

Silent Worker

"The foundation of every State is the education of its youth."—Dionysius.

Vol. XXX. No. 9

Trenton, N. J., June, 1918

5 Cents a Copy

MOVING PICTURES AND THE DEAF

By ALICE T. TERRY



SCENE FROM "A DOG'S LIFE." REDMOND ORDERING CHAPLIN OUT OF THE DANCE HALL



HAVE often thought of writing on Moving Pictures, and one would think that I should do so considering that I live in Hollywood, California, the centre of the film industry of the world. Some months ago *The Literary Digest* had a lengthy article dealing with movies and movie life in this locality. But that was not a complete picture. Nor can I make this article such. I will write on moving pictures chiefly as it relates to the deaf.

To begin, suppose you come and take a walk with me. Leaving our house, we go north for half a block, immediately before us is the dark blue mountain wall whose generous slope affords

the desired picturesque setting for homes of various sizes, shapes, and colors—the most conspicuous being, of course, the white ones with the red roofs. Then we turn east on Sunset Boulevard which since the advent of the film industry here has become one of the famous thoroughfares of the world. On either side of this broad avenue, extending east and west for miles, are located a dozen of the largest film studios. Sunset Boulevard is famous also for its citrus groves, its great old pepper trees, its beautiful homes and one of the finest High Schools in the State. Just a little way from here higher up the slope is a great white mansion which until recently was the home of Douglas Fairbanks.

The air is pregnant with the perfume of orange blossoms, lemon blossoms, and grapefruit blossoms. The farther east we go the stronger seems the perfume. After a leisurely fifteen minutes walk we come to the new Charlie Chaplin Studio, situated at the junction of Sunset and La Brea Boulevards. This magnificent million-dollar plant with the imposing Chaplin home covers a whole block. A few blocks farther down Sunset is the beautiful home of Miss Alice E. Chenoweth, one of our deaf friends. Still farther east, say two miles, in a big old fashioned home half buried from sight by the orange grove in front of it lives Mary Pickford. But let us not go farther, let us stop at the Chaplin Studio. Not because

this is the newest and handsomest studio of them all, but because our interest should naturally center here, for the time being, at least. Here working side-by-side with the million-dollar comedian is the deaf-mute actor, Granville Redmond. So far as I know he is the first and only deaf man to get in the movies. Mr. Redmond is the celebrated landscape painter whose pictures are so highly prized by connoisseurs everywhere.

Mr. Redmond as an Actor

About a year ago, Chaplin was first told of Mr. Redmond and of his possibilities as an actor. Being a pantomimist himself, it is likely that he, Chaplin, took a fancy to the idea of working with a deaf-mute skilled in the language of pantomime or signs. So Chaplin sent for Redmond, but it was not until a few months ago that the latter accepted Chaplin's offer.

Now after a few weeks trial, I am told on the best authority that the great comedian is immensely pleased with his deaf actor, that he predicts for him great success on the screen. In fact, Chaplin and Redmond are quite chummy, which means in no uncertain tones that the world-famous actor is learning the sign language. To use in the movies? Yes! Those of you who have seen Chaplin's new play, "A Dog's Life," have noted that he uses the signs for "baby," "children," and etc., perfectly. Where did he learn those signs if not from our deaf friend, Redmond? In this play Mr. Redmond is the large husky-headed fellow who plays the role of keeper of The Green Lantern dance-hall. As can be seen he has been given an important part in this, his first play. Critics see in him great possibilities. He needs only time in which to develop his latent dramatic powers; it will come, Chaplin himself says so. Then we will have in our deaf friend a great actor.

The movies has no use for speech and lip-reading. On the contrary, the movies is pre-eminently the place for pantomime or signs. Being unable to speak, Mr. Redmond entered the movie field with some misgiving; but Chaplin quickly assured him that it is not necessary to talk, that "plain, ordinary lip movements will do." So I am wondering if we shall hear now and then of some hysterical lip-reader who will exclaim, "I read Mr. Redmond's lips!"

I have had several interesting talks with Mr. Redmond and his charming wife—our homes being not far apart—and I am watching his career with great interest.

Mr. and Mrs. William Japes

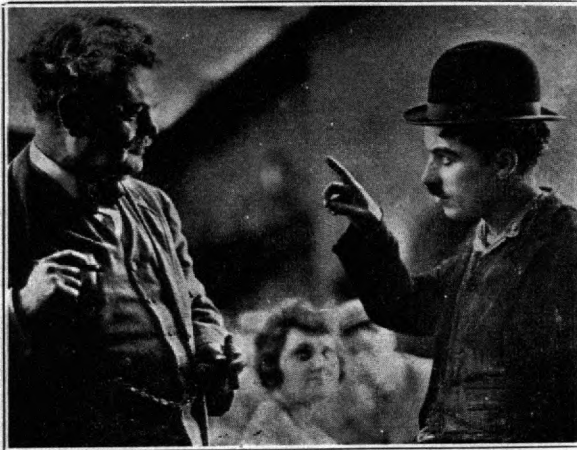
No, our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Japes, of Detroit, Michigan, are not in the movies; but I presume that winsome and talented Violet Colby Japes could easily get in if she tried. While here on their recent honeymoon trip Mrs. Japes several times expressed a desire to see the inside of the Chaplin Studio. Like other visitors she was refused admittance, finally she penned a brief note to the great comedian himself. To her surprise—and to the surprise of every one else—Chaplin promptly wrote, inviting her and Mr. Japes to come at a certain hour on a certain day. Clever girl! She was indeed clever to succeed as she did. For the studio rules in regard to visitors are unrelentingly strict. Mr. Redmond himself tells me that out of one thousand visitors to the studio only two, besides the above mentioned couple, have been admitted to the inside.

I am pretty sure of Mrs. Japes's talent as an actress, for I saw this well demonstrated one evening when she entertained a party of us at her suite in the hotel. She depicted human life in various phases, both her make-up and her acting being faithful in the extreme.

Equal Pleasure and Profit

Unlike the spoken drama, the deaf can enjoy moving pictures just as much as the hearing do. Some one may say that the deaf lose, as they do not hear the music that accompanies the pictures.

But I do not think we lose; there are various ways in which we are compensated but the hearing would hardly understand if we tried to explain. For myself I hate the noisy show, that is where some struggle or a battle is going on with its accompanying loud imitation battle din. To me the vibrations are a continuous, growling



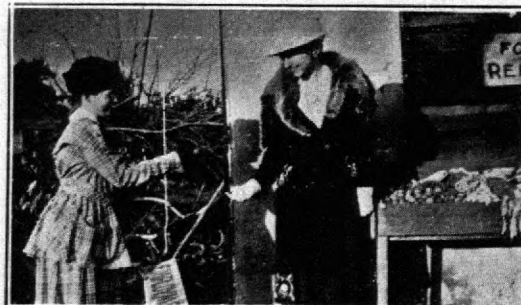
Chaplin Talking on His Hand to Redmond

thunder—or worse than that—which sickens me soul and body. In fact most all musical vibrations irritate me. But by many of the deaf I know that the vibrations are enjoyed, especially by those with some remnant of hearing.

Pictures That I Do Not Want To See

Frankly, I do not like any of David W. Griffith's plays. I marvelled at the popularity of his *Birth of a Nation* or *The Clansman*. In my opinion they worked a great injury to the colored race, the colored race which since the days of the great and good Booker Washington has had a chance to rise and grow in mentality and usefulness.

I have lately seen "Hearts of The World." I



Mrs. Terry and Mrs. Japes in the "Slum Quarters" of Chaplin Studio

suppose that most people interpret the play as patriotic. Well and good. But for myself I have gotten far better ideas of the war and its soul-sickening horrors from reading and thinking than from anything that Mr. Griffith shows. Perhaps after all it is the wonderful music which accompanies his plays that makes them sink so deeply into public mind. A hearing lady tells me that the music is half the picture.

I particularly dislike to see them try to depict great books on the screen, such books as *Quo Vadis*, *Les Misérables*, *Ben Hur*, etc. Having read and thoroughly absorbed such books I have always doubted any one's ability sufficiently to enact them on the screen, or even on the stage. Everytime that I have gone to see such a film I have invariably left in disgust. Why? Because what I saw on the screen was only a meagre portion of the story compared with the rich, complete version of the story in my mind; in my mind, yes, just as the great author wrote it, and not as ordinary men dissected, mutilated and twisted it about to suit their capricious tastes.

I wish the films would let great books alone, books whose greatness is far beyond the dramatic and emotional powers of ordinary men and women who enact their parts more from the mercenary motive than from really fine feeling.

But in some cases of books that I have not read I must say that the screen production quite satisfies me. For whatever may be lacking in the play I do not note, having no previous mind picture of the story. I had never read "Camille," so when I saw the film version of the story, played by French actors, I enjoyed it very much.

Best of all I like the plays which depict modern life,—its ups and downs, its joys and sorrows, with an abundance of fun thrown in.

Only in modern life are the movies at their best. That is the way I look at it.

Do The Movies "Cheapen Experience?"

Bernard Shaw deplores motion pictures on the ground that they "cheapen experience." In the case of growing boys and girls to whom experience is as yet a distant, a novel, even an alluring thing, this warning is worthy careful consideration. All sorts of misdemeanours, crimes and pitfalls look easy, even desirable, on the screen to some immature minds. But older, responsible people, of course, know better.

I have often thought that too much movies can be particularly injurious to deaf children, in that the slowly developing minds as yet lack sufficient language to reason out the scenes and dramas before their eyes. In that state they are exactly in a position to under-rate experience, to "cheapen experience" even more than hearing children do.

In the case of films, educational and otherwise, shown in schools for the deaf I do not see how much good can result unless an accompanying explanation is given by the teacher.

I will probably write more on this subject another time.

In last month's article on *Funds and Funds* I did not say, speaking of a certain deaf man's oral schooling that it cost his family \$7,000—but \$17,000!

GOODYEAR MUTE TRIES FOR AVIATION

When it comes to patriotism, "Silent Bob" Hogan is right there with the goods. He has been trying since the entrance of the United States into the war to get in some of the different branches of the service.

He first tried to join the army and was turned down because he was a mute, he then tried the navy but was unsuccessful. Last fall he tried to join the Signal Officers' Reserve Corps, but was turned down because of deafness.

Undaunted, he wrote President Wilson and begged him in his letter to get him in some branch of the service. President Wilson recommended him to the Aerial League of America, and he immediately applied for membership.

During his vacation period when he was attending the school for the deaf, he was employed in the Curtis Airplane shop at Buffalo, N. Y., and in California. He says that he knows everything there is to know about airplane engines and the construction of the different parts of the flying machine.

At the School for the Deaf at Rochester, N. Y., where he received his education, Glen Curtis' sister was one of the instructors. She is deaf, and it was through her that he first had a desire to become an aviator. She secured him a position in her brother's plant at Rochester, where he received his knowledge of the airplane.

In the near future he will attend a series of lectures held by the Aerial League of America, on the airplane and the art of flying.

He hopes to be able to get into the aviators' corps and receive his training and go to France as soon as he graduates from the training school, if he succeeds in getting in the aviation corps.

He is patriotic to the core and is anxious to get into some branch of the service where he will be of help to his nation and "can do his bit."

He is employed in Department 270B, Mill 2, says he likes the Goodyear, but that he would like to get a crack at the Kaiser.—*Wingfoot Clan*, March 23.