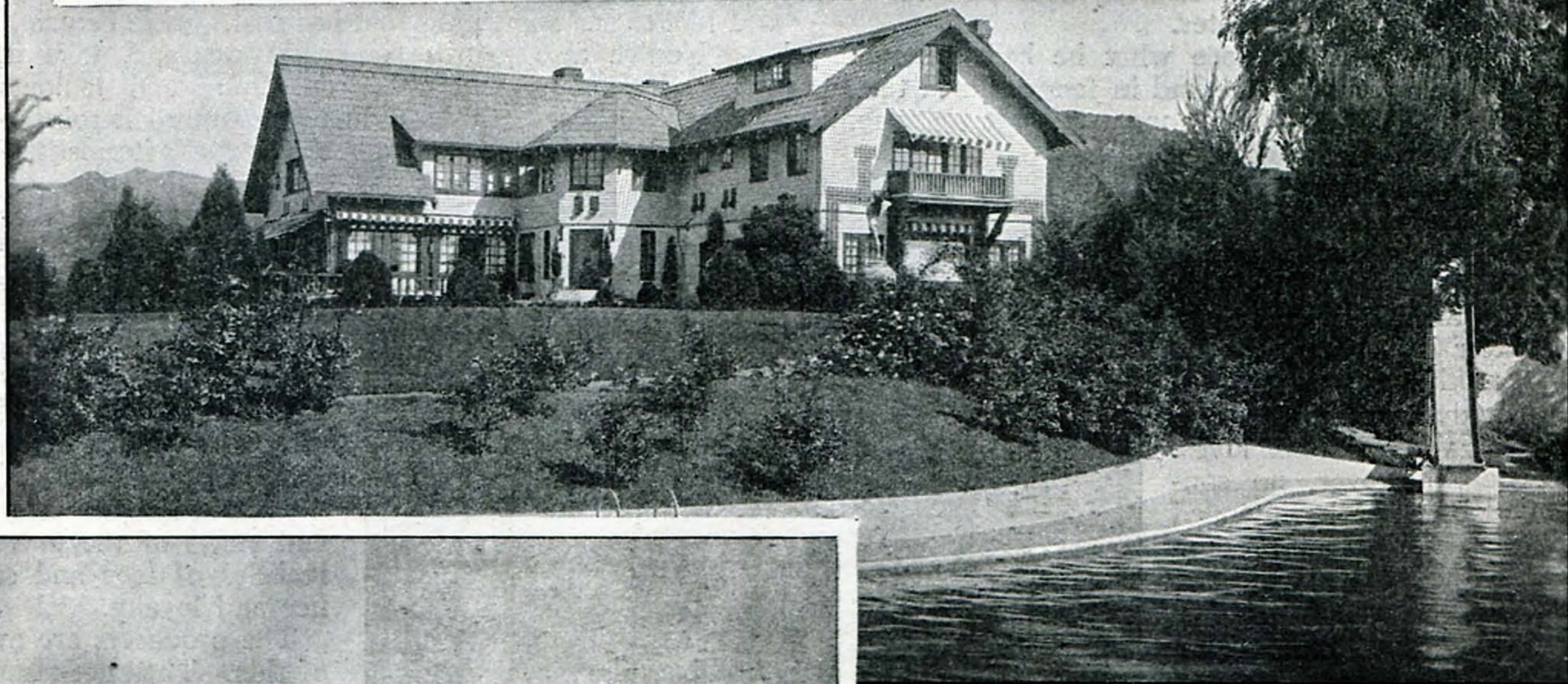


# If You Were Mary Pickford? Think of it! And if you

can, you have reason to be both thrilled and frightened at the thought. By Gerald C. Duffy

*Pickfair, though not far from Hollywood, is the home of two stars who take no part in the colony's social life.*



**A**CTRESSES will happen in the best-regulated families. Which is a fortunate thing for both the actresses and the families. In a certain Smith family living in New York—just as other Smith families live in New York—an actress happened not so very long ago. Led by a sage desire to become individually famous and popular, she abandoned her name, which was already famous and popular, and assumed one which no one had ever heard before then and which probably every one has heard before now. So Miss Smith, who happened to be an actress, became Mary Pickford.

It could have happened in any other Smith family, or even in any other family; it could have happened in your family. *You* might have been—or might yet be, for that matter—Mary Pickford under a different name that would please your fancy better, or under your present name if it is fancy enough to please you. Imagine yourself suddenly dissolving from your present identity and then crystallizing in the mundane image of the most famous girl in the world. Pink thought!

In suggesting that you imagine such a thing I am assuming of course, that you are of the eligible sex; this is a story for ladies only—the men have their own exclusive ones. So, girls, suppose you *were* Mary Pickford!

Conceive—if you think you can later survive the shock of discovering it isn't true—conceive the glorious surprise of awakening some morning and seeing a soft, beautiful, perfect spiral of blond hair upon your pillow. You wonder how it got there, and in amazement you seize it to throw it out of bed, but you find that seizing it hurts your head. Bewildered, you grope for the other end of the curl and discover that it is attached to your

*Mary Pickford never calls her husband "Doug." That familiar abbreviation is left for others who don't know him as well as she does.*

scalp. Then you are suddenly astounded by noticing that there are other blond curls beside the first one—your head is covered with them.



Everything at Pickfair is beautiful and comfortable—but above all, it is livable and homelike.

Thoroughly roused by the shock, you sit bolt upright in bed and look around you. Your amazement is multiplied, for you find yourself wallowing deeply in a mattress so soft that it almost submerges you. Rose silk coverlets adorn the bed, which is at one end of a rose room so vast that it awes you; and through rose-curtained windows the tender morning light is reaching in to caress you, and even the light is rose from the tinge of the California sun. A moment later you find yourself in the center of the room, standing upon a rose carpet, and you wonder how you got there. Upon looking at your apparel, you discover that in your dazed condition you put on a rose negligee and arose.

Moving timidly about the room, you first come upon a low chiffonier, over the top of which are strewn many little bottles, most of them bearing Paris labels. They are the most exciting perfumes in the world. You uncork a few and inhale their ethereal scents, and then you count the bottles. There are fifty-five; the fifty-fifth you learn by the pen-written label is a vial of pure jasmine essence brought from Tunis by Mary Pickford.

Still puzzled and dazed, you look about at the room. At the end opposite the bed, you see a divan and a fireplace; and there are huge chairs that are overflowing with upholstery, the general impression being that of a homelike living room rather than a chamber for slumber. A large mirror, across from the windows, at-

*The ever effervescent Douglas Fairbanks stimulates her so that she forgets to be tired.*

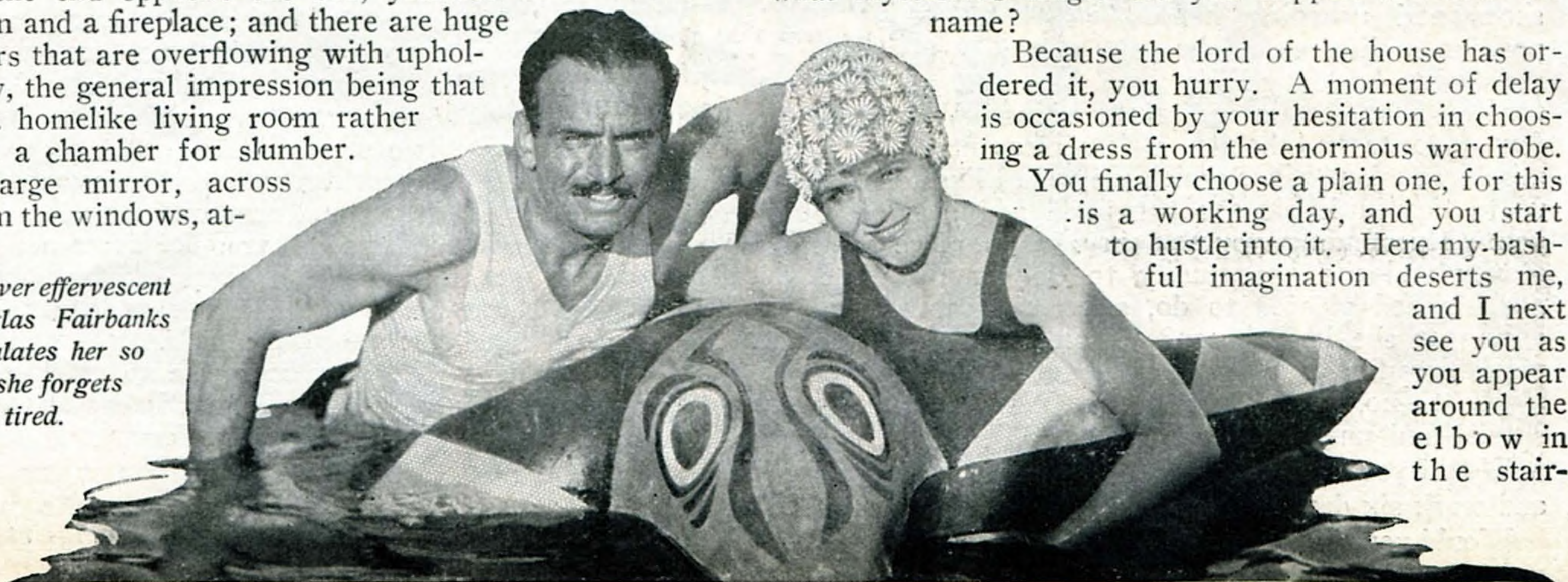
tracts you. You wonder how you look in blond curls. And then descends the greatest and most wonderful shock of all. Staring dumfounded into the mirror, you discover that you are not yourself at all—that in the place of your usual facial design is a face you have seen more often than you have seen your own. It is more beautiful—if you will pardon my boldness—far more beautiful than the face you have been accustomed to wearing. *You*, by some impossible power, have become Mary Pickford!

A knock at the door startles you. You want to hide, but a strange voice coming from your throat says: "Come in." Instantly you are confronted by a very tall, very dark and very fierce-looking woman; the fierceness however wilts away when she smiles. Suddenly from her lips come sounds; strange, ridiculous, unassorted sounds. You are surprised that you understand them and that you know you have been told in French that Mr. Fairbanks says if you don't hurry down to breakfast you'll be late at the studio. You answer: "*Très bien, Bodamere,*" and the woman vanishes. Suddenly you realize that you called her Bodamere. By what mysterious magic did you happen to know her name?

Because the lord of the house has ordered it, you hurry. A moment of delay is occasioned by your hesitation in choosing a dress from the enormous wardrobe.

You finally choose a plain one, for this is a working day, and you start to hustle into it. Here my-bashful imagination deserts me,

and I next see you as you appear around the elbow in the stair-



case and descend to the tiled hall. Mr. Fairbanks, who is watching his police dog *Coppet*—pronounced “copy,” which publicity-man Larkin will tell you it is—turns and sees you at the same moment. He calls:

“Hello, Hipper!”

You smile and you are happy, for “Hipper” is the name which no one but your husband has the right or the audacity or the imagination to call you. By your answer you reveal your mood. You may say: “Good morning, Douglas;” but if you are feeling particularly piquant your reply is, “Good morning, Tiller.” The reason you call your husband Tiller is the same reason for which he calls you Hipper. But you never call him Doug. That familiar abbreviation is for others who don’t know him as well as you.

Follows the thrill! Tiller crosses to meet you and sweeps you from your feet, holding you aloft. The kiss starts before your toes are upon the floor again. I shall give no details of this. You will have to use your own imagination.

Upon leaving the tiled hallway, you pass through a mahogany dining room into a white ivory breakfast room in a remote corner of the house. What comprises the breakfast I cannot say, for I have eaten only luncheons in that room. Breakfast is the one meal of the day which Hipper and Tiller can be sure of eating alone.

From the time of folding the napkin after the morning repast I cannot say what you would do if you were Mary Pickford. I know what Mary does, but I have grave doubts if you, inhabiting her shoes and usurping her position in life, would be satisfied to be Mary Pickford without certain radical revisions. We all have a few favorite bad habits, a few pleasant vices, a few mischievous ambitions which we would like to take with us to heaven if we are permitted admission. Would you, then, finding yourself in Mary’s place with the money and the opportunity to do exactly what you gosh-danged pleased to do, select the mode of existence that she has chosen? Would you go to bed at nine-thirty five evenings a week and the other two evenings at—no, you’re wrong—at eight-thirty, except on special and unavoidable occasions?

Would you arise at seven-thirty six mornings a week and work six days every week? Or would work at all?

Would you live within seven miles of Hollywood without being a prominent figure in its social life?

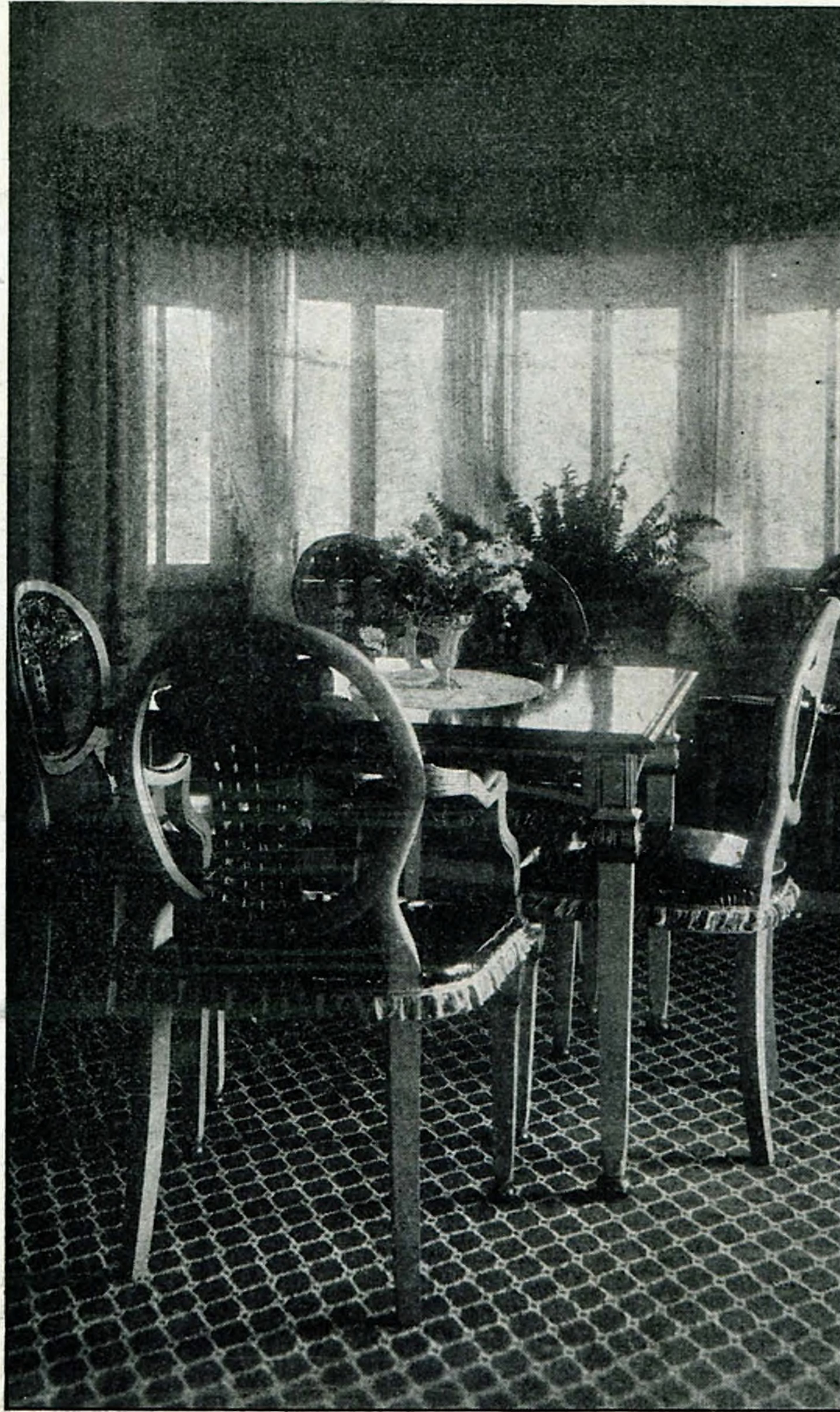
And, having money, automobiles, Parisian gowns, beauty, and the admiration of the most thrilling men, would you behave yourself or would you misbehave? Do you realize that being popular brings compulsory inconveniences and hazards, and that people who are popular must also be good? If you were Mary Pickford you might with just one delectable indiscretion lose everything that she has struggled years to gain.

For one of the most dangerous of high explosives is fame. When carried gently, gracefully, cautiously there is no peril attached to it; but if it is forgotten for a brief instant, if the person who holds it slips because of something smooth, or falls because of something rough, or puts it in a hot place, it will explode with a detonation that will be heard over many continents and echoed in newspapers, sewing circles, and churches. So, for your own sake, if you were Mary, you could not do the things that motion-picture people are supposed to do; but, instead, you would have to be content to do the things that motion-picture people really do. But it is not compulsion that makes Mary’s life tranquil and serene, as is proven by her abstinence from even the most conservative of public pleasures. Logic will tell us that in order to retire at nine-thirty she must not stay out after nine-thirty at the latest. So, instead of spreading herself in public she compresses her life into fourteen waking hours a day. And, considering all that she does, it doubtless requires much compression to make it fit.

After breakfast she is whirled to work in a car. I shall not deal with her professional life; that you

know already. But there are many things she does beside acting. Between scenes she is constantly viewed and interviewed by gentlemen of the press who come to get a story from her and remain to try to sell one to her. She gives orders to her office force and takes them from her director; she signs photographs and autographs checks. At noon she pauses to eat a dish of spinach—and usually nothing but a dish of spinach. In the course of the afternoon she takes fifteen to twenty scenes, two cups of tea, and a French lesson.

During the ride home the ever-effervescent Douglas stimulates her so that it does not occur to her to be tired. They have dinner and then go to the movies. This last is an interesting procedure. It takes place in



*The charming sunny dining room at the Fairbanks home is closed to friends only at breakfast time—when Mary and Douglas prefer to be alone.*

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## If You Were Mary Pickford?

Continued from page 34

an immense room furnished as a very formal living room, but never used as such. In the Fairbanks mansion it serves two purposes; that of a theater at night and in the day that of a museum containing two exhibits. Exhibit number one is a unique vase, an anniversary present from Charlie Chaplin. The interesting feature of the vase is that its color is a deep, rich red, exactly the shade of ox blood. The piece of pottery was made in ancient ages, and since then science has not been able to reproduce the mysterious color. There are in existence only two such ox-blood vases.

Exhibit number two is the other ox-blood vase.

To convert the museum into a theater a button is pushed, and in answer a full-sized screen appears magically at the far end of the room. In the hallway opposite the door an Oriental rug, hanging against the wall, is drawn back, revealing holes in the wall. Behind these holes is the projection machine. Douglas is the operator as well as half the audience.

But there is no orchestra. Would you be satisfied to see your pictures like this? You would have to be if you were Mary Pickford.

And music has been banished from another phase of Mary's life. She has forgotten how to dance! Does this frighten you?

Inasmuch as the bodies assigned to us by our Creator are not transferable, and I am therefore risking no legal entanglements, I shall assert that if you were Mary-Pickford the first thing that I should do would be to fall desperately and incurably in love with you, as any sensible man would. The second thing that I should do would be to keep quiet about it, lest by loving I lose a friend—an unfortunate but frequent occurrence.

Yet my emotions must not be thought audacious, for no one could know Mary without loving her. To ask one kindly to refrain from affection would be as absurd as to say that the blood of the dying sun is gruesome. For who could help loving a girl whose soul is visible through her acts as well as through her countenance? This phenomenon exists in Mary Pickford, and the tenderness of her spirit was shown to me and made me miserable—you'll understand why in a moment—just a short time ago. A sudden and unexpected lull in production left hundreds of motion-picture people in Los Angeles and Hollywood with vacuous days, and consequently vacuous bank accounts—

and vacuous digestive organs. Mary felt their sufferings as though they were her own, and made others feel them; she gave not in hundreds but in thousands, and the friends she made during those unhappy days are never too proud to tell of her generosity. But Mary's only plea when accused of generosity is: "What I have was given to me by the world; certainly I feel that I can do no less than give some of it back to the world, where it will do good."

Though Mary is quiet and reserved and calmly impressive, there is a certain contagious light-heartedness about her; a sort of invisible reflection of the youth she gives to the screen. To you who see her on the screen she must seem a little girl—a child—much younger than she really is; but to speak to her, to listen to her ideas, to know her serious outlook, she seems in life much older than she really is. She is a strange complex of youth and maturity. Fifteen minutes in her presence is refreshment—to me at least—for the soul. She is buoyant—and yet she is the one who holds Doug—the toy balloon broken loose and bumping against the ceiling—down.

Some sirupy-minded people say that Mary Pickford is all beauty. I stanchly declare that if she wasn't so blamed beautiful she'd be all brains!

If, after reading thus far, you are still allured by the desire to be transformed into Mary Pickford I shall tell you a sad secret, which is Mary's saddest secret, and which will make you be more content with yourself as you are. To confide in you to this extent weights me with a sense of guilt, but I feel that you should know the sacrifice which your idol is making for you—for you. And the price that she is paying for your amuse-

ment is her own unhappiness. It is this:

A few months ago the public, glutinous for sensation, devoured a rumor that Mary Pickford was to become a mother. It is not strange that the rumor reached Mary's ears, and, if you knew the place that is vacant in the corner of her heart, you would say that it is not strange that she wept. For there is no woman in all the world who has a stronger mother instinct, or who would cherish a child more than Mary Pickford. Some of her happiest moments are spent with her sister's little girl whom she has nicknamed "Shoop"—because Shoop says "soup" exactly as most children eat it.

But not having a little one of her own is the sacrifice that Mary Pickford is making for you. To be the kind of mother she would be would force her to abandon her career. And the only reason she does not abandon it is because the public has begged her not to. Certainly there is no personal reason. She is not working for fun, because work is not fun; she is not working for art's sake, because already she has achieved the loftiest success; she is not working for money, for she could not spend the amount she has by now accumulated. She is working for you. And for you she is making the sacrifice of categorical happiness. The world was quick to believe the recent rumor and slow to believe the denial of it. But I knew it was false, for without intending to listen, I stood in a room adjoining one where Douglas and Mary were talking, and there was a twinge in my heart as I heard her say:

"Dear—don't you wish it were true?"

And that was when she wept.

## They're Growing Bigger As Well As Better

Continued from page 31

Following the completion of his new production, which is temporarily titled "The Spirit of Chivalry," he will undertake another feature with historical background. He has a number in mind ranging all the way from the days of the Greeks to the American Revolution. It wouldn't be at all astonishing for him to burst forth with plans for filming the story of Hannibal, the Carthaginian conqueror, or Caesar, or some such popular fictional idol as the Brigadier Gerard of the Conan Doyle series.

The only thing that Doug insists on is that his heroes be human when they are visualized on the screen. He regards everything else as supplementary.

"I'm not going to talk about how much money I'm spending on my new production," he told me. "It's going to cost a fortune, to be sure, but I don't care about that so long as the picture is satisfactory. I'm not trying to make it a triumph of architecture. I want the public to enjoy the story. I don't want them to voice their opinion with 'Oh, what wonderful sets!'"

"Every bit of 'The Spirit of Chivalry' is going to be human. Our idea is to show that the same emotions prevailed in the Middle Ages as now. Soldiers may go to battle in aeroplanes instead of on horses, but they're not any different as people. We may travel in automobiles and Pullman



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