



From her early babyhood, Jobyna was at home before the camera. Her mother was Mrs. Kemp-Ralston, South Pittsburg's only photographer, and in her little studio, she trained her daughter for a movie career. Here is one of the pictures that the mother took of her  
re little girl

**T**HERE are always plenty of pretty stories to be picked up in southern Tennessee, that magic land of wild honeysuckle, roses and magnolia where even in winter the sky hangs, fragrant, balmy, above purple-topped mountains and pale green valleys. And now since visiting the little mountain town of South Pittsburg, not more than forty miles from the Georgia line in Tennessee, I shall never see white roses without thinking of a little girl reared in that place. The little girl grew up in a rose garden, so to speak, which formed the side yard of the old fashioned red frame house with galleries running along one side both upstairs and down. The house stands on the main business street and stores have grown up all around it. But the garden with its great bushes of white, fragrant roses remained intact through the years and came to play an important part in this little girl's life.

The little girl is Jobyna Ralston, a favorite with thousands of film fans, a fact which Jobyna appreciates very much, but no more, I believe, than the fact that all her life she was a favorite in her old home town.

Jobyna's mother was the town's only photographer and a good one. There were two children, Jobyna and her younger brother who is with her in Hollywood.

# Just a Small Town Girl

By  
*Catherine S. Prosser*

What the folks in Tennessee remember about the childhood of their own Jobyna Ralston, now Mrs. Richard Arlen

When there was spare time she was making pretty dresses for Jobyna, curling her long curls over her finger about the little girl's face and often posing her for hours before her best camera.

"Not that you are so pretty at all, Jobyna. But all this will help you later," the practical-minded mother said.

And all the time Mrs. Kemp-Ralston had plans for her daughter in the back of her alert mind. From the first she ever heard of motion pictures she was interested. The magic photography of the cameras thrilled her. She bought every movie magazine available, learned of the stars and the directors, kept up with producers and their latest releases.

Jobyna photographed well; Mrs. Ralston decided she would screen well. She had always had some dramatic talent. If she could teach her poise before the camera, how to lose that self-consciousness that was so fatal to some screen players, she knew that she would have started Jobyna in the right direction when the time came to seek the opportunity to get into films.

Jobyna was sixteen when she had her first serious love affair. Then as she sat in the rose garden it was always in company with a hand- [CONTINUED ON PAGE 111]



# Just a Small Town Girl

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some youth. Johnny Campbell's people, who had a farm several miles from South Pittsburg, were well thought of. They and the Ralstons were friendly but neither family approved of the match. The "kids" were entirely too young.

"Jobyna and Johnny steal a march on friends," the town paper announced and the countryside gave them an ovation. They were leaders at all the parties, picnics and dances. An easy, lazy, dreamy life but gradually as the weeks passed it irked upon the spirited Jobyna, ambitious for her young husband.

Then one day Jobyna said, "Another month of this, Johnny, and I go to work. If I do, remember, it's all over with us."

The romance that had flourished in the rose garden along with the beautiful white blossoms withered and died. Jobyna got a divorce. The memory of those dream days left a sadness in Jobyna's eyes that has not passed with the years.

A week later she was off to New York determined to go on the stage or movies and make good. She had displeased her mother by marrying so young. She would make good now.

Some in South Pittsburg say that Mrs. Ralston engineered Jobyna's entrance into pictures. That she went to New York, hunted up certain producers and helped Jobyna obtain her first minor rôle. Eventually, she went to Hollywood where she struggled along from one minor rôle to another until good luck brought her one day to the Lloyd studio and Harold Lloyd recognized in her his type ideal for *The Girl* in a series of pictures which kept her engaged for several years.

Then not so long ago Paramount took Jobyna away from Lloyd and she is to have still greater opportunity.

Tennessee didn't see Jobyna for several years and then one day a year ago last summer she came for a long visit and to gather comfort, if possible, among her flower friends as well as her real friends.



**Jobyna Ralston, as a baby, posed with her aunt. This picture, too, was taken by her mother. Jobyna is wearing a sprig of honeysuckle and her aunt has a rose in her hair, two typical flowers of the fragrant South**

Jobyna's father, mother and brother had been with her several years in California previous to that time and they had been so happy in a bungalow, with Jobyna helping her mother with the cooking and

house work when she was not at the studio. Then two years ago happiness fled suddenly when a doctor called to see Mrs. Ralston and found her seriously ill with no hope of recovery.

Jobyna was inconsolable at first over this parting with her mother. Then with her usual fortitude she gathered strength to go back to a picture Lloyd was making and in which she was needed. After completing it she went back home.

That first evening Jobyna strolled down to the old house to view her roses growing in profuse but rather unkempt fashion. She gathered a handful, sat a full hour in the old swing but she could not bring herself to go inside the house. When she returned to the hotel her eyes were red.

Jobyna never lacks for courage long, however. A day or so later she turned the key into the front door of the house and went into those nine silent rooms so full of their memories and began her packing up. The dozens and dozens of photographic plates which Mrs. Ralston had made were packed with special care.

South Pittsburgians scented another romance but Jobyna had already given her heart to another. In Hollywood, the handsome Richard Arlen, also a Southerner, was counting the days until she returned.

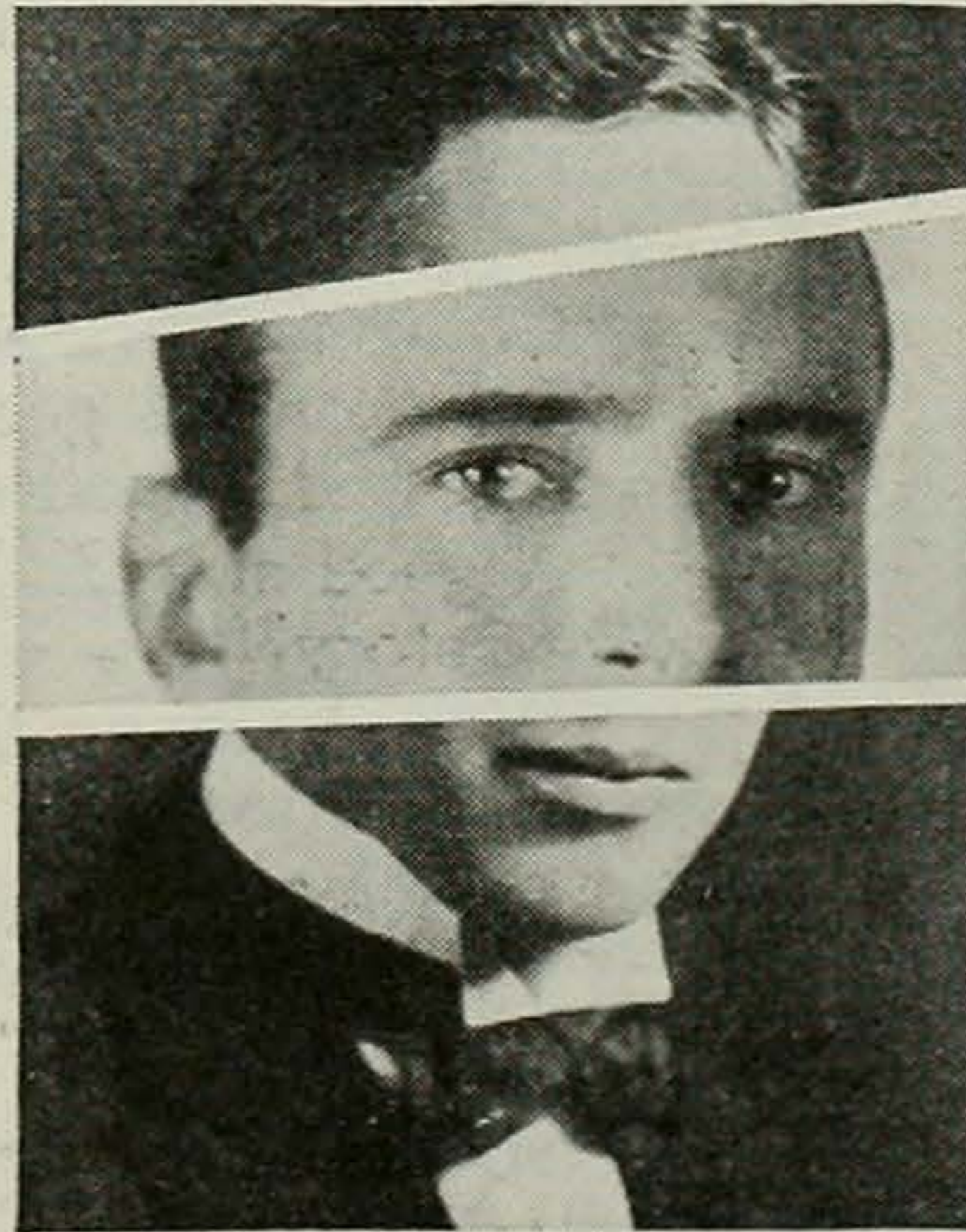
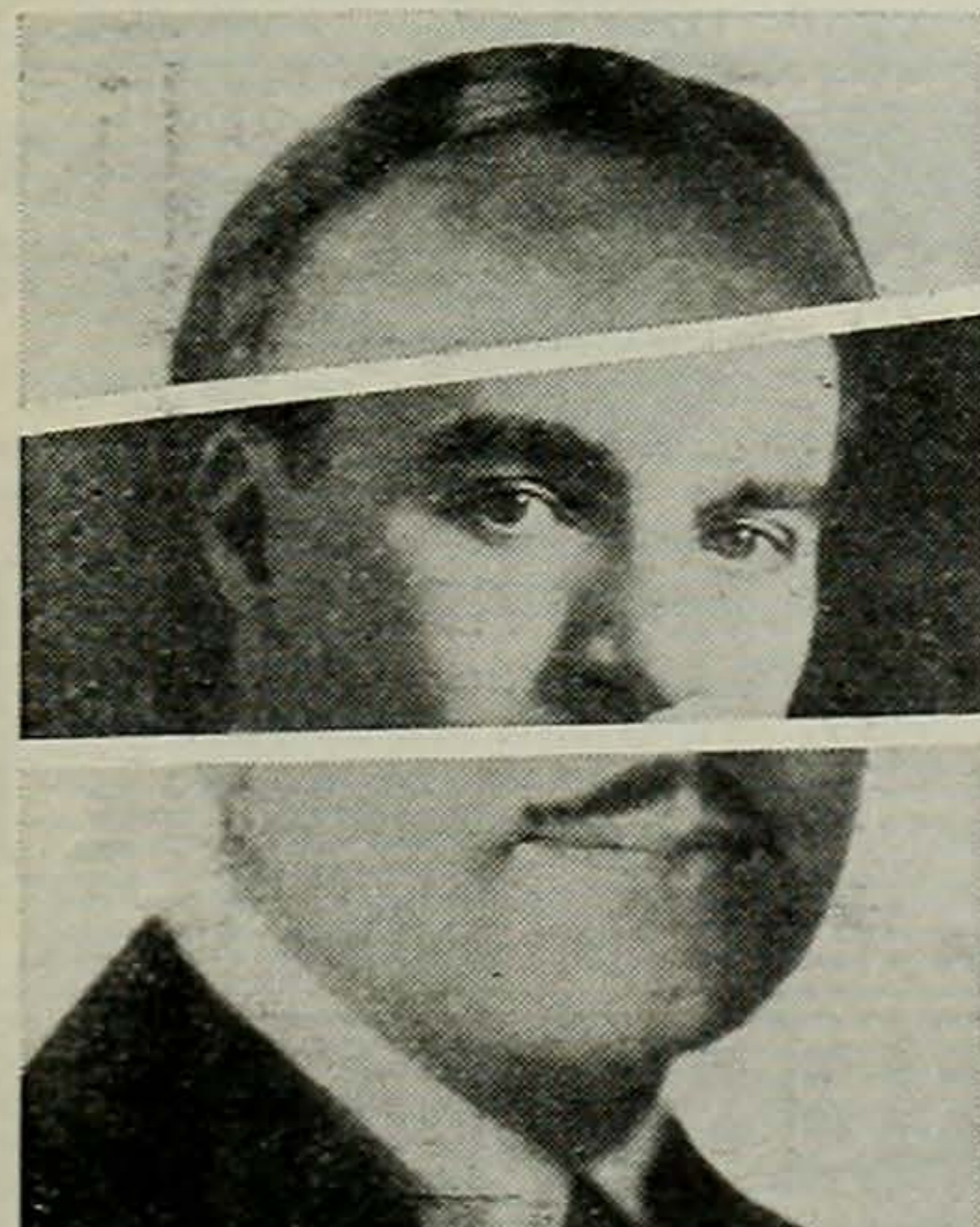
And that is what Jobyna has made promise to her old friends to do; to come back once in awhile to South Pittsburg to see them and not make it too long between times.

"And," she wrote to one friend not long ago, "next time I'm bringing South Pittsburg the handsomest man in the world to see. My husband, if you please!"

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