plot is absurd beyond words. It is packed with hopeless sentimentality. Now, Josephine is not preeminently endowed for the interpretation of drama—even more or less of it. In spite of the fact that the wit of her Jewish blood enables her to appreciate and make capital of the limberness and humor of her negroid inheritance, she remains first and foremost a comedy dancer and it is a pity that the movies are so greedy that they must drag so many entertainers out of their proper milieu. She ought to be kept *shuffling* along until retirement, behind a proscenium arch or in cabaret precincts. But doubtless before long Hollywood will be trying her out as a Katherine for some unlatin Petruccio to tame.

The Garden of Allah, Cine Ideal. Rex Ingram kept an extensive studio going for several years just outside Nice, which he used as a sort of means of egress with his actors into Provence, the high Alps, Corsica, North Africa and elsewhere to make pictures with convincing background. During this time *The Garden of Allah* was filmed at Beni Mora, and on the edges of the Sahara beyond Cairo.

Alice Terry, Ivan Petrovich, and an admirably selected group of actors have given a joint interpretation of Robert Hichens' quixotic tale that is memorable. The plot follows the book accurately, unusual for a film play. The ending is not rebashed for popular consumption with a living happily ever after motif. Father Adrian goes back to his monastery and, we trust, his God; Delani purchases the charming house and garden of her friend Count Anteo, situated at the edge of the desert. There Father Adrian's son plays with his pet barbeest and begins to dream of fulfilling the sort of life his Trappist Father had deserted his faith to discover. There Delani, the child's mother, grows romantically to maturity—the exquisite desert panorama always before her eyes and the mysterious song of the Bedouin flute-player forever in her ears—"only God and I know what is in my heart."

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to say the least, we offer the idea that perhaps by returning to his former life of faith and renouncing romance at its very apex, he salvaged his best illusions. A few more years and the love phenomenon would have lost its finest perfection; a few more months even, philosophically speaking, and the long series of hideous compromises with reality would have begun. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

Paris at Midnight, Cine Empire. Balzac's classic *Père Goriot*, woefully entangled with Hollywood conceptions of current Parisian Bals Masqués. The characterization of *Père Goriot* is palatable enough, as is Barrymore's of *Vautrin*, the criminal. The accompanying background of French pension life of the meagerest type, during the days when the Faubourg St. Germain was the kernel of the haut-monde, was artificial and insincere. The roles of the avuncular daughters of humble golden-headed *Père Goriot* are played with more posings and affectations than ever Molière allowed to his *précieuses ridicules*. The piece is worth seeing purely for the purpose of becoming more or less familiar with one of France's greatest fiction portraits, and one of literature's most difficult and tedious contributions to a reading world.

Rain, Cine Lyric. An appropriate film for this persistent season. The play, which had a five-year run in New York, with Jeanne Eagels as Sadie Thompson, was far more finished and concrete than the movie, with Gloria Swanson playing the role of Sadie. From the first entrance of Sadie in the stage play, Miss Eagels made the world realize that Sadie's swagger was to hide Sadie's misery. In the screen version, Miss Swanson swaggers because Sadie is tough and hard-boiled, and so callous the world is certain she has never suffered much and doesn't know how. There is no convincing mounting up of emotional incidents and flashes of what is going on inside Sadie Thompson to lead to the strange temporary metamorphosis of character when Mr. Hamilton, the missionary, goes through the motions of converting the hard little customer. Be it said, in passing, that this process of regeneration is much too prolonged on the screen. A play is not a life, and the art of suggestion is wittier than the grinding out of detailed action and reaction between the rise and fall of the curtain at the beginning and end. Lionel Barrymore as Mr. Hamilton is excellently repellent and fanatical, horribly pitiful and hateful. His mad insistence upon sin and due retribution for it, and his tortured dreams and fancies as a result of a ruthless suppression of all joyous impulses, Barrymore reveals most impressively. Miss Swanson's acting is much more satisfactory—spontaneous, sincere, moving—as the frightened, half-hypnotized creature grasping at anything that bears the shadow of a resemblance to a protective interest in her well-being. Of course the interest is a perverted one, as poor Sadie discovers—to her renewed disillusionment. The theme is a psychological one, honest and gripping enough to cleave through the claptrap of movieism, and hold the interest through to the utterly disenchanting end. *Rain* is another film play that has adhered faithfully to the original climax and dénouement of the play from which it is taken.

Averell Harriman, head of the American corporation holding the manganese concession in Tchitura in the Georgian republic, accompanied by Richard M. Robinson and William S. Hamilton, vice-president of the Guaranty Trust Company of New York, have arrived in Moscow to confer with soviet officials and inspect their plant after one and one-half year's operation.

Prior to the conference Harriman declined to indicate the subjects slated for discussion or whether the status of the undertaking was satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Since the concession was granted on conditions being changed in many respects, including the new soviet selling arrangement with German interests for the output of other manganese deposits. Labor conditions have changed also.

At the same time American interests represented by Harriman are not averse to considering any new concession proposals the soviet authorities may put forward.

The Household Searchlight: Chinese Dishes

By LUCILE KELLY

Cookery in all parts of the world interests me immensely, and I found in China cookery in varied forms—from the most delightful, down the scale to the very worst. And I never in my life saw so many fried cakes. I have always believed that rice was the staple article of diet, but I have changed my mind. Cakes—big, little, brown, yellow, white, and yes—even black—in baskets, in barrels, arranged on papers on the streets. Every place there were cakes.

In the picture you see a man with a small frying pan frying his cakes and a few spread out on the up-turned barrel. These sell for one copper apiece and make up the meal of many a small urchin.

The other photograph is a traveling kitchen. Painted in red with blue and green decorations

it is noticeable even in the extremely crowded streets of China. But you could not possibly miss it; for the vendor carries with him a loud bell which he rings as he goes. And when a customer comes along he dispenses with a cheerful smile—rice, cakes, noodles and fish and boiled vegetables.

But this is only one side of the cooking. I ventured into the kitchens of some of the big hotels, and I found the chefs most pleasant and willing to help me. Strange to say, with all of the fine cooks among the Chinese, the hotel chefs were mainly French.

In Shanghai I learned to make a delicious Chinese noodle. The recipe:

Soak strips of pork or beef in soy sauce for 15 minutes, then add lawloo or bean shoots

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