Striking Romance of Rise and Fall of an American Family—and Its Comeback

THE HOUSE OF MOHUN

By GEORGE GIBBS

Author of "Youth Triumphant" and Other Successes

Are Flappers as Bad as They're Painted? Are Jazz-Boys All Limbs of Satan?

WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY

CHERRY MOHUN, up-to-date girl, rich and charming, at once irritated and attracted by

DAVID SANGREE, young American ethnologist and war veteran, amazed by changes in manners and customs brought out by the war, but interested in Cherry. His modest funds are invested with her father.

JIM MOHUN, a self-made financial leader. Too busy to think of his children he leaves them to

MRS. MOHUN, who has successfully cultivated the social side of life.

BRUCE COWAN, a motorcar salesman, of cave-man type, of whom Cherry imagines she is enamored.

BOB MOHUN, son, is a typically reckless youngster.

GEORGE LYCETT, elderly chorus, philosophizing as the story develops.

JOHN CHICHESTER, whom Mrs. Mohun would like to call son-in-law.

"Your mother," he said softly, "has been trying to make you marry John Chichester to save our fortunes"

Steering a Straight Course

SHE was brave. He had always had a sense of a fine quality of nobility beneath her heedlessness. Strength, too and character. For she had steered a straight course, untouched by the signs of weakness that were all about her. But how much strength had she? How much courage? Had she enough to conquer the tendencies to which she had been bred? It seemed to him that she would need it all. She had made a brave decision, impressive in the certainty of her inspiration, but he was sure that it was to be put to the trial. Already she had heard the rasp of bitter tongues, felt the gnaw of a heavy heart, known the pain of lonely silences, but these were only the beginning of her venture. There would be some trying moments—some dangerous ones. How was she equipped to meet the bitterness of a world which had shown only a smiling face? He saw her radiance already dimmed, her color stained with weariness, her warmth chilled by the cold touch of materialism And yet—was it not possible that out of the struggle which was to come something more splendid than the radiant Cherry might emerge—a creature sentient to the real meanings of life, a woman of full stature, her imperfections burnt off in the fires of life, her character incorruptible in disappointment and pain? The flower-like beauty of her face which had first attracted him seemed less significant now. It was of other beauties that he was thinking, the scarcely revealed inner beauties of her spirit which had emerged into the light at the first need.

He could not reproach himself for the counsel that he had given her. God knows he had no hope of benefiting by it. He needed no salve to his conscience in having advised her against the thought of this preposterous marriage, born out of the enormities of modern social dogma, which traced their origin back to the jungle where the value of women was reckoned in cattle. There was higher value here—not to be computed in the conventional way. Alicia Mohun did not know this Cherry that Sangree knew—had never known her—nor was John Chichester, with all his knowledge of the characteristics of women of another sort, capable of passing judgement upon her.

Sangree smiled grimly as he thought of John Chichester. Ten thousand dollars! How many head of cattle did that amount represent according to the appraisal of the jungle north of Forty-second street? A shrewd device of Mrs. Mohun's, but paltry, unworthy, and not quite human. Chichester wanted Cherry—but he should not have her. No, by God!—anybody but him—even Bruce Cowan—but not John Chichester!

Pacing furiously on his way home, Dr. Sangree was in a savage mood when he reached his dwelling place. The night man at the elevator was nodding over a newspaper when Sangree entered, but he rose with an air of sudden awakening to his responsibilities, which, it seemed, had been definitely challenged.

"I don't like to speak about it, sir," he said with a solemn air as he seized the hoisting apparatus of the lift, "but you must know the rule about women here at night."

Sangree boiled within, but he governed his tongue.

"Well?" he asked.

"That young woman in your apartment, sir," said the man coolly. "I don't want to report it, but you see I'm here to keep the rules. It won't do to let it pass."

A swift movement in which to decide whether to knock the man down or to hand him a bank note. Sangree resisted the first impulse, which would have precipitated the car into the basement or sent it through the roof.

"She was my sister," he lied calmly. "She didn't know the rule. She won't come again."

"Oh, I see, sir. But of course I have to do my duty—"

The elevator stopped and Sangree drew a bill from his pocketbook.

"All right. Just forget it," he growled.

"Oh, all right, sir. But you understand—?"

"Yes, I do. Good night," he snapped and went down the hallway. Damn the man! He was too civil by half and his solemn air didn't conceal his insulting metropolitan omniscience.

Sangree turned the key and opened the door. The room was redolent of her moments of penance and his own asceticism. The comedy in the elevator seemed a cruel piece of buffoonery. He had lied to the night man and paid for the privilege of the lie. Convention again—which made a falsehood of the most irreproachable acts of existence! In his moment of doubt Sangree had said that Cherry was his sister. And yet after all was not that the truth?

The Head of the Family

During that month Sangree saw little of Cherry, but her calls upon the telephone reassured him as to the quality of her courage and without comment she reported the success of the undertaking. He put together, from the fragments of conversation, the scene at the dinner table of the members of the Mohun family when Cherry had exploded her practical petard into the midst of their hopeful hallucinations. To them it must have had something of the nature of an infernal machine. He did not hear until afterward what part Jim Mohun himself had played in the plan or what were its reactions upon mother and brother, for, as Sangree knew, Cherry was already ashamed of her mother's weakness and her brother's inelegancy and meant, if it were possible, that no one should know of her difficulties in convincing them that there was nothing else to be done. Upon Bob's part he imagined long-winded arguments re-enforced by vague hopes and vaguer promises; upon Alicia's tears, recriminations and, perhaps, hysterics.

In the Olympian Club he heard of the advertisements of the sale of the contents of both houses at auction.

At the club also he saw John Chichester, but that gentleman now passed him by with sober air and a mere nod of recognition. From Genie Armitage he learned of the sale of Alicia Mohun's pearls over the counter of Tiffany's for a considerable sum, which possibly explained John Chichester's air of preoccupation. "Dom John" was not a person who cared to admit a failure in anything, though the end of his hopes with regard to Cherry must have been revealed to him very soon after Cherry's visit to Sangree's rooms. His manner puzzled Sangree, though it did not annoy him. He imagined, at first, that Alicia Mohun had told John Chichester of the nature of Cherry's curious friendship for Sangree, but that did not seem to explain John Chichester's air of restraint, which was evident when they were in the same room—an air which had some of the milder qualities of reprobation.

At first he had been inclined to think this one of the needs of his own financial misfortune, for Chichester was sufficiently worldly to appraise his associates by an assessment of their financial value in the social scheme. But later Sangree revised this opinion, and it seemed to him that her mother would have been the last person to whom Cherry would have confided the secret of her visit to his rooms or the nature of the conversation which had been its object. But he knew as well as though Cherry had told him that John Chichester had definitely been given his dismissal and he suspected that the sale of Mrs. Mohun's pearls had provided the opportunity for a rather satisfactory conclusion to that affair.

John Chichester's friendship had been unimportant to Sangree, his confidences unsought, and it made no possible difference to him that the older man had decided not to continue his amiable advances, but his snubs were so pointed now that Sangree could not resist the impression that some influence of which he was unaware was behind this rather mystifying change of demeanor.

But, whatever its cause, Sangree regarded it with the good-natured tolerance of one who has little to lose. If never before, John Chichester now belonged to a phase of life which Sangree relinquished with little regret. His dues at the Olympian were paid until the end of the year and, since he could no longer afford the luxuries, his resignation would take effect at that time, when he would adapt himself to the situation now demanded by his slender means.

Social Exile

Sangree had taken his new point of view with singular calm. Those of his new acquaintances who chose to follow him into social exile could do so if they liked, but he cherished few hopes of them. His position was quite different from that of Cherry, who must, if he knew the world, begin very soon to feel the stings of benefits forgot. He knew that she was to suffer acutely, if she had not already done so, in her alienation from those who had once been her intimates. But it now appeared that, once having come to a decision, Cherry had performed her duty to herself and her family with a precision and dispatch which counted not upon the opinion of the world.

But her plans, as he later discovered, had been made less difficult of accomplishment by strength from an unexpected source, which came to her with all the gentleness of aid from Heaven itself. After the talk with her mother which had resulted in a renewal of their quarrel, it seemed scarcely possible for her to fight her battle alone; but, having made her decision, she did not recant, though she saw nothing short of violence as an alternative to yielding to her mother's insistent threats and tears. It had been a dreadful morning and she sat in her father's room thinking of the last disturbing interview that she had with her mother. James Mohun was upright near her in his Morris chair, where he now spent most of the day in the sunlight by the window overlooking the street. She thought that he was dozing, but some impulse made her turn to look at him. His gaze was fixed on her—a calm, untroubled look—"like that of a child which has just awakened," as she expressed it. He almost seemed like somebody that she didn't know, or rather like the father she scarcely remembered in the past, when she was a child, before the family came to New York; when they had lived in the old house at Leiperville; for there used to be time then for Jim Mohun to romp with Bob and Cherry in the evenings before bedtime. It was the look that he had in his eyes when he tucked Cherry into bed. She couldn't understand at first. She had become so accustomed to the shadows of worry that had come when they had moved to New York. Now it seemed as though the illness which had struck him had suddenly gone, taking with it all the pain which had been its cause, leaving his mind and body quite placid and undisturbed. His speech, too, was distinct, clearer than it had been since before the stroke. It almost seemed as though for some purposes of his own, until that moment, he might have been dissimulating.

"Now, Cherry," he said to her gently, "tell me."

And then, as she protested, he went on very calmly: "Tell me exactly. I know a great deal. I have heard. I haven't slept always and the doors have not always been closed." He smiled at her again, but he seemed to know exactly what he was about, and when she tried to evade him he cornered her.

"Your mother," he said softly, with a glance at the door, "has been trying to make you marry John Chichester to save our fortunes. I know that. You don't want to marry him and you've refused. I know that too. I'm glad." He leaned forward and patted her shoulder. "I was afraid that you might agree on my account—but I'm glad that you wouldn't!"

She caught his hand in hers and kissed it, because he had made her very happy.

"Everything's Been All Wrong"

"Everything's been all wrong with us," he went on calmly. "You see, I've been putting the cart before the horse—all these years. I was trying for something for all of us that we could have had all the time without trying—happiness.

"It was at home—it ought to have been at home." He paused and frowned. "Cherry dear, I don't think I wanted the money for myself so much as for us all—for what it would give you that you wanted. But no matter how much I made we always seemed to need more—"

"Oh, Daddy—don't!" she whispered painfully.

"Oh, I'm just telling you this because I'm glad you haven't made the same mistake that I did. You can't buy happiness that way. And it would have been worse for you, living with a man you couldn't love—"

He seemed to feel by the touch of Cherry's hand how happy he was making her.

"Sometimes I wished to God I'd never left Leiperville. We were happy there, Cherry, and we didn't have any too much money. But she didn't understand—Muzzy didn't. And she never could have been contented back there again with the cast-iron deer on the lawn." He laughed quietly. "You remember those deer, Cherry? Always standing—waiting, listening, watching, when I came up from the station. I liked 'em. They were home. I wonder if they're still there."

Cherry had never known that things like that could mean so much to him. She murmured something and he went on in a moment. "I'm counting on you, Cherry. I've always felt that I could count on you in a pinch. The pinch has come. Even the house at Leiperville will be sold. We're completely ruined. There's nothing at all, of course, but the furniture and your mother's jewels."

He made the statement passively, almost with the air of one who remarks upon the misfortune of another. It seemed to Cherry that if he was without passion he was also without regret—as though his air of abstraction was a part of his illness in which the world had forgotten him and he the world.

"Of course, my dear," he went on calmly, "we will have to change our whole mode of life."

"Yes, Daddy. I've planned that." And she told him of David Sangree's offer of the house in One Hundred and Eighty-second street.

He listened soberly, nodding his head in approval.

"That is good," he said, repeating the word—"good, very good—" And then, with another glance at the door, "And your mother?"

Cherry moved her shoulders helplessly.

"She still hopes for something out of the wreck. So does Bob. But they'll agree. They must."

He nodded his head sagely.

"Yes, they will agree," he repeated. "They must."

Cherry glanced at him in disquietude. His tone was so unlike the one that she had known—so gentle—so colorless. For a moment the thought came to her that his mind might have been enfeebled by his illness, but the look in his eyes reassured her. Their gaze was keen, untroubled, almost judicial in its calm. He seemed to be seeing all things with a clearness which came from some new inner vision that had been granted him during the period of his unconsciousness.

Greatly reassured, and responding to his questions, Cherry began telling him what she planned to do—the sale of the furniture—even her mother's pearls—if necessary. He nodded slowly, but definitely. Yes, even that, he agreed. When she had finished he was silent for a long while, looking out of the window, and Cherry thought that she had talked too much.

But as she moved in her chair, he spoke again, very quietly.

"Will you please tell your mother to come to me here, Cherry dear?" he asked.

She started up, dismayed. "Do you think you'd better, Daddy?"

"Yes, my dear—if you please," he said firmly, "and at once."

He was still looking out of the window. She felt that his words were a command such as he had never issued before. And, as she still hesitated, his voice was more calm but more insistent.

"You will do what I ask, Cherry—if you please."

What happened in that room after her mother had entered it, no one but husband and wife were to know. Alicia Mohun, pale but dry-eyed came out and moved like a sleepwalker down the corridor to her room, where she remained alone for the remainder of the day. Later Cherry stole silently into her father's room. He was still in his chair by the window. He was quite motionless and his eyes were closed, so, for fear of disturbing him, she went out and up to her own room, wondering at the miracle that had been accomplished so quietly.

She Did Not Call on David

Though David Sangree had placed himself at Cherry's disposal for any task that she did not care to accomplish herself, she did not call upon him. Perhaps she took pride in being able to attend to the details of reorganization herself—or, perhaps, she did not wish to intrude upon his busy hours unnecessarily. He had a feeling that when she really needed him she would let him know. But just the same he couldn't conceal an anxiety on her behalf. He had never been able to forget that, in spite of her air of self-sufficiency, she had not been trained to responsibility such as this.

When he met her at the house in One Hundred and Eighty-second street to make the final arrangements before the Mohun family moved in, she seemed to be in a state of nervous repression, intensely alert mentally, with a cheerfulness which was a little too determined to be quite natural. He thought her thinner, her motions more abrupt, her short laugh more frequent, her comments more frankly ironical. She gave him the impression of one riding at high speed along unfamiliar roads, somewhat miraculously passing all hazards without a mishap. But it was obvious that her experiences, if they had concentrated the forces of her character to the definite focus of her will, had already taken from her some of the graces of exuberance which had been among her careless charms. And while her manner vaguely disturbed him, he asked her no questions as to her difficulties, preferring to wait until she chose to mention them, if at all, of her own will.

The thought that constantly recurred to him was that she had accomplished too much. It was not her health but her peace of mind—of which it seemed somehow to be the expression—that caused him inquietude. He could not believe that this nervous obsession of duty—for it seemed nothing less—could be permanent. The spring was coiled too tightly. The pendulum had gone beyond its leisurely arc and, obeying a natural law, must some time swing far in the opposite direction.

After she had gone over the house, making suggestions as to changes of furniture to suit the needs of the family, she dropped wearily into a chair in the room which had been selected for her father and took out her cigarette case. The moment for confidences had come.

"I want to talk to you, Rameses," she said, "I haven't had a chance before. It seems as though I have been driven from one unpleasant duty to another with no time to think for myself."

"It has been a terrible responsibility," said Sangree with feeling. "I've thought of you often."

"I'm glad you have," she said. "You know—" and she laughed—"I've felt as though some devil were chasing me—that I'd have to keep going—to prevent him from catching up. I must keep going. I need a skid to my wheel—that's certain."

Sangree frowned. "You need a rest," he said severely.

"No," she went on quickly, "I don't think I want a rest. I'll do something damned silly if I sit down and think. I think I've had a little too much—all at once—that's all. It's gotten me twisted somehow. I can't quite find the reason for it. The whole thing is like a death in the family with any funeral to go to. I could understand that. You could grieve, go in mourning, and have it over with, but there isn't any end to trouble of this kind. It just goes on and on, without any end in sight. I've had bitter moments, unhappy ones, but none of them is so bad as the indifferent ones, when I don't care what happens."

"That's rubbish," he broke in.

"Thanks. I know it. And I wanted you to tell me so. It's comforting somehow. You see, Rameses," she finished with a grin, "it's you who have been the skid to my wheel."

"Oh, have I?"

"Yes. But I need an emergency brake or something. I'm in a funny mood. I guess I've always had my own way too much. I never had to think about anybody but myself. This thinking for others isn't my line at all. It was a kind of adventure at first. I liked them all relying on me. I liked making the beds—at first. It was a sort of game, being useful—a sort of a novelty. But I don't mind telling you that I'm rather tired—it all."

She took a few puffs of her cigarette but Sangree didn't reply, though he was watching her keenly.

"Why shouldn't I tell the truth to you? I miss the machines, my runabout especially. I miss the crowd too. They used to come running after me—Gloria, Vi, Sylvia, Phoebe—phoning every day. Now, nobody does—except 'Genie. I've been busy when they called. God knows I can't blame them! I haven't been much fun when I have seen them. I don't suppose they see any reason why they should get down on their luck just because I am. I wouldn't either if I were they. The boys have been all right—but somehow I haven't felt much like seeing the boys. And nobody likes to be hearing hard-luck stories all the time. And so, of course, things are going on with them in the same old way—parties, jazz, joyrides. It hurts me a little that they can jog on without me—don't you see?"

"But you could go out now, if you wanted to. Why don't you? It would do you good—"

"No. Things are changed somehow. Don't you suppose I feel it?" she broke in quickly. "To go with that crowd, you've got to go with them all the time. And besides, the invitations for the real things have stopped coming—even to Muzzy. She feels the slight horribly. She would, you know. It's just as though we were all already dead and buried. And I guess we are, so far as ever going about again is concerned. Oh, I don't care about the invitations. It's the neglect of one's friends that hurts the most—and then the careless nods of acquaintances." She laughed bitterly. "H—m! Yesterday I passed the little Carruthers snip on the street—you know—the 'profiteer Carruthers'—and she cut me. Imagine it!"

"Is her acquaintance valuable to you?"

"No. But I've always been nice to her, Rameses," she said, rather pathetically.

To be continued Monday

Uncommon Sense : What Is Fame?

By JOHN BLAKE

PUBLICITY is easily acquired, if one doesn't care what kind of publicity he gets.

Whistler once said that a man who desires to be widely known in London need only to remove his shoes at a reception now and then.

Soon he would be known over the world of fashion as the man who removed his shoes.

A baseball player in America or a cricketer in England who appeared at an important game wearing flowing side whiskers would soon be talked of in every country in the world.

Not long ago a young man who wanted to be famous walked up Fifth avenue in New York every afternoon wearing only a white shirt, trousers, shoes and stockings.

People viewed him curiously for a day or two, and then forgot him.

Side whiskers, which used to be so common as to occasion no surprise, would have gained him more celebrity.

THE desire for public notice is so general as to be pathetic.

Those who have no hope to gain it to do outlandish things in order to attract attention seek by cultivating the acquaintance of important people to get a little second-hand celebrity.

Movie actors, politicians, even famous criminals, have followings of people who think that reflected glory or infamy is better than none.

Reputation of the right kind is much to be desired. But it must be earned honestly to be worth anything.

If it is only a reputation for honesty or fair dealing it is better than the kind of fame the human fly gains by standing on his head on the cornice of a skyscraper.

TO BE famous without being fantastic requires a combination of talent and industry which is rare—otherwise it would bring no fame.

But such is the level of general laziness that any one can gratify a normal desire to shine a little, simply by doing his work a little better than the next man, and being a little more earnest about getting ahead in the world.

The kind of fame conferred by side whiskers on an athlete soon grows as inconvenient as the whiskers themselves.

The Daily Movie Magazine

AN INTERESTING BIT OF REALISM

When you see this magnificent ballroom in Gloria Swanson's new picture, "My American Wife," you might like to know that it is a replica of the President's mansion in Buenos Aires. If the camera had been tilted a bit higher you could have seen the ropes and lights and all of the paraphernalia incident to the making of this scene, which was built in the Lasky studio

THE MOVIE FAN'S LETTERBOX

By HENRY M. NEELY

M. E. L. writes: "Of all the disappointments I've ever had 'The Young Rajah' was about the worst. The whole thing spelled CHEAP with capital letters—and that impossible Wanda Hawley! Poor Rudy! If nothing else it serves as good evidence to show what the producers were trying to do with him. They seemed to think that any thing would do so long as his name was tagged to it.

"Yes; they are right to some extent. In the promenade, I heard such remarks as these: 'Wasn't he adorable?' 'The best I've seen yet!' 'Better than the book,' etc. (because he doesn't die I supposed, and yes, the flappers were rejoicing because his hair wasn't combed funny.

"Well, I was glad some could enjoy it, I couldn't; I simply felt like crying, that's all. After seeing 'Blood and Sand' I was looking forward to something if not as good at least pretty near it and—lo, behold! I sat there as limp as a rag, having visions, too, of Rodolph being slowly led to slaughter. Such material to such a personality! Of course, they figured, while they had him why not make as many pictures as possible with the least expense and delay, rush him through; the won't be any good after we're through with him.

"I certainly am glad he escaped them and I do hope he will win with all my heart for Rudy, so much so that I wouldn't miss a picture of his if I had to crawl on all fours to get there."

* * *

A Prejudiced Gentleman writes: "The exquisite daintiness of the fairy tale prelude to that recent atrocity, 'Singed Wings,' gives me new hope that some day, in the not too distant future, a producer will commission one of our artist-directors to film an unadulterated fairy story. There is no doubt that that step will mark the beginning of an era of finer things for the screen. (How like Merton that sounds.)

"But seriously, the subject is receiving no small amount of thought by more than one famous director. In a recent address at Temple University, Herbert Brenon confessed that the supreme ambition of his career was to film some of the fantasies of Grimm and Andersen.

"And why not? Of course the thing is a gamble on the face of it, but would not the perennial bit of Peter Pan in all of us be awakened to such a degree that a commercial success would result? I am almost afraid to hope for it, but here is my choice for the staff of artists whose united efforts would create a wonderful fairy story:

"Penrhyn Stanlaws and Herbert Brenon, directors.

"Ferdinand Pinney Earle and Warren A. Newcombe, art directors.

"William Bitzer and Lejarena Hiller, photographers.

"Possibly a case of too many cooks, but wouldn't we have a lot of fun waiting for it?"

* * *

(You couldn't have made a better choice of personnel. And I believe that such stories, done by such men, and sincerely treated or else let alone by the producing executives, would be tremendous popular successes. Speed the day!)

* * *

June Weston writes: "Regarding Mr. Hines' letter I don't see where girls are nutty for being Rody Valentino admirers. I am one and I think he is one of the best ever put on the screen.

"Mr. Hines wrote something about one of Rody V's pictures being 'Mud and Sand.' I am most sure that was called 'Blood and Sand' and as for 'Beyond the Rocky Mountains' that one was called 'Beyond the Rocks' and really I don't think Spain throws bulls, but they have quite a lot of bull fights.

"I think it is a shame to let jealousy ruin a person's character. I really do think they had a grudge against Rody when they made him die in most of his pictures."

* * *

R. D. H. writes: "You want to know the fans' opinions of 'Nero.' Well, I for one, think that it was a very good picture. The scenery was splendid and the acting was great.

"The two best actors in it, I think, were Salvini and the fellow who played Nero. I cannot recall his name.

"Salvini is a good, sincere actor and has great ability. Really, he ranks high in my opinion. Nero also did some excellent acting. I did not think much of the actresses.

"Are you ready to give us your opinion of 'The Young Rajah' yet. If you meant that for the worst picture you ever saw, I must say you and I differ greatly in our opinions.

"As for Valentino's acting, he acted the dark, mysterious Indian prince very well. In fact, I think his next best after 'Blood and Sand.' Of course, the story was unreal and very fantastical and you could never sit back and say, 'I believe it,' but neither could you say that to the 'Lotus Eater' nor to 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.' Still you didn't think they were so bad, did you?

"Well, let me tell you, I for one would never support any one who was trying to dish (excuse expression), some one else out of his hard-earned popularity. You say we should be fair to this Frenchman, as the poor boy didn't know what he was doing. That is a very easy thing for him to say, and, furthermore, Mr. N., no matter how much you try to disguise your true feelings, we fans are not so dull that we can't see that you are against Valentino and, although you say you are strong for him, you never lose time to slam him in a clever way.

"I don't believe you have taken any trouble to be fair in your views to Rody, therefore, why expect us to be fair to the Frenchman who doesn't deserve it?

"This is one more letter for the waste basket, but I just had to let you know how you have hurt our feelings."

Your letter didn't go to the waste-basket, did it? I'm printing it because I am curious to see whether other readers think my attitude toward Valentino has been hostile. Oddly enough, the letter I have just received from his attorney—which I have referred to elsewhere—begins, "I am very much impressed by your fairness in inviting Mr. Rodolph Valentino"—but then, of course, you fans aren't interested in what I have invited him to do.

* * *

Old Timer writes: "Thanks to 'Irene' for mailing you that letter from the fan magazine; also to you for insisting that we have clever people writing to our column; we do, lots of 'em; but not me. If I were I sure would be cashing in at it.

"'Cause if there is one thing we need in our family at present it's jobs. Don't need an old dignified lady for a messenger girl, do you?

"I wish to take exception to K. L. H. Grant's statement that Norma gets by on her eyes alone. I could name a half dozen girls on the screen today that, feature for feature, are much more perfect than she—beautiful eyes and all—but they never hold their audience as she does.

"Why? Because they lack that very necessary quality—personality—that is something that can never be defined in words. One either does or does not have it, and our one and only Norma sure has.

"And that quality, coupled with looks and ability, would get any one by with colors flying.

"Once heard Neysa McMein say that all she wanted was that, if she made a second appearance on this earth, she would come back looking like Alice Joyce. Well, I hope I come back looking like Norma. I can think of nothing which could be 'whicher.'

"Our friend 'Heine' says that if he resigned as District Attorney he could easily land a job at $8000 'per annum.' (The last with apologies to Ring Lardner.) Now, Henry, we all know that if we were an ex-D. T. (gee, that's funny looking; hope Volstead doesn't see it), the way those jobs are played these days, we would never need another job for a long, long time.

"Must grab my hat and dash madly to my favorite neighborhood theatre to see 'Grandma's Boy.' Will report on it later if you will allow me in again soon."

(Your postscript—which I'm not printing—is a well-deserved reproach. I know I'm rude. But I did appreciate it and I do thank you. Things have been somewhat hectic lately and I haven't had time even for ordinary manners.

If I did need an "old, dignified" messenger, why should that interest you?)

* * *

Mrs. H. O. writes: "I certainly liked R. N. L.'s letter very much. Somehow or other you just seem to get the spirit while looking at Rudy's picture of 'Blood and Sand.' Mr. Neely, now don't be thinking I'm one of 'em so-called flappers 'cause I'm not. Being a mother of three kiddies myself, when I saw Rudy play the part of the mischievous boy, I certainly did chuckle 'cause I know how 'tis myself. The best of them need a spanking once in a while even if they are all growed up; p'raps you know, too.

"As for Dee Roach being 'Rudy's' rival, na! na! H. M. N., not much. He may be able to act (that is left to be seen), but here in America it isn't only acting that counts, but charm and personality, and 'Rudy' has all that, and then some more.

"I hope for the time when, perhaps, we shall see our dear Norma play with 'Rudy.' Then we will sit back contented, heave a great sigh, and say, 'Ain't Love Grand!' You know how 'tiz. At last our movie dreams will be realized, so I'm just gonna keep on wishing."

Little Benny's Note Book

By Lee Pape

The Park Ave. News Weather; Bum.

Sports: Last Sattiday Benny Potts and Sid Hunt found a peece of rope and went erround looking for a satier to show them how to tie some diffrent notts, which jest wen they thawt they wasent going to find one they found one and he sed he would show them the Siameez nott and he took the rope and tied them together with it by the legs and then he went away laffing and they couldent get theirselves undid and they started to ask men going past if they had a pen knife, wich about the 15th one did.

Sissiety: Miss Loretter Mincer can stand on her hands, tern a cart wheel and is practicing the split but she still gets stuk less than half ways down. She says she cant make up her mind whether to go in the movies or be a Red Cross nerse.

Poem by Skinny Martin

I once gave a birthday party
The invitations sed No presents please,
And all the guests took it serious,
Maybe I wusent disappointed holey geez.

Exter! Boy lost! Sid Hunt's little brother Bert got lost for 3 hours last Wensday and all the fellows was looking for him and hoping for a reward but he found himself and got home jest in time for suppir.

For Sale Cheep. Full set of carpenter tools consisting of one saw ony needing a slite sharpening and half a new handle, one partly loose screw driver, one hammer with an exter short convenient handle and a jelly glass full of assorted mixed nales and screws not all rusty. See Pud Stukins.