

The 5¢ Theater and the Moving Picture Drama

Cheap, and even humble, as many of the moving picture shows may be, they represent a growth hardly paralleled in the history of amusement in this country. Within the last five years their glaring signs, strident music and brightly-lighted portals have been multiplied by thousands with a rapidity almost magical. In the larger cities they are numbered by hundreds. Few towns of any size or country fairs lack one or more of them. Flourishing on the thin purses which came with the recent financial depression, they affected the theatrical business so seriously that some types of sensational melodramas have been almost driven from the field. Yet these facts hardly give a hint of the scope of the subject—the millions of dollars invested in such shows, the outlays for machines, films and theaters, the streams of nickels and dimes which flow into the box offices of such resorts, every week, the growth of a wonderful scientific invention and the ingenuity displayed by a dozen manufacturers of films in supplying novelties.

Cost of Running This Amusement.

Twelve millions of dollars invested in moving picture shows in Greater New York alone was an estimate made by an expert in the business, to a writer for the Philadelphia Ledger. There are in round numbers 500 "store shows" in the city, besides twenty regular theaters devoted to the exhibition of moving pictures. An average investment of \$4,000 for each "store show" was considered conservative. The cheapest of them cost \$500, the more pretentious \$25,000. Outside of New York City there were 6,000 of these picture shows when the last count was made, about a year ago. This year, one expert said, the number is nearer 15,000 than 10,000.

"You can't gain an idea of the growth of the business," he remarked, "unless you travel from city to city and see these show places. Chicago has nearly 350 and Philadelphia about 200. It is safe to say that there is hardly a town east of the Rocky mountains of 2,000 population or more that has not a moving picture show. In many cities of from 75,000 to 100,000 population you find surprisingly elaborate theaters of the sort costing \$50,000 or upward. If the average investment of \$4,000 each is placed on 10,000 theaters in the country, the investment would be \$40,000,000."

The films made in America every year for the picture shows are worth at least \$102,000. The manufacture of the films is practically controlled by nine concerns. Eight of these are licensed under the Edison patents; the ninth has just formed a combination with a company representing some of the foreign manufacturers. With an output of twelve films a week by the licensed concern and a total output of two American and three imported every week by the new combination, there are at least seventeen films put on the market every seven days.

The moving picture show usually consists of four illustrated songs. In the large theaters the films are withdrawn and new subjects substituted every day. The films are lent to the proprietors of the shows at so much a week. The moving picture machines now in use, with their lenses, powerful lights and reels, are worth \$2,000,000.

A well-equipped picture exhibition requires the services of ten persons. By this is meant the working force of a "story show," not a theater. The list includes a piano-player, a drummer, a man at the lantern and his assistant, and two ushers only. Their wages average about \$200 a week. With 10,000 such shows, the pay rolls would be \$2,000,000 for a force of 100,000 persons.

Into the box offices of these moving picture shows at least \$3,000,000 is passed in dimes and nickels every week by American pleasure-seekers. The average city "store show" takes in \$300 a week, the proprietors counting on an audience of 200 persons at each performance. In the theaters devoted to moving picture shows receipts of \$3,000 a week are considered good business. The latter class are excluded from the \$3,000,000 estimate, the sum being based on 10,000 "store shows" at \$300 each.

With one-half of the \$3,000,000 receipts representing nickel admissions and one-half tickets costing a dime, the receipts would indicate that 45,000,000 persons visited these shows every week, or nearly every other person in the United States.

How the Pictures Are Manufactured.

Some idea of what it means to make a moving picture was gained from a visit to one of the largest studios. Here the stage, the dressing and property rooms are as elaborate as those of a well-equipped theater.

The points of difference from the theatrical stage are, however, striking, owing to the limitations of photography. All of the scenery—a different set for each series of pictures—is painted in black, white and gray, to make the films clear-cut. The stage, sixty feet wide and forty feet deep,

has a roof and walls of glass, with screens of white cloth to soften the daylight. Forty stage calcutums, or arc lamps with a special violet ray, focused on a narrow area, supplement the daylight and make night photography possible. In this light the "actors" wear the usual stage make-up of powder and grease paint.

The stage is in movable sections. Under it is a tank of water sixty feet long and forty feet wide for aquatic scenes and climaxes, or series of films have a ducking. In another wing of the building are the testing and developing apparatus, the latter including porcelain tanks and reels, each made to receive films 250 feet long.

"Where do the people who appear in the pictures come from?" The question was asked of one of the stage managers of the studio. "Most of the principals are trained actors," he replied. "There are always enough of them idle in the city who are willing to earn from \$5 to \$10 by rehearsing a few days, then going through the pantomime seen in the pictures."

The presence of the tanks suggested the question of how often exterior scenes were built for the studio. They are arranged there sometimes, was the reply, but not frequently. The studio is used chiefly for interior scenes. The exterior settings are almost invariably the streets, parks, woods or hills of the city and suburbs.

A popular series of pictures called "A Thief Chase" was posed in Bronx Park, New York. A deserted suburban mansion served as a background for

POSING THE ACTORS IN A MILITARY DRAMA.



A Typical Scene in the Studio

"A Fire in a Boarding School." In "The Great Train Robbery," another popular series of pictures, the scenes showing a dance hall, a telegraph office and the interior of a baggage car were made in the studio. The train scenes were photographed near Paterson, N. J. A special passenger train was hired for the occasion, and 100 theatrical supers were rehearsed to act as passengers, train crew and bandits.

Most of the moving pictures showing what were announced as scenes in the recent Cuban war were made in the Orange mountains. One set, depicting the landing of some of the American troops, is said to have been made in Cuba. The rest were carefully rehearsed with professional supers. "Curiously," said one of the stage managers, "the most difficult scenes of all to make are those in city streets. When we go into the country to make films we post a circle of pickets to keep people away from our scene. But in the city the appearance of a camera means the gathering of a crowd. It is next to impossible to keep the people out of range."

The old saw that things are seldom what they seem is nowhere more

HOW CHICAGO CARES FOR ITS UNEMPLOYED

There are approximately 120,000 unemployed workers in Chicago. How are they and their families to be cared through the winter? This question stares the city and county officials and the relief and charitable organizations in the face. Nobody can give exact figures as to the number of unemployed. The experts, however, give this rough estimate and classification: Teamsters, 6,000; restaurant workers, 12,000; woodworkers, 8,000; ironworkers, 7,000; building trades, 25,000; stationary engineers and firemen, 3,000; unskilled labor, 50,000 to 60,000. This gives a total of from 111,000 to 121,000. These figures, of course, tell only a part of the story, since at least 50,000 of the unemployed, according to the experts, have families. Bad as the situation is under ordinary circumstances it could be much worse, says the Inter Ocean.

With the approach of winter there is annually an influx of floating population to Chicago, because of the ease with which lodging and food can be obtained through relief organizations. This year, however, measures were taken to minimize this influx. The police have attempted to keep away the vagrant element. Word has been sent broadcast to the workers who usually flock to Chicago in the winter to keep away, as there is no work for them. Moreover, with the approach of winter and the practical certainty that there would be no employment for them, thousands of foreigners left the city and went home to Europe, to stay at least until times become better. These foreigners are thought to number at least 50,000, and their absence relieves the situation materially. The county agent, the Salvation Army, the Associated Charities and the various employment agencies all agree that there are more unemployed workingmen in Chicago now than there has been in many years past.

The big relief organizations of Cook County, the county in which Chicago is located, are taking care of a large number of the unemployed and needy. The county agent maintains a large store, where modities for the relief of families are kept. The cases to ascertain whether or not applicants are worthy, but not many questions are asked of first applicants if there appears to be a need of immediate relief. In extreme cases the county will send prov

general rule beneficiaries are expected to appear in person. The monthly double ration which is issued here to families having more than three children consists of two bars of soap, six pounds of rice, five pounds of beans, five pounds of rolled oats, two pounds of coffee, one pound of tea, two bags of flour and five pounds of corn meal. Coal is also furnished if needed. In the case of repeated applications extreme care is taken to see that the cases are worthy of assistance.

The biggest central bureau outside of the county agent's office is the Bureau of Charities. This is the biggest central bureau of the city, and it conducts the most extensive work of private charity in the homes of the poor in Chicago. Besides this organization are the Chicago Relief and Aid Society, the United Hebrew Charities and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The Salvation Army and the Volunteers of America do a vast work in supplementing the work of the big organizations. Both have their headquarters, their storehouses and their branches, through which relief is afforded the

homeless wanderers are always taken care of in the police stations of the city at night or supplied with tickets for the municipal lodging house, which has now been in existence for several years and has been found to be practical in its workings.

SHOWS WHICH HAVE REVOLUTIONIZED THE AMUSEMENT BUSINESS.



AUTOMOBILES AND HORSES.

The fight of the horse car men against the trolley car is remembered by all. The claim was then made that 2,000,000 horses would be thrown out of work and that horse breeders would starve. The trolley is well-nigh universal, and yet more horses are raised each year than the year before and they bring better prices.

The horse interests have ever fought the automobile. There have been thousands of columns of argument published against it and short-sighted men have advocated such heavy taxation against it that a great and ever-growing industry would have been sadly hampered had half the unwise legislation planned been put into execution.

Now highway experts, aided by the motor car interests and a powerful association of London and its suburbs, have turned like the trodden worm and started an attack on the horse, the United States director of office of public roads says.

The claim they advance is that the polluting of all public thoroughfares is done not by automobiles, but by horses; that if no horses were allowed to drop organic matter on public thoroughfares the dust nuisance would soon be fought but an unpleasant memory. They advance the logical statement that the nuisance created by hundreds of thousands of horses is detrimental to public health and a menace to the pavements and they charge that the continual cleansing of the streets because of this traffic imposes a vast and unjust tax upon the citizens.

TO SHOW HIS GRATITUDE.

When Hannah Perry was dying, Gould, the good-for-nothing old fellow who had been practically supported by her charity for years, and who had shirked even the slight "jobs" which she had given him, underwent a curious change. He hovered about the kitchen door and "asking the woman that Hannah's sister had to cook during the illness, how 'she' was. For some reason he never called her by name.

"He came round the first day it got noisy about that Hannah was ailing," said the sister to a caller after the funeral, "and wanted to know what he could do. Of course I didn't know him from Adam, not having visited here since father died. I told him Nothing kind of sharp, I guess, and he went off looking shame-faced."

"The next day he came round again, and wanted to know if he could chop some kindlings. I had found out who he was, but there wasn't any wood to be split, so I told him 'no' again, and he disappeared. I never laid eyes on him till the day before she died. What do you suppose he had been doing—that shiftless old fellow? Why, he'd been building a chicken coop for her!"

"A chicken coop!" echoed her listener. "Of all things!"

"Yes, Mrs. Douglass, that's what it was. Not a particularly good one, either. I said to him, 'What is this for?'

"He said, 'It's for her,' and jerked his thumb up at the window."

"Then he looked so sheepish that I told him to set it next the shed and come into the kitchen. Hannah gave up keeping hens ten years ago and a woman on her deathbed, and got money saved up the way she has, isn't going to start in any poultry business. Of course I didn't say as much to him, because it was just plain grief that made him go to work and do it."

"What did you do?"

"Oh, I gave him some pie, and told him that it was a nice coop, but I didn't think that Hannah'd ever use it, and sent him off. Poor old fellow! I guess it was the first piece of hard labor he'd done for many a day."

"Or will do."

"Yes, but he's old, and this shows that his heart is good."

"I wonder," mused the other, "if I can't find some things for him to pester round-about, now that Hannah's gone. I'll ask Henry."

A Man's Tacit.

Nobody but Mr. Henley would have asked such a question, in the first place.

"Miss Fairley," he said, "if you could make yourself over, what kind of hair and eyes would you have?"

"If I could make myself over," said Miss Fairley, "I would look just exactly as I do now."

"You would?" exclaimed Henley, in honest surprise, and to this day he can't understand why Miss Fairley thinks him a man of little taste and less tact.

A Friend in Need.

"Loan me a dollar, old man," said the actor. "I'm hungry."

"I broke myself," responded the stage manager, "but I'll put you on in the bill to-night. We have an eating scene."

"Man, I'll starve before night."

"In that case I'll call a rehearsal."

—St. Louis Republic.

Natural.

Uncle Si (to the leap-for-life performer)—Hau'd you come to git into this business?

The Artist—Why, the idea struck me while employed as a book agent—Puck.

Quite Refined.

Mrs. Callier—Are your new neighbors refined? Mrs. Nextdoor—I should say so! They never borrow anything but our silver and cut glass.—Chicago News.



BLOWN UP BY DYNAMITE.

Homesteader Sits on Box of Explosives and Sets Off Fuse.

Claus Carlson, a homesteader, 28 years old, living in Itasca, Minn., committed suicide by sitting on a box of dynamite and setting it off in a tent back of his house, where a lumberman's outfit was kept. Fellow workmen heard him say as he was setting the dynamite off: "Run for your lives, I am going up." The camp was badly shattered and the men inside barely escaped. The body was blown fifty feet and badly mangled.



MRS. MARY ELLEN LEASE.

of the boundless prairies of the West, or the "nation's great undeveloped wealth."

"Oh, I've toned down in my old age," she told a reporter after the lecture, "but I feel as strongly on reform issues as I did years ago. This, however, is a conservative age, and I find that it is not best to be too radical. Then, too, it would not be proper to discuss such things in a schoolroom."