

A NEW BOY

Hollywood Hails Robert Montgomery as an Ingratiating Young Actor of Real Promise

By Keith Richards

It's great to be born wealthy but it's tough to have wealth torn away from you before you are old enough to really enjoy it.

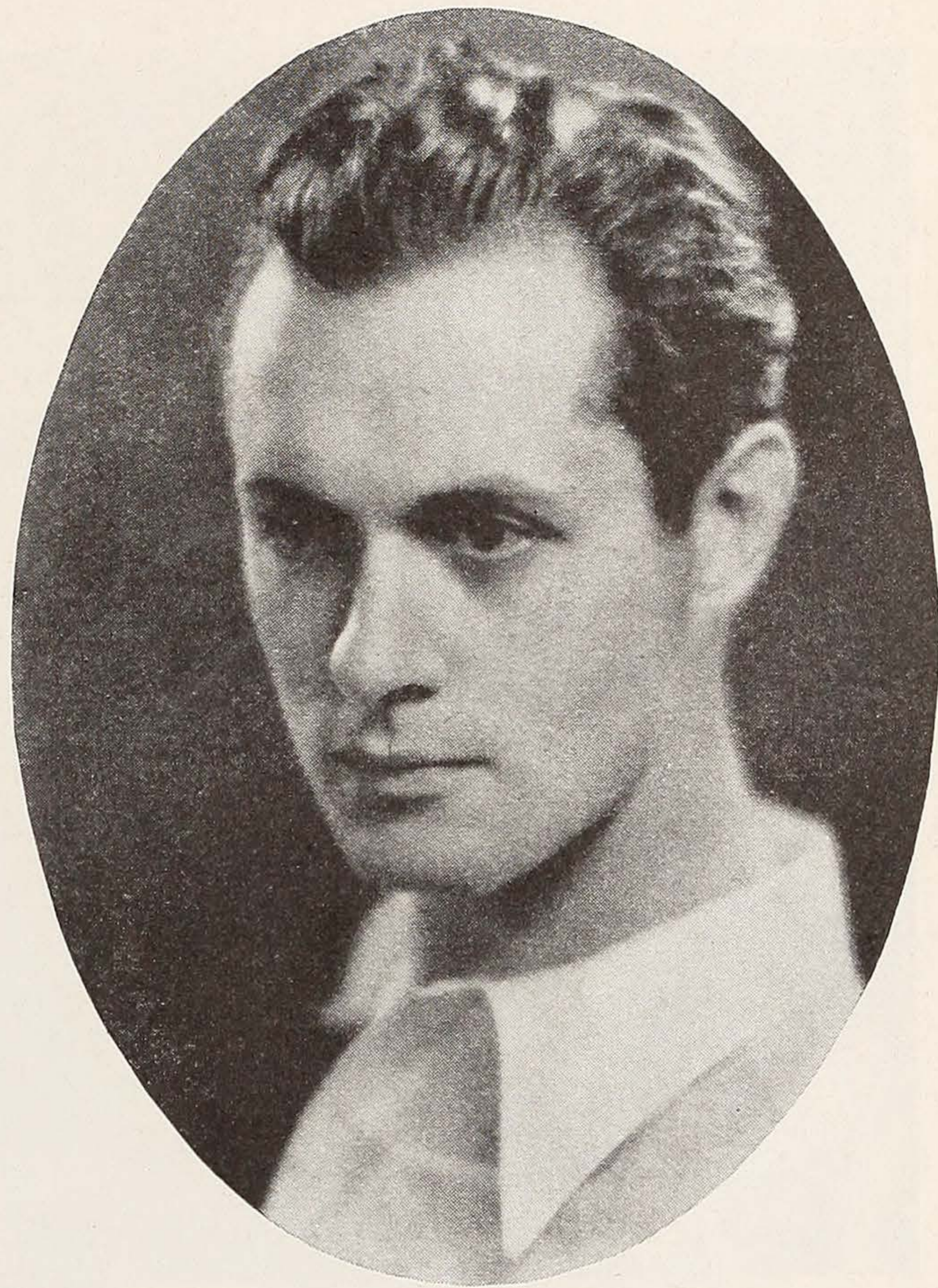
Likewise, a boy who has known money, and then is forced back to poverty, really deserves more credit than one who has always been poor, when he triumphs over adversity and climbs to success.

These two paragraphs epitomize the life of Robert Montgomery, a slim 25 year old lad with laughing brown eyes who is one of the 'big shots' among the new faces which have come to Hollywood in the wake of talking pictures.

Eight years ago he and his brother rushed from fashionable prep schools to the side of their dying father, president of one of America's biggest rubber companies.

Robert Montgomery had never done a stroke of work in his life. When the paternal affairs were untangled it was discovered that a fortune had disappeared overnight, and the two boys were penniless.

Today, from that start, young Montgomery has driven



In his short screen career Montgomery has played opposite Joan Bennett, Joan Crawford, and Norma Shearer.



Robert Montgomery is seen and heard as Norma Shearer's leading man in "Their Own Desires," and registers a real success.

himself upwards until now he is repeating on the screen successes scored on the stage during the past four years. In rapid succession he has had four big talking pictures, "Three Live Ghosts," "So This is College," Joan Crawford's "Untamed," and Norma Shearer's "Their Own Desire."

He's being talked about. This good-looking boy with the nice smile and the rather unruly brown hair has a personality that has caught on. And, unlike most newcomers to the screen, he isn't starting in small parts. Because of his training on the stage, seventy-two weeks in stock, and such big New York productions as "Possession," "One of the Family," and "Garden of Eden," he is getting talkie leads right off the bat. He's climbing faster than any young man who ever stormed the studio gates of Hollywood, this chap who reverses the usual Horatio Alger formula.

You will recall that the Horatio Alger stories are all about boys who struggle upwards from direst poverty.

Montgomery, however, had (Continued on page 93)

De Mille's Magic Box—Continued from page 89

photographed all of the first forty pictures produced by Cecil B. De Mille, and a dozen or more by other directors. On the last fifteen De Mille productions it has been used at some time or other during their making.

While \$25,000,000 is the estimated production cost which has passed through the slow and old-fashioned F. 3.5 lens of the box, this amount would undoubtedly be doubled if it were possible to compute the fortunes made by stars who rose to fame through it.

The Marquise de Falaise, for instance, (Gloria Swanson) thought \$75 a week an amazing salary when she came from bathing girl comedies to play the lead in "Don't Change Your Husband."

A test was made by this camera of a bit-player in "The Birth of a Nation." The result was the signing of Wallace Reid for leading rôles opposite Geraldine Farrar—and the start of the most meteoric and tragic career in all picture history.

Bebe Daniels, in person, seemed a rather awkward youngster—but the Pandora's box of the movies demonstrated that she had a remarkable screen personality. From barely more than a bit in "Male and Female" the black-haired Bebe has soared to the luxury of town cars and a home at an exclusive beach where land is valued at dollars to the inch rather than the foot.

Half the weight and size of the present modernized cameras, and with one-fourth their convenience and range of action, Pathé Professional Camera No. 5 is responsible for some of the greatest technical advances which movies have known.

Credited with being one of the first bits of 'effect lighting' in films is a scene with Raymond Hatton in "The Warrens of Virginia." Mary Pickford and Jack Holt

were the principals of "The Little American" in which the camera participated in the first use of artificial lights to film a night scene at sea (the sinking of the Lusitania). It likewise participated in the first successful camera to 'spot' color at will on a picture scene (the illuminated jewel in "The Devil Stone").

Made on one of the basic patents of picture-making Pathé Professional Camera No. 5 has only fundamentals in common with the present machines. Where its cost was \$1600, your modern outfit, with all lenses, motors, sound recording equipment, etc., runs its cameraman about \$6000.

"If cameras had cost that much in 1913 there would have been no Lasky company!" drily remarked Cecil B. De Mille, whose first picture, "The Squaw Man," cost \$15,000—and brought the financial shoe-string of the tiny new concern almost to the breaking point.

Today four lenses can be changed on a modern camera in less than five seconds.

In 1913 it was a fifteen minute job to put on a new lens. Therefore, the majority of the 6,000,000 feet of film exposed by the old camera ran past a 2 inch F. 3.5 lens, just one-half as fast as the lightning quick F.2 lenses now employed.

As an example of the rapid advances made in camera equipment let it be said that where Gloria Swanson required eight lights for a scene in "Male and Female" Mr. De Mille needed but four spots of illumination for the photographing of Kay Johnson in a similar set-up of "Dynamite" which De Mille has just finished at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. (Yes, we *are* drawing a parallel between the bath-tub scenes of these two pictures—made 12 years apart!)

Names have been given of a half a dozen celebrities whom Pathé No. 5 intro-

duced to film fame—but there are scores more. It met Thomas Meighan, for instance, in "Kindling"; Julia Faye in "The Woman God Forgot"; Florence Vidor, "Old Wives for New"; Noah Beery, "The Whispering Chorus"; Lew Cody, "Don't Change Your Husband"; William Boyd, an extra, "Why Change Your Wife"; Agnes Ayres, "Forbidden Fruit"; "Fool's Paradise"; Conrad Nagel, Jacqueline Logan, Mildred Harris; "Saturday Night," Leatrice Joy; "The Ten Commandments," Rod La Rocque.

Blanche Sweet, Rita Jolivet, Victor Moore, Bessie Barriscale, Dustin Farnum, Theodore Roberts, Robert Edeson, Theodore Kosloff, Elliott Dexter, Ina Claire, Marie Doro, Mae Murray, Wanda Hawley, Helen Jerome Eddy, Bryant Washburn and Marjorie Daw are still other famous faces first photographed by the busiest camera filmdom has known.

It doesn't work so much now, this Pathé No. 5. It is old-fashioned in relation to the highly modern cameras which can do everything but mix you an ice cream soda. It can't do some of the very involved trick stuff now demanded, but its fundamental picture-making quality is nowhere impaired.

So it is that Cecil De Mille religiously uses it at some point in every picture he makes, and it is his intention to do so until the antiquated wooden box folds up from old age, the ravages of wood-eating termites—or what have you.

When the box fails De Mille will remove the Karl Zeiss lens and put it in the safest safe deposit vault he can find. For it will be the one imperishable reminder of the sturdy outfit which stood by him when he was pioneering in pictures—and which has made him a fortune beyond his fondest early dreams.

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seventeen years of the most de luxe sort of life before Fate handed him a 'sock on the nose.'

He grinned when I talked to him about it.

"I was well on my way to being a very agreeable, well-mannered, more or less useless rich man's son," he said. "At that time my dad's death was a dreadful tragedy but the financial failure was the best thing that could have happened to me.

"The saving thing about our situation was that we had been taught not to despise work. We had never had to do anything, but dad had always jumped on any tendency we showed towards snobbishness. So when the crash came my brother and I just looked at each other, and the next day we applied for a job at the nearest railroad yard as mechanic's helpers.

"After four months I went on a long cruise in the Standard Oil tanker, 'Caddo.' When I got back I roomed with a boy named Steve Janney, who was recently killed. He was in the show business, and inside of two weeks he had talked a friend into giving me a chance in 'The Mask in the Face,' a William Faversham production. I did seven different characters in this piece, for five dollars a week each, or thirty-five dollars. Then followed seventy-two weeks in stock, a tremendous experience, and then Broadway again!"

A succinctly stated story, but one which

would be all the more remarkable to you if you could see this youngster face to face. He doesn't look at all like one who has worked blindingly hard to achieve a success. In fact, his Biff in "So This is College" is Robert Montgomery to the life; a vivid, very modern, very self-possessed, very charming young American. To all appearances he has never had a care in the world.

But let him state his philosophy of life.

"I don't know whether I would recommend my experience for all youngsters," he said. "Certainly I frequently regret that I had to pass up four years in the big university for which my father had entered me when I was still a baby. Also there were many times when I came, through inexperience, mighty near to making mistakes which might have ruined my life. It is safest to take the college route, to be under discipline during formative years. There is no doubt of that. On the other hand the school of life is a forcing school. Through sheer necessity you plunge along faster, if you get the right start. If you can keep your head, college can be dispensed with. But it is a great gamble. My boy, if I have one, will go to college. I wouldn't want to take the chances with his life that I did with mine."

Sounds like an old graybeard, doesn't he?

At twenty-five he has packed more into a life than most men accomplish in fifty years.

Between seventeen and his present age he has fought, and won, the most difficult personal battle he will ever have.

You can take your hat off to Robert Montgomery, who became a stage star, and is attaining stellar rank on the screen, despite the early handicap of being born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

He remembers with pleasure his carefree days; but he looks forward with even keener anticipation to the time when he can enjoy luxurious living again—this time on the money won by the magic of his work as a creative artist.

He was a nice young lad of seventeen, that son of a rubber magnate. But he's a far more powerful personality at twenty-five as Biff in "So this is College" and Andy McAllister in "Untamed."

"I had only had my chance in 'The Mask in the Face' two days when I knew that acting was what I always wanted to do," he told me. "I wanted to progress as rapidly as possible, so I inquired of older actors. They said, 'Go out in stock,' and I did. In seventy-two weeks I did seventy-two different characters in seventy-two different plays, and over fifty of them were old men! This character work, and the whole variety of experience, was my 'college,' the only college I have had in the show business. That sort of thing is hard work, but it all seems rosy in retrospect, particularly as I seem to be getting ahead."