

News Notes Gathered From the World of Stage and Screen

PERFECT BODY WINS FOR GEORGE WALSH ENVIABLE "BEN HUR" ROLE

Life of Strict Self-Denial is Rewarded in Bestowal of the Part.

(By Jack Jungmeyer.)
Hollywood—The lifelong physical training of George Walsh brings as one of its rewards the role of "Ben Hur" in the heroic spectacle soon to be started abroad by the Goldwyn Pictures—one of the most coveted parts yet provided by the screen.
"My self-denial and constant application to strict athletic discipline have not been in vain," said Walsh in recounting the steps by which he had prepared for opportunity.
"Since childhood I have never relaxed by efforts to keep in perfect physical trim. I would not have been selected for 'Ben Hur' had there been any question of meeting the rigorous requirements."
It was the Goldwyn company's difficult problem to find an actor of stellar caliber and at the same time a trained athlete capable of fulfilling the descriptive semblance of youth and bearing. Many notables of the film world were considered, the eliminations finally stopping at Walsh.
Selection was made more difficult because the script as written by June Mathis precludes the use of a "double" for the arduous "wounds." Ben Hur's feats are to be shown in closeups.
"Many times through youth," resumed Walsh, "I wondered why I stuck so unswervingly to the abstinence demanded by training. Under guidance of physical mentors I learned to live by system. It is hard for youth to live systematically."
"For instance, I wanted to smoke with my pals. It was not permitted. I wanted to stay up nights, to go to dances and indulge in other pleasures. I went to bed early. No late sleeping mornings. I was shocked out, often, as my friends were just coming home from parties I would like to have attended. I ate, slept, studied, exercised, almost breathless, and lived by system."
"Of course it had its current rewards, too, although I often debated its value. While at school I played in every athletic sport. Then at college, Fordham University, I duplicated my prep school athletic record, and for two years, I am proud to say, I was placed on the All-American team by Walter Camp.
"Basketball, running, hammer throwing and rowing were favorites, although I competed in everything.
"After college I continued athletics at the New York Athletic Club, representing that famous organization in many branches. At that time I added swimming. I rowed in the N. Y. A. C. eight-oared shell for several years and while I never became champion at any one thing I ran up high points as an all-around athlete.
"I have never allowed myself to get out of form, to go stale. I train today as rigidly as if I were to row an important race tomorrow.
"Physical condition has proven of great value to me in my motion picture work. For one thing, I have been able to play strenuous roles without use of a double."
"I regard the selection as 'Ben Hur' as the crowning incident of my life, and I could not fill the role except for the years of physical discipline that have gone before. There is the chariot race, which will be no boy's play; numerous fights, including the one for 'Ben Hur's' life against hired assassin gladiators, for which real fighters are to be used; the rowing in the slave galley, where I will have to handle an oar many men couldn't even lift—these and many others.
"It's a chance which amply compensates me for whatever ephemeral pleasures I may have passed up as sacrifices for physical fitness."

Is Chosen For Ben Hur Part



GEORGE WALSH

LAEMMLE HAS HAD ME-MORIC CAREER

Leader in Movie Industry Practically Penniless 40 Years Ago.

The remarkable success of some of the leaders in the motion picture industry is of much interest. Here is an account of Carl Laemmle, one of the great figures in the industry, who on the 14th day of February four young men from the town of Laupheim in Wurtemberg, Germany, came to New York from the steamer Necker. Among them they had less than \$50. Each of these young men, including Laemmle, had a dream of making a fortune in the new land, and so far as the producers know will have the brief simple title of "Men."
The prolific William Hurlbut has written still another play, scheduled to go into rehearsal in two weeks. It is entitled "The Bridge."
which he had looked forward to a given line of business and devote his energy and slender capital to an idea which, few, if any, of the people already engaged in it, regarded seriously.

SWIMMING STARS GOING TO FLORIDA

Aileen Riggan, Gertrude Ederle and Others Will Go South.

New York, Jan. 23.—Many of the best men and women swimmers of the country will take part in an outdoor six-day swimming and diving carnival to be held at Miami, Fla., early next month. According to the present plans the showing of many of the competitors in this carnival will go a long way toward determining the personnel of the American Olympic swimming and diving team.
Heading the list of potential Olympic team candidates who will compete at the Florida resort next month is Miss Gertrude Ederle of the Women's Swimming Association of New York. Miss Ederle is regarded as the greatest woman swimmer ever developed and has many world's records to her credit. Another almost certain Olympic selection who will take part in the carnival is Miss Aileen Riggan, winner of the fancy diving championship at the last Olympic games. Miss Riggan is one of the youngest athletes ever to score at the Olympics. She was 19 in 1920 when she captured the diving championship.
Another likely competitor in the Miami carnival is Miss Helen Wainwright, a point winner for this country at the last Olympics. Others who have been invited are Miss Elizabeth Baker, national outdoor diving champion; Miss Agnes Geraghty, Miss Adelaide Lambert, Panama Canal Zone champion, and several other star performers.
Mr. Whitney's production of "Sign Here" will open out of town in another two weeks, and will then join the battalion of plays seeking New York houses.

AFGHAN HOUNDS WILL BE SHOWN

Will Exhibit Old Breed at Westminster Kennel Club Feb. 11.

New York, Jan. 23.—One of the oldest breeds of dogs will make its first appearance in an American bench show when the Westminster Kennel Club opens its forty-eighth annual exhibition on Feb. 11. This is the Afghan hound, several of which are being brought over for this event by Major G. Bell Murray of Kirkpatrick-Fleming, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, to be shown in the miscellaneous class during the three-day exhibition.
As the name implies, these dogs come from Afghanistan. Major Murray spent a number of years in the British Indian Service and it was while in Northern India that he became interested in the breed. In their native country they are used for coursing deer and antelope, and have proved themselves to be fierce and more sure-footed than the greyhound. However, it is possible that their familiarity with the wilderness of the country, which puts a premium on these characteristics, gives them an advantage they could not hold if pitted against the greyhound in the latter's natural environment.
With considerable difficulty, Major Murray obtained a number of specimens from Afghanistan to build up his kennel. The Afghan hounds resemble long-coated greyhounds, with ears like those of spaniels or setters. Their forelegs are heavily coated and in that point they are not unlike old English sheepdogs, or perhaps more nearly, Irish water spaniels.

Canadian Girl Is One of 3 Stars On The London Stage

Andre Charlot would probably never be spendthrift enough to present three such people as Beatrice Lillie, Gertrude Lawrence and Jack Buchanan in a single revue in any of the London theatres he controls and directs. Neither, to dispose of the matter thoroughly, would any other English producer.

While each of his stars have been released sometimes by Mr. Charlot for other productions, they have been so closely associated with him in London during the eight years of his producing activities that the professional history of Beatrice Lillie, Gertrude Lawrence and Jack Buchanan is practically the history of the Charlot revues. Certainly this is true of the first few years of their respective careers.
Miss Lawrence, Miss Lillie and Mr. Buchanan are also products largely of the Charlot methods, although they have departed from his management now and again. In fact, Beatrice Lillie was born in Toronto, and had her first school at St. Agnes College, Belleville, Ont. Her first stage appearance was made in London at the Alhambra Theatre in a revue called "Not Likely." The following year she scored again in "9096, Gerard." This was in 1915. The same year she appeared in "Now's the Time." She succeeded Mabel Russell in "Samplers" at the Vaudeville Theatre in March of 1916, and has since appeared in the Charlot Revues entitled "Some," "Cheep," "Labs," "Bran-Pie" and "Pot-Luck."
BABY STAR'S FACE INSURED.
Baby Peggy, famous screen starlet, has had her face insured for the cool sum of \$250,000. The policy was contracted for by Principal Pictures Corporation, Limited, of London.
This is, as far as records can show, the only policy of its kind ever issued, and one of the biggest financially in the records of Lloyd's office.
One of the features of the unique policy is that it is not a life policy, but one of the lowest rates ever granted. This is due, according to officials of the insurance company, to a strong expert of and believer in the motion picture as a factor of education and ethical advancement.
A Rabbi's Praise
Rabbi Silverman of Temple Beth-El, one of the visitors to the location where C. B. DeMille was making "The Ten Commandments," is quoted as saying: "For years I have made a study of the Ten Commandments, and have lectured on them in all parts of the world. I have never been so profoundly impressed as during the hours when I was privileged to see the reproduction of this great code with living and breathing human beings. I envy Mr. DeMille his opportunity in this production. I have for many years been a strong exponent of and believer in the motion picture as a factor of education and ethical advancement."

TO HIS DESTINATION BY DEVIOUS ROUTE

Actor, Here Last Week, Uses Various Conveyances to Reach Worcester

The many friends among the theatre-going public of the city, whom Tom Martelle, famous feminine impersonator, made during his portrayal of the leading role in "The Fashion Girl" here last week, will be pleased to learn that he has arrived at Worcester, Mass., where he has a week's engagement, without contracting a heavier cold, despite the fact that he had to take a long, tiresome and somewhat broken trip. This information was received by J. Frank Carroll, in a telegram from Martelle, yesterday.
In order to arrive in Worcester in time to present his show, on Monday night, Martelle was forced to leave St. John on the C. P. R. Sunday afternoon. He traveled as far as Mattawville there, and drove to Bangor, arriving there in the early hours of Monday morning, caught a morning train to Boston and thence to Worcester, arriving there in time to fulfill his engagement. His cold was no worse, he reported, and hopes that it will be better before long.

McCormick Aspires To Be Diplomatist

Asheville, N. C., Jan. 22.—John McCormick, tenor, is considering entering diplomatic life after his career as a singer, he said at Grove Park Inn, where he is passing a week.
"I do not always desire to sing before the public," Mr. McCormick remarked. "Six years from now, on my forty-fifth birthday, I would not be averse to renouncing my present work for an appointment as ambassador to some European country, preferably Italy, as I speak Italian fluently, and its musical background fascinates me."
Asked if he had a second choice, the tenor replied with a twinkle that "If Ireland were a republic by 1929, Dublin would have the call over the Court of St. James's."
The singer expressed himself as an independent in politics.

APPEAL PROBLEM IN PHOTO-PLAYS ALWAYS PRESENT

Producers differ as to What Will Please the General Public.

Producers differ in their conceptions concerning what will appeal to the public. To have a line outside the box office is always a dream of every motion picture theatre owner, and there is no doubt that these showmen study the desires of their patrons, the spectators differing according to the locality in which the theatre is situated.
Frank Lloyd, as a producer and director, has taken his angle of appeal in clinging closely to the narrative of that widely read novel, "Black Oxen." Obviously he found that it had an interesting theme, that it was a book which had been talked about, which actually was an excellent advertisement for the screen production. Mr. Lloyd cleverly selected Corinne Griffith to play the part of the rejuvenated Mme. Zerkow.
One was entranced with the story from the very outset—where Clavering first catches sight, in the theatre, of the lovely Mrs. Zerkow. In fact, Clavering is entranced, and to us quite natural. That old codger, Dinwiddie, and the white-haired busybody, Janet Ogilthorpe, are also splendidly real. We would venture to think that Gertrude Alberton, the author of this novel, must be very well pleased by the way in which it has been translated to the screen. The translation is beautiful and the appealing features of this screen effort.
Small-town life and gossip are contained in "West of the Water Tower." Certain changes have been made in this adaptation, and it becomes muddled toward the end, when the marriage certificate is being sought. Nevertheless it will have its appeal in the many small communities throughout the country.
We have just been reading a London Morning Post article on public appeal of some films. The writer says: "So much is heard about box-office attractions and producing films to suit the public taste that it may be interesting to give the experiences of an exhibitor who controls one of the most important picture theatres in the North of England. His opinion is that very often the selection of films is a gamble. It is extremely difficult to judge what will appeal to his public, but as a general rule he holds anything involved or abstruse, and subjects that are gloomy or that make great demands on the audience's intelligence.
Two Surprises.
"It is interesting to hear that, despite all the exploitation schemes, involving street parades and other notions to draw the public's attention, both 'Way Down East' and 'The Orphan of the Storm,' which were heavily booked elsewhere, failed to attract. The exhibitor himself was impressed by the massive and imposing effects of the German film 'Möma Vanna,' but from a financial point of view he regretted having booked it. His experience is that scarcely any of the films which the critics praise draw the public into his theatre, for his audiences are not in the least interested in artistic values or dramatic unities, in lighting effects or development in film technique. They want elemental themes and a good story, well told—something with which they can come to grips. On the other hand, he declares that a hundred miles away from his theatre the demand may be the exact antithesis."

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Ernest Shipman, well-known member of the New York Canadian Club, and producer of moving pictures of Canadian subjects, has recently made a trip to Florida, seeking location for studios and administrative offices for his company. In a recent interview with The Times Union of Jacksonville, Mr. Shipman said:—
"Production must inevitably move to the readily communicable Eastern States. Florida will be the general choice, offering every advantage of California."
In this connection it is interesting to note that Mr. Shipman is filming "Viking Blood," by Captain Frederick Wm. Wallace. Captain Wallace is one of our members and has written for The Maple Leaf an article which will be reproduced next month. "Viking Blood" is being filmed at Halifax.

A GOWN OF PEARLS

A gown with 35,000 pearls as decoration, all sewed on by hand, was made for Allen Pringle to wear in "Three Weeks," the Elinor Glyn story which Alan Crosland filmed for Goldwyn.
The electrical sign on the front of the Putnam building in New York, advertising the Cecil De Mille Paramount production, "The Ten Commandments," is the largest theatrical sign ever constructed—200 feet long, 28 feet deep. It is lighted by 4,600 50-watt lamps and 850 250-watt lamps.

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CARROLL PLAYERS

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