

INSPIRATION IN GOOD PICTURES:

The intelligent grasp instantly what is told on the film, that justice triumphs, that evil is punished, that goodness pays in the long run. These are eternal facts that I try to bring out in my pictures.

—MARCUS LOEW

Life Filled With Big Chances, Says Wally Reid

Star of the Lottery Man Has Taken All Sorts of Chances in His Life, But the Odds Were Against Him in His Latest Picture.

The fellow who said only one big chance came to every man had the wrong idea. Life is crammed full of big chances. Who knows but what you'll be run over by a steam roller the next time you cross the street. Columbus took a chance and discovered America. Steve Brodie took another and became a bartender. The kaiser risked his all on one throw—and look at him!

I've been taking them all my life. At eighteen I left a Montana ranch to go east and become a newspaperman. Six months later the editor took a chance and fired me. My father was glad of it. He had always wanted me to be an actor. I broke into one of the sketches in motion pictures, and here I am, riding wild horses, mixing it up with bory "extras," and otherwise jeopardizing my classic features in the interests of art.

But the other day I consider that I took the biggest chance of my life. In making the big scene for "The Lottery Man," the director suggested that I rush pell-mell through a crowd of some two thousand women "extras," all of whom had been coached beforehand to grab me, tear off my shirt, tackle me around

the knees, scratch, punch, and generally ruin me in every way possible. According to the story, I'm the prize in a big marriage lottery. I've promised to marry the woman with the lucky coupon, and 300,000 of them have been sold. The mob I run through are a few of the candidates on hand to see that justice is done at the drawing. I started my mad rush, and they carried out their instructions to the letter. I finally escaped with my life, but left half my wardrobe, a portion of my left ear, and my foolish notions about the "weaker sex" behind. I'll believe all the stories about the famous Russian Women's Battalion of Death now, and Kipling, with his "female of the species is more deadly than the male" gets my vote.

Now, I'm not a poker fiend or a Wall Street speculator or strong for the ponies. But that picture has started me thinking lately about the lines of chance. Here's the general layout: As Jack Wright in the film, I've fallen in love with a pretty girl after starting this lottery. I try to have it stopped, but it's too late. So I do the next best thing. I rush out and buy up all the coupons my limited funds will allow. My devoted mother does the same. So does the girl. And a friend plunges to the extent of 50,000 tickets. But the lottery is won by a homey old maid who has exactly one money chance. Of course, I get the girl eventually, but it's only by a trick. Now, what would happen in real life?

I used to study a branch of algebra called permutations and combinations when I was in prep school that tells you how to figure all these things out. If you understand the formulae involved, you can set up any kind of a raffle you like, and you can't go wrong, because you can reckon out to the dot just how many chances you have to sell to make money. I know. I used to manage lots of them when I was a youngster.

Well, when you come to figure out what chance a single coupon in a 300,000-ticket lottery, like the one in "The Lottery Man," has of winning the prize, it sets your brain in a whirl. I used up all the stationery in our cosy little California bungalow, and the final result is up in the ten millions. So Lizzie was a pretty lucky old maid! Then there's the "lottery man's" friend, who plunged to the extent of 50,000 chances. He didn't have as much show as you'd think. About 500,000 to 1 was what I doped out for him.

The mother has about one chance in two million, and the girl—well, the picture fixes it—she doesn't have to enter into the mad scramble to win the prize. The prize comes willingly to her. So it all works out very beautifully and all according to my theory that every man has his "only girl." But the cynics will smirk and say, "That's only in the movies. Real life is different."

Perhaps. Did you even stop to analyze your chances of getting a "straight flush" in poker? According to my reckoning it's 5,260 to 1—provided all the players are gentlemen. That's the trouble with some of these wild-eyed

cranks who spend half a lifetime trying to break the bank at Monte Carlo. They labor for years dopping out an unbeatable system, using all the science and higher mathematics they can stuff into their heads. Then they take all the money they can scrape together and risk it on the roulette wheels or other games of chance, playing this private, patented system of theirs. One in ten thousand beats the game consistently. Even in his case, it's not the system; it's dumb luck.

Don't you suppose the canny owners of those Palaces of Chance at Monte Carlo have figured out ahead of time just what possibility there is of a player sending them to the poorhouse? All they need is pencil and paper and two formulae. That's what eventually passed laws forbidding lotteries, you know. The people running the game had all the better of it, and the folks who bought tickets had about as much chance as the kaiser has of getting a testimonial dinner from the American Legion.

They used to be quite the rage. States would run them to get funds for buying land or making improvements. The Louisiana Lottery has a place in all the history books. Even the scientific colleges considered it a perfectly legitimate means of raising money. Princeton University engineered a famous one, and many of her graduates—ministers included—can thank the chance-taking instinct of the American people for their education. But when it comes to marriage—

The poets and fiction writers tell us that there is "the one girl in the world" for every man. The important thing is to be on the job and recognize her when she comes along. I'm inclined to string along with them. I'm prejudiced. I've found her, and we're very happy together. But I won't deny

that you can discover a number of folks—married ones among them—who will tell you that the "one girl" idea is all bunk. They say it's purely a matter of chance, propinquity, and moonlight, and any man can get along swimmingly as the husband of any reasonably nice girl. That idea, in my opinion, is the reason why divorce lawyers own limousines and Reno is big city.

The way it works out in "The Lottery Man" is exactly true to life. A young man makes all sorts of rash statements about "marriage is a lottery." "I love them all," and "any pretty girl is good enough for me." Then "she" comes along, and, just like Jack Wright in the picture, he overthrows all his previous notions in one fell swoop and rushes out to win that lady or bust! And it doesn't make much difference to him whether she's light or dark, rich or penniless, a likely candidate for Mr. Ziegfeld's Polles or as homely as Sis Hopkins. That's one thing that can't be figured out by higher mathematics. The wise pros. can tell you all about poker and lotteries and Monte Carlo. But when it comes to love, every man is "on his own," and the heart, not the head, is the best little guide. I've been successfully through it, and I know.

IMPORTED GLASS FOR NEW LOEW THEATRE

All the leaded and plate glass installed in the new theatre was supplied from Hobbs Manufacturing Company, Limited, and imported direct from Belgium.

The leaded glass, as supplied, is of special design, and Architect Lamb of New York City made special designs to carry out the general color scheme of the theatre, which work was executed here in London.

MAKING THE BABY LAUGH SOME JOB

Making the baby laugh is no easy task for a director of motion pictures. Youngsters that seem to fairly bubble with merriment will frequently turn the most stolid stoics when the lights are turned on and the camera man is ready to turn his crank. Then it is up to the director to make the baby laugh.

Fred Niblo, my husband and director, was formerly a monopolist in vaudeville and earned the reputation of being one of the best laugh provokers on the American stage. There was never a grown-up on whose face he could not provoke a smile. But when it comes to making babies laugh before the camera, Mr. Niblo says it is the hardest work of his acting career. They have no appreciation of the old mother-in-law gag and don't catch the "why did the chicken cross the street" stuff.

While producing "Stepping Out," my new Paramount picture, Mr. Niblo had an especially stoical baby and was compelled to resort to all kinds of monkeyshines to provoke a laugh; a string and a bunch of sleigh bells he resorted to from the prop room would not please the child.

It's a funny thing about these babies. You pick one that smiles all over its face and think life is going to be one continuous joy during the photographing of the picture, then the little youngster will get on his dignity and his funnybone becomes as calloused as the conscience of a Paris Anache. Mr. Niblo has done everything to standing on his head to provoke a laugh and failed.

Woe unto the comedian that would

try to make a hit with an audience of babies. Then here is the reverse. You may pick a baby with an especially sober mien for a scene, and the now-

city of filmland will delight him. He great hopes were crushed to earth. The youngster set up a howl—that was the way it was used to getting what it wanted. He must have been making a baby laugh but you are somewhat up against it to make a surging baby look sad, without resorting to methods that would be cruel.

Mr. Niblo had a bright idea recently when he thought he would get some colored stick candy to spring suddenly on the infant. He was sure that a



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