



NORMA TALMADGE is that rarest of treasures—a beautiful woman whose head cannot be turned. Fate has showered her with good fortune, but she still retains her girlish good humor and sincerity. On the opposite page you will find an interview that presents this paragon just as she is.

Photo by Puffer

Beauty and the Bean

Norma Talmadge is one of the six best smilers, and she offers food for thought as well. Here is the evidence.

By Malcolm H. Oettinger

IF Marjorie Rambeau had decided upon the screen when she was fifteen, she would have been very much what Norma Talmadge is to-day. In a roundabout way that describes the most popular of our emotional stars. Norma has been suffering, in a celluloid way, for so long, from early Vitagraphics on up through Selznicked sobbings and independent trials and triumphs, that now it has become a habit. There's nothing to it, if you ask her about it.

Offscreen she is lovelier than on. Less inclined toward the fatal *embonpoint*, possessed, indeed, of a sylphlike slenderness, an ethereal slimness that seems to be all but lost on the silver sheet, Norma would do well, I think, to increase her personal appearances. And for other reasons. Her sense of humor, eliminated for the purposes of nine out of ten scenarios, is the one bright feature illuminating many a drab studio wait. It is a gamin humor, a rough-and-ready quirk to her make-up, the humor of Dot Gish rather than that of Betty Blythe or Olga Petrova.

Womanly on, she struck me as being girlish off the two-dimension stage. After considering her decade of service that includes kittenish ingénues and quavering mother parts, stage-struck suburbanites and sinister sirens, I am tempted to call Norma Talmadge the emotional *Peter Pan* of the picture play, the gelatin version of Modjeska in miniature. At a flash, you might take her to be twenty. I know that she is considerably older, simply by counting the years on my fingers. But her work has left no marks, her eyes have nothing of that lusterless pall that comes from too much tragedy, her laugh is happily unaffected.

She is a cameo in candor. Perhaps she is not, therefore, a mosaic in tact, but under the circumstances, what could be more interesting? Another feature that distinguishes her from the common run of star stuff is the fact that she does not bore with the bromidic, she does not inoculate you with the inane. There are no sputtered apologies for being late; no plea that you forgive her costume; no expressed hope that she is saying the right thing. Crowning glory, Norma doesn't take herself seriously!

Arrayed in a flimsy, flouncy creation sporting frills and furbelows, the senior member of the Talmadge sisters' film firm was portraying the Spirit of '61 or something like that, for the dream episode in "Smilin' Through" while a dubious orchestra throbbed behind the shirt-sleeved camera man. The hoopskirt, the kerchief, the beribboned wrists reminded me of Elsie Ferguson's sartorial scenery when I came upon her dreaming true with Wally Reid, in "Forever."

As I watched Norma cry real tears, while Harrison Ford knelt at her feet, I could not refrain from comparing her with Marjorie Rambeau: the two women are strangely alike in so many respects. Their reactions to scenes of stress are similar, too. Last winter I watched Miss Rambeau from the wings. When she came off

after her hysteria in the murder episode of "The Sign on the Door" the tears were coursing down her face. But her expression was placid.

The camera man was calling for extra lights, so a delay was imminent, and Norma tripped daintily over to my chair. The tears were gone—evaporated I suppose. Apparently she turns on the flood at will, and as easily stems it.

"It'll be weeks before this thing is over I'm afraid," said the emotional little girl. "By the time we've wrapped it all up, the camera man will have a long white beard, and I'll have to buy me a new set of costumes. Don't you like 'em?"

She pirouetted, manikin fashion.

"I always tire of a part after it's taken more than six weeks. And this—the end isn't in sight!"

Two weeks before I had spoken of emotional strain and that sort of thing with Lillian Gish. To her a part meant all in all. She lost weight worrying over the rôle with which she was engaged; she brought home her schemes and plans of how each new characterization should be done, and kept them constantly uppermost in her mind.

"Did Norma Talmadge do this?"

I wondered. And asked.

She looked at me helplessly, humorously.

"I'm going to be awfully disappointing, I guess. You see the truth is that what I'm playing doesn't affect me at all. I leave the lady in distress at the studio every night, and take her up the next morning, or noon, wherever I left off. When I work, of course, I try to put myself into the character I'm portraying. Everything is useless unless you do that. I try to feel her emotions, as she feels them, and react accordingly. If she is unhappy, she would cry, and so I cry."

"How do you manage to cry at will?"

She smiled frankly. Shrugged her white shoulders.

"I don't know. But the tears do not affect me temperamentally. I feel no subconscious desire to cry at home. At work I'm an actress and at home I'm me. And the two ladies don't mix. When we hold over a heavy scene, sometimes, I worry about how I should do it, but except in such rare instances, I forget the studio when I say 'Good night' to the doorman."

Incidentally, this star is on speaking terms with her studio fellows. I heard spoken evidence of this on all sides while she was acting. The spotlight men were as interested in her work as were the "grippers" lounging about the outskirts of the set. Dispositions may readily be gauged by the barometer of studio feeling!

Making pictures is a business affair with Miss Talmadge. She spoke candidly, openly, unsparingly of her work, not in the terms of art and atmosphere and technique, but in terms of success.

"I enjoyed doing 'The Passion Flower' but like so many of the things I have enjoyed it was not a money-maker. It was unnatural in theme, you remember, and drab in its details—sordid stuff for the great fan public.

Scenes of Rare Beauty

from Norma Talmadge's latest production "Smilin' Through" will be found on page eighty-one of this issue, in the rotogravure section. When you see how beautifully she adapts herself to the quaint fancies of costume drama, you will understand her decision to make "The Duchess of Langeais" her next production, for this offers just as many opportunities for unusual and exquisite costumes as this.

On the other hand my last picture to be released, 'The Sign on the Door,' has made heaps of money, but really offered little to my taste in the way of screen fare. Of course it was a good story—but I don't like melodrama. My ideal of story and plot combined with acting chances would be a dramatic play with plenty of good, wholesome comedy."

Doesn't that savor of a box-office viewpoint? Norma admitted that it did.

"Lots of people sneer at the idea of suiting the box office," she said. "Foolishness! Don't you realize that the box office is the public? I'm making pictures to please the public, and please the public completely. The critics are not even considered, composing as they do, the slightest sort of minority."

The directorial megaphone was waved toward her, and she returned to the Klieg-lit garden, to weep some more. The studio forces claim that during the filming of the tragic graveyard scene in "The Passion Flower" so potent was her acting that the hardened camera man broke down and wept sympathetically. Whether this is true or not may be open to conjecture, but Norma's virtuosity at playing on the tremolo stops coupled with the fact that he may have been a very sentimental Bell Howell expert makes the story plausible in the extreme.

The Talmadge outlook on the cinema world is a complete one, encompassing as it does, all of its branches. For instance, I asked her what she thought of German films.

"Let them bring them over if they're all as good as 'Gypsy Blood' and 'The Golem.' Pola Negri is marvelous, absolutely. She brings a freshness and a buoyancy

to the screen that no one else I can think of possesses. She ranks with my favorites, Mary Pickford, Nazimova the incomparable, and Elsie Ferguson.

"Why shouldn't we have German films? Competition never hurt any one!"

Then the little girl in her naively added, "Anyway, they aren't sending many over here!"

Norma thinks that talking pictures have as little chance of becoming fixtures in popular favor as have colored pictures or titleless films. And her greatest ambition is to play *Du Barry*. Her conception, she assured me, is altogether different from any one else's. And some day, she promises, she will do it. From now on, you know, she will make only two pictures a year. This decrease in output will demand higher standards than ever. What greater pains could be taken than are being taken now, I cannot conceive: at least fifteen minutes were consumed in getting the electric moonlight to strike the exact angle of the Talmadge shoulder deemed best by the meticulous director, Mr. Franklin. And three different veils were photographed in the tragic scene she was doing while I was there.

When next she returned to me, I had a problem all ready for her.

"You have been a star for some eight years. You have done the same sort of thing dozens of times in eight years. You have staved off the advances of the leering villain, registered terror, exhibited anger—everything in the category. And you are a tremendous favorite. Your every expression is watched by millions.

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A Fan's Adventures in Hollywood

Lila Lee and Theodore Roberts provide many thrills when they take her sight-seeing in Hollywood—and her second meeting with Betty Compson brings the greatest surprise of her career.

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By Ethel Sands

WHEN I look back over all my "Adventures in Movieland" I feel like a sort of Jack-of-all-the-interesting-professions. I've selected gorgeous costumes with Elsie Ferguson, played extra in pictures, and even fluttered around like a social butterfly with Constance Binney and some of the other awfully attractive stars. And now I've had a brand-new thrilling movie adventure that I am going to pass along to you. Theodore Roberts and Lila Lee took

me sight-seeing through Hollywood, showed me all the stars' homes, and told me a lot about the place, and now I'm going to play ballyhoo for you and try to show you Hollywood just as I saw it.

Perhaps first I'd better tell you something about ordinary sight-seeing buses and the men on them who point out the interesting sights and tell you about them. They are called "ballyhoos." I think it is a crazy word, but it isn't half as crazy as some of those men. They are always telling you foolish things

Theodore Roberts is much nicer and more jolly than any part I have ever seen him in in pictures, and he made a wonderful guide.

like: "Here is where the billionaires live; the district is so rich that even the birds have bills, and the people have to go away for a change,"

when what you really want to know is, where does Wally Reid live and where does Charlie Chaplin take his girl friends out to dinner?

The first day I was in Los An-



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"Tell me, aren't you afraid of repeating yourself? Aren't you afraid of using the same gestures over and over, afraid of using the same facial play every time some one dies, for example?"

The Talmadge brow wrinkled in a puzzled frown.

"No, that's no problem," she replied slowly. "When I cry over my lover or shriek at the villain, or argue with my screen husband, I do it as I feel at the moment, without thinking of how I have done it before. If I do it the same way, I don't worry, because I am a believer in the personality idea."

"What is the personality idea?"

"Well, it's the notion that people come to a Chaplin picture to see Charlie do the things he does best. And people come to see me do the things they think I do best. Some folks love to see me shipwrecked on desert isles, consequently I've done pictures with that theme no less than five times since I have been in a position to choose my own stories. I have been saved five times, and I have registered extreme joy at the thought each time. And yet there has been no fear of repetition. The costumes vary each time, just as the settings vary, and my position is, of course, different. What remains is me, and

my personality—my individual method of interpretation. And if I repeat that over and over, all is well, because people come just to see me repeat the sort of situations they have seen me in—and for some strange reason, have enjoyed my work in before. And there you are."

As she stated it, there was no trace of the ego. Rather it seemed a detached discussion of personalities, and Norma Talmadge's in particular. She appreciates her ability and her worth, but there is nothing of the upstage or the aloof in her manner, nothing of the assumed glacial mien affected by so many of our stellar aristocracy.

The mention of Chaplin in her conversation interested me, because to me he is by far the most fascinating figure in the fluttering photos to-day.

"Yes, I love his work," said Norma. "I should like nothing better than to play opposite him in a big drama. He wants to put Art on the screen. I hope he will."

"Will the box office ever team up with Art?" I asked.

"It has in the past," she flashed. "The Birth of a Nation' and the more recent 'Miracle Man' are examples. Was anything ever more artistic than either of those? 'The Miracle Man' made two million dollars for its sponsors, and is still mak-

ing money. Of course," she added practically, "there is always a risk in attempting to make money on an artistic production. I can be reasonably sure that a 'Sign on the Door' sort of play will make a financially big movie, and I'm not taking any chances to speak of when I produce it. But who can be sure that the public will get excited over a faith picture like the Tucker masterpiece?"

"I try to make my stories as artistic as possible, but so far I am too interested in being happy and well and free from worry to take any great chances with Art. I'll take whatever credit you'll give me for doing 'The Passion Flower.' That was no *Pollyanna* story. I think the fans will like 'Smilin' Through.' We're working hard enough to please them! But don't tie me up too definitely with this Art for Art's sake idea. At least not until there's a drop in the notoriously high cost of living!"

After which, if you will not agree with me that Norma is a beauty with brains, I'll vote for De Mille for secretary of the interior.

To meet a supremely attractive personality never works a hardship, but when the possessor of the personality talks, rather than chatters, the duty of transcribing her sentiments and views to the printed page becomes nothing less than a linotypical holiday.

The Eight Most Handsome Men

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fine Greek head and sculptural features, and the passionate chivalry of a don."

Boyish Cullen Landis.

Young America—pep, personality, and a devil-may-care smile—are what Cullen Landis typifies to the fans who elected him to a place of honor among the eight most handsome men on the screen.

"Mr. Landis' youth had much to do with my selection of him," one correspondent writes—and many echo her sentiments—"but isn't healthy, clean youth a beauty in itself?"

Apparently it is to the majority of the fans, for it was what moved many of them to vote Richard Barthelmess and Cullen Landis among the handsomest.

Radiant Richard Dix.

"Oh, please choose handsome Richard Dix," wrote Edith Lee, of Indianapolis, Indiana. "He did wonderful work in 'Dangerous Curve Ahead' and he is young and unmarried." But it wasn't Edith's plea, but votes, that won him a place.

"A clean, exuberant young man," many call him, and, "Although he has

no classic beauty," Lucy Garrison, of Sacramento, California, added, "his genial smile and winning personality are much more than actual beauty of feature."

Companionable Elliott Dexter.

"It is too hard to pick out the handsome actors," according to J. W. Blaine, of Evansville, Indiana, "without falling back on the old saying, 'Handsome is as handsome does.' And with that in mind Elliott Dexter is a sure winner. I think he is the most friendly of all actors."

And Mrs. Leila Haigh agrees with him to the extent of saying, "No matter what his part, Elliott Dexter plays it magnetically. I go to see him rather than the stars who are featured. Here is hoping he is made a star soon."

And, of Course—

But we cannot quote any one's tribute to Eugene O'Brien, for almost all who cast a vote for him said merely, "And, of course, Eugene O'Brien."

Only Ruth J. Warrenly, who wrote from an obscure post office in Nebraska, shed any light on the sub-

ject. "Though I haven't seen any of his pictures for years—only two, in fact, since he stopped playing opposite Norma Talmadge—I still remember him as being awfully good looking. But every one tells me that his present vehicles are so bad—and the same applies to Antonio Moreno—that I never go to see them."

Looking Ahead.

These are the handsome favorites of to-day—of to-morrow one cannot be sure. There may come other satellites whose rise will be as rapid as that of Rudolph Valentino or the less-sensational Richard Dix. But in the list are many favorites who have reigned long, and it is safe to assume they will not readily be supplanted. Thomas Meighan has been a favorite even since the days when he played opposite Billie Burke, and Wally Reid began to be adored long ago when as the fighting blacksmith in "The Birth of a Nation" he vanquished all comers. But one never can tell. To-day's child wonder may be to-morrow's hero. Wesley Barry may be the handsome film favorite of the future!

Smilin Through

Moonlit gardens drenched in jasmine, where hoop-skirted maidens rustle to and fro amid the gayeties of an old-fashioned wedding, form a background of breathtaking beauty for Norma Talmadge in her latest production. As *Moonyeen* she is the heroine of one of the sweetest and most tragic love stories ever told.



Photo by Abbe

After *Moonyeen's* death, her niece *Kathleen*, becomes the center of interest. This part is also played by Norma Talmadge. Like her aunt, *Kathleen* loves deeply, but circumstances are more kind to her, and she is united to her lover at last. It is a story fraught with youth and beauty and love.