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Kipling's "Ameera," the Hindu Girl from Lahore, impersonated by Miss Virginia Brown Faire.



By Curtis Dunham

IT IS of interest to the multitude of newspaper readers that the present highly developed resources of motion picture art are solving its most embarrassing problem—how to overcome the prejudices of the world's masters of creative literature. For the picture screen, no less than the printing press and the stage, requires a constant supply of fiction as a basis for its finished product. In the exercise of its purely entertainment function it is dependent upon the story-teller—and the better the story the more successful the motion picture form of transmission to the public.

Now, story-telling is a very ancient art, while that of the motion picture is so new that it seems a wonder that it is recognized at all. While they serve the same general purpose, their symbols of expression and their technique are violently opposed; where the one transmits its message wholly by means of written words, the other's ideal is to discard words altogether. Therefore, the writer of stories for picture interpretation must forego much of the finest expression belonging to his art—the verbal graces, the happy phrase, the glowing description, the animated dialogue with its unrivaled power of establishing character. These are of no value in connection with his task of enabling the scene-builders, the picture director and his company of actors and the photographers to present his creation to the public. He is still the creative genius of the completed photoplay, but he has sacrificed his old and cherished direct communication with his audience. Besides—unless he is on hand to supervise in detail the whole process of picturization—he and his creation are wholly at the mercy of the producing organization.

"No," said Rudyard Kipling. For at least a dozen years the English master of vigorous poetry and prose had answered "No" to all suggestions and temptations designed to win him over to motion picture authorship. The fundamental reasons influencing himself and other established authors of the first rank were, in effect, those set forth above. Kipling held out longer than any of them. He objected to his published works being "adapted" by anybody else for the picture screen, and he did not feel tempted to do it himself. Candidly, he had little faith in the picturization process. He was not impressed with the usefulness of the motion picture as a literary medium, anyway.

Turns Down Million Dollar Offer

The surest and speediest way of bringing out that uncompromising negative was to "talk money" to Mr. Kipling. At least one choice illustration is on record. A certain rich and commercially successful picture concern retained a celebrated lawyer noted for his impressive speech and manner to go to England and "bring back a Kipling contract." By dint of much wire-pulling in literary and publishing circles the lawyer managed to obtain an interview with the novelist in London. The short scene between them was thus described:

"Having opened the subject in a few well-

chosen his hands under his coat-tails, took two impressive turns about the room, and said:

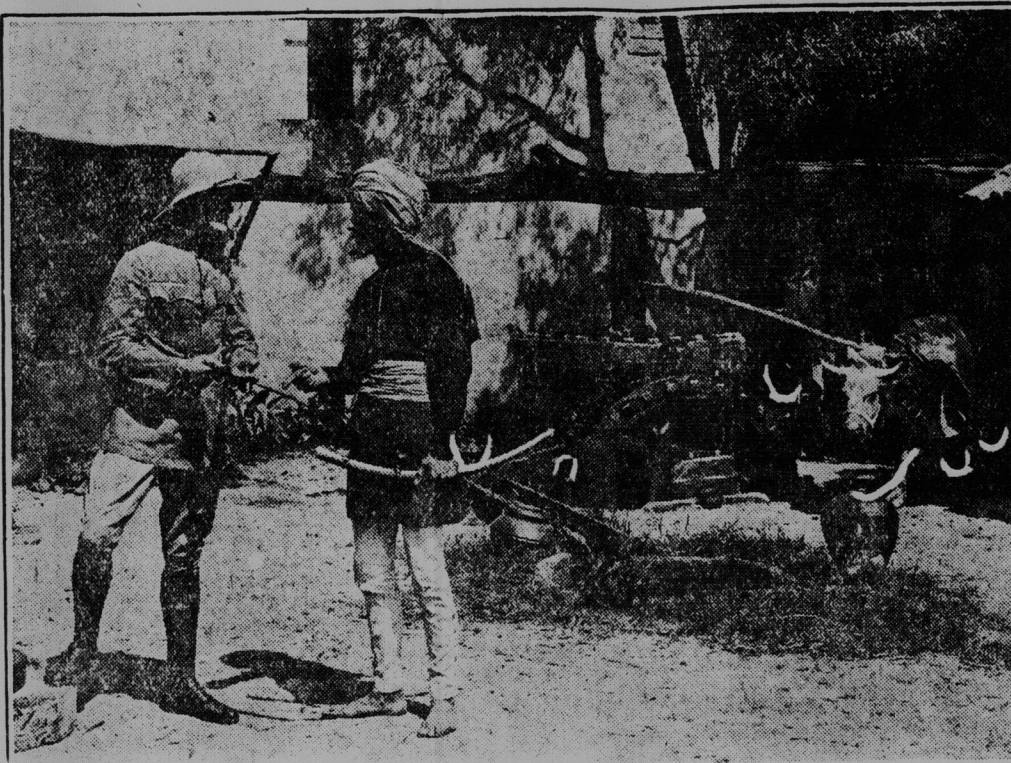
"As to what my proposition means to you, Mr. Kipling, I have full authority to state that seven figures—not less than one million dollars—"

"Amusement at Mr. Kipling's unaccountable behavior appeared to paralyze the lawyer's vocal apparatus. On the word 'million' the novelist had seized his hat. On 'dollars,' the door slammed with Mr. Kipling outside. Finis."

Incidents so picturesque as this one find a speedy and wide circulation in the world of moving picture production. For quite some time thereafter Rudyard Kipling pursued his ordinary literary course undisturbed at "Batemans," his delightful country home in Sussex. Meanwhile magazines and newspapers more and more were printing articles setting forth the great strides motion picture production was making in the direction of more faithful and truly artistic transference to the screen of the works of the world's master story-tellers. Maybe Mr. Kipling was keeping track of this tendency, but there was no evidence of it—at least outside of his own intimate circle.

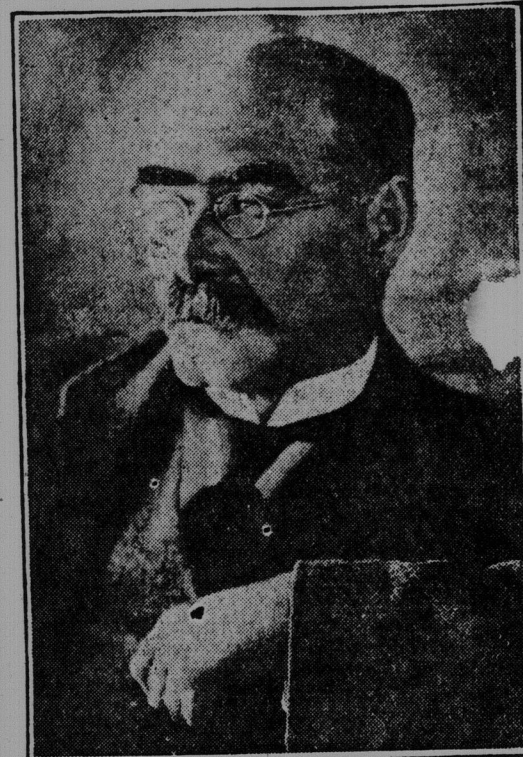
Suddenly, a few months ago, was published the authoritative announcement that Rudyard Kipling shortly would make his debut as a screen author. He was rewriting his affecting tale, "Without Benefit of Clergy," in terms, not of the printing press, but of the motion picture screen, and the filmed result would bear the imprint of

An Ordinary Water Wheel Wouldn't Do, So the Carpenters Made One, Using Mr. Kipling's Detailed Drawing as a Guide, and the One-Cow Motive Power Was Specially Imported from India.



How They Coaxed Kipling Into the Movies

"Not for a Million Dollars!" Roared the Great Novelist, When He Was Asked to Write a Scenario--and Why He Changed His Mind.



Rudyard Kipling.

Kipling that exact duplicates of those Lahore streets and interiors built on the "Brunton lot" near Los Angeles was the right and efficient way of going about it?

Well, that was part of Mr. Lewis's job—and Mr. Kipling was expecting his arrival in England shortly!

To his enormous surprise, the technical expert found Mr. Kipling entirely up-to-date regarding the main essentials of producing realistic effects in motion pictures. There was no objection to reproducing Indian scenes on the "Brunton lot," and Mr. Kipling himself would furnish authentic designs, specifications, native utensils and fabrics, with the fullest descriptions

Author Furnishes Copious Notes

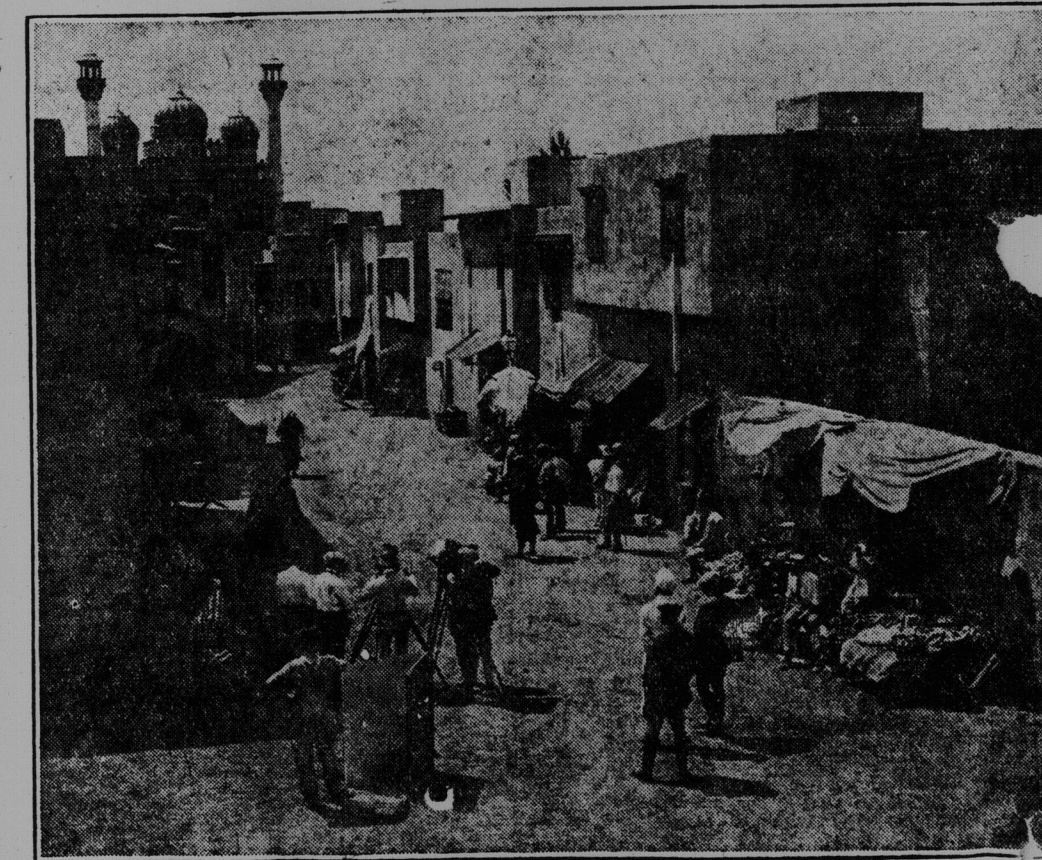
During the progress of writing the first continuity—"Without Benefit of Clergy"—Mr. Kipling went ahead with plans in detail for the "movie" city of Lahore with all the native objects belonging to the street, the bazaars, the courtyard of the "House of Love," and the domestic interiors where Ameera and Hold lived their happy but ill-fated romance. If Rudyard Kipling's own materials and memory happened to be uncertain about any detail, he had only to refer to the comprehensive J. Lockwood Kipling collection in the Kensington Museum London. For his father, celebrated painter and art collector, was the leading authority on India and the native life of that country.

When the continuity of "Without Benefit of Clergy" was finished, Mr. Kipling added several pages of minute directions about the manner acting the part of the Hindu heroine, Ameera. So it will be seen that not only for the building of the "sets" in which to photograph the acts of the story, but for the costume and acting, the drama, the author's materials, designs and written information were exhaustive.

After many camera tests in the scenes built for the filming of "Without Benefit of Clergy," graceful Virginia Brown Faire was engaged to the part of Ameera. By the same process of elimination, Thomas Holding was chosen for the hero part, the British structural engineer, John Holden. All of the other parts were filled with equal care. For "extras," the Hindu colony of Los Angeles was drawn upon.

The photographs reproduced herewith tell

To Meet the Imperative Demands of Mr. Kipling Every Scene Had to Be Exact Even Down to the Minutest Detail.



Except for the Cameramen in the Foreground This Might Be a Street Scene in Lahore. As a Matter of Fact This Street Was Erected on a Los Angeles Back Lot Under Rudyard Kipling's Directions.

thor's supervisor of production. Mr. Brunet returned to America with the Kipling agreement in his pocket.

He summoned to his office Randolph Cooper Lewis, the technical expert and veteran picture author, whom he had kept in mind for the Kipling enterprise, and outlined the situation. At first Mr. Lewis was oppressed by grave doubts. He was one of the original Kipling prophets in this country. He knew his Kipling backwards. Without "atmosphere" and absolute fidelity to detail, a so-called Kipling picture would not be Kipling at all. Could it be possible to convince Mr.

their own story of the building of the sets. The is the courtyard with its native water wheel driven by an ox, and the curiously-patterned wheel in process of construction in the Brunton Studios after authentic designs. You see the street in Lahore, with its bazaars, window awnings and groups of natives. Ameera is at the upper window listening anxiously for the hoarse beats that will announce the coming of the man she loves. Also an exhibit of fabrics, ornaments and draperies, together with drawings—ever by Rudyard Kipling himself—which leave not a single detail to the imagination of the producer.