

Who Makes a Movie Scene Possible?

The Assistant Director, With Aid of the Property Man and Stage Carpenter, Is the Magician Who Produces the Marvelous Settings You So Admire and the Scenes That Are So Startling and Puzzling.



WILL ROGERS as an Alaskan Gold Hunter and ANNA LEHR



ENRICO CARUSO really enjoying himself



ETHEL BARRYMORE



MAE MARSH



ARE you one of the hundreds of thousands who spend a night weekly in the moving-picture theater and enjoy the show so much that you feel like you wanted to shake hands with the author who produced the play and tell the man who directed it that "It's a bully good play and that he's a topnotcher in the art of producing moving pictures?"

Haven't you often times wished that you were acquainted with the actors who so cleverly interpreted their parts and performed almost unbelievable feats and faced dangers galore for your benefit and entertainment?

However, you have overlooked one of the most important requisites necessary to any well-conducted and up-to-date studio. Three invisible persons are far behind the scenes. Their expertness contributes in a large degree to the success or failure of any production, these men are the assistant director, the property man and the stage carpenter.

Property Man Formerly the Noise Maker.

The property man has for ages been a familiar figure with actors and actresses of the old stage. He often made his appearance on the stage between scenes, but usually appeared in the dark, had nothing to say and disappeared without applause. The audience gave him the most thought when he produced the storm, lightning and thunder scene, when he successfully manipulated the rain-making machine, produced the moon and stars and clouds at the opportune time, or in some almost magical manner banged together a couple of cocoanut shells in exact imitation of galloping horses. This man is the property man of the old stage, but not so with the moving picture stage.

With the entry of the movies entered the property man of the moving picture

stage, an entirely different individual from his namesake on the stage as of old, who has been overshadowed and completely eclipsed by the wonderful development of the movies in their short life.

In the olden days and even in present-day theater stage work the property man when called upon to produce a desert scene, called in the stage carpenter, who constructed a sloping frame from 30 to 50 feet long, pasted on some canvas, then brought in the scenic painter who completed the job by dabbling here and there with a few highly colored paints, making it look like the wastes of the Great Sahara desert. A dab here and there in the background that looked like a mere speck in the distance represented a various assortment of palm trees, a dozen or so hump-backed camels strung out in a long line to represent a caravan, a few buckets of earth and a stillness like a desert and the scene is

complete. Far from this state of affairs in the movies. Here the director calls in his assistant and says: "Make up a desert scene with a caravan, two palm trees and a gang of two dozen bandits, and have it ready at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning." Twelve hours remain for the task to be completed. The property man, if he wishes to hold his job, knows no such name as failure and goes out and delivers. **Must Get Anything Needed, and In a Hurry.**

The studio yard is usually full of dozens of men and women, boys and girls, all especially fitted for the star's position, but who would, just to get a start and show the old man what they can do if given a chance, be willing to take on a few hours work as an "extra."

Out rushes the property man. He selects a couple of dozen of the male "extras" for his bandits and changes them into a corner of the studio, where he informs them that there will be nothing doing today, but to show early tomorrow morning for a march across the desert. All look like they would make good Arabs, and the first part of the desert scene seems easy.

Camels and a caravan might seem a hard task but not so to the assistant director. He hunts up an old circus man who has his circus in winter quarters and who since the advent of the movies has made more money out of renting his worn-out outfit and animals to moving picture concerns than he did in his most prosperous years of the circus business while traveling on the road.

"Here, Bill, I want six camels with their tanks filled with water, so we won't have to stop a half a day and water them. Have them ready at the studio tomorrow morning without fail."

"Bill had them there, alright." The caravan formed at 10 o'clock and the worn-out and scrawny droms with drivers decked out in a various array of colors started to wend their way across the hot sands of the desert.

Here is where the Arabs came in. They come galloping up on charging steeds and the battle is on. The young girl who was about to be carried away to the sultan's harem is rescued.

The author writes, the director directs but without the fine hand of the assistant director all would come to naught. As a result, the assistant director, who really makes things possible, is scarcely ever given a thought by the thousands who sit on the outside looking in. His position is one of ever-changing variety, and he never gets to see his real work carried to an end unless he himself attends a moving picture show. While the scene is being filmed he is away on another mission, with orders to "have it ready by Monday."

Renting a Battleship Thought Small Matter.

An order to "Rent a battleship for Wednesday" has no terrors for the assistant director. He secures one and within a few minutes is giving the stage carpenter instructions to make ready for the film's next step. And it is ready at the appointed time with no "ifs and ands" for an excuse.

How would you like to be the one who is ordered to prepare an earthquake or a cyclone, or possibly a train wreck, and be ready to be filmed at an appointed hour, and not so many hours off, at that? Such orders as these have no terrors for the assistant director and mean nothing more to him than a request to bring in a dozen ruffians from the street for a mob scene. Orders for wild and tame animals come by the score and are handled just the same way as are the "film-crazed girls" who are waiting outside the studio door for an opportunity to show what they can do. When a call comes, the assistant director goes out and gets them. That's his business and he makes short work of it. Sometimes he finds it hard to manage the animals, but more often finds it an easier job than to handle the girls.

Gives Free Circus Performance to Get Big Crowd. Once an assistant director was given

a hurry call and told to produce a two-ring circus and an audience large enough to fill a tent seating several thousand people. He began burning up the wires trying to locate a circus. The time was short and it looked like he was going to fail in his mission. Finally he located a circus 100 miles away, hired it for a twenty-four-hour period, bundled up the whole lot and shipped it to the studio. Circus attaches arrived at the studio grounds during the night and a short time after daylight had the show set up and ready for business. How to get the audience proved a puzzle. Finally the assistant director, who was the one held responsible for the securing of the audience, seized on the fact to make the

show free. He spread the word and at the appointed hour, when the scene was to be shot, the tent was taxed to the limit. The show went on with its performance and the audience, unmindful of the motion picture operator, had the double sensation of being thrilled with the sights of the circus and later seeing themselves in action at the circus while sitting in a moving picture theater in their home town. The circus scene was arranged and carried out all within the space of twenty-four hours.

Not long ago the director of a well-known film corporation found it necessary to use 5,000 head of cattle. Rangers of the wild and woolly kind, with long horns, was the substance of the

order given to the assistant director. A trip to a cattle range and the 5,000 head of cattle were secured by contract. The assistant looked over the animals, nearly collapsed at the thought of trying to drive them fifty miles to the studio, when a fresh thought struck him and he ordered the studio driven to the ranch.

When a call came from an Australian Cockatoo it nearly drove the assistant director to distraction. Only one was to be had in the whole state of New York and that was owned by an old lady who refused to talk about it or part with it under any circumstances. The cockatoo was finally kidnaped for part of the afternoon after the old lady had been persuaded to take an automobile trip into the country for a few hours. She locked the cockatoo up when she left and found it in its accustomed place upon her return. She later saw the bird and recognized it as her own while watching a movie show in New York. However, she has been unable to solve the mystery.

400 Years of Illustrations

ILLUSTRATED books and papers are now so widely diffused that we do not fully appreciate the trouble and labor expended upon them. Many years ago the Penny Magazine, with wood-cuts illustrating the text, was considered a wonder, and no publication of the kind ever did more good in educating young people and instructing their parents.

Most boys and girls probably think very little of the art and care, experience and thought which are required, not only to execute the wood-cuts, but to make the engravings fit into the text of type. Many no doubt think that such illustrations are like Topsy and "just grew so." But if they were made to try it for themselves, just once, they would soon find out the difference.

But, with all our facilities and improvements of the present day it seems quite wonderful to be told that in the very infancy of printing the now popular form of illustration reached surprising perfection almost at once, and books were profusely illustrated by cuts which look quaint enough nowadays, but which were in the highest style of the period which produced Albrecht Durer, who was the foremost artist and engraver of his day, and who was born in Nuremberg over 400 years ago.

In regard to these old illustrated publications a good authority, Mr. Fitzgerald, says:

"The combining of wood blocks in

the same page with type has always been a matter of much nicety and difficulty, while copper engraving offers greater difficulty. Yet this seemed child's play to the early printers, who essayed works of magnitude which even the most speculative of modern publishers would hesitate before attempting."

And it is to be observed that these illustrations, while often rude and sometimes in mere outline, are always spirited, free and bold. One of the oldest illustrated books is an edition of "Aesop's Fables," published about 1471. It has initial letters of great interest, and upward of 160 very curious wood-cuts. The copies which have survived the centuries are bound in thick oak boards, covered with stamped leather. There was a book published in Florence only five years after this Aesop which had three copper plate engravings, and one of the most remarkable features of the early illustrated works, is the grace and excellent fancy of their tail-pieces and type, and the fresh look which the ink has.

The "History of the World," in French, published in 1491, and the "Cologne Chronicle" of 1499, both great volumes, have many fine cuts, some of them carefully colored by hand. The "Ship of Fools," published in 1488, is a very well-known work, many of the illustrations having been reproduced in many other books, and is crammed full of illustrations.

Temperature Causes Many Phenomena

A CLOSE observer describes two phenomena of nature not easily explained: First, that natural sounds are very different in the colder than in the warmer months of the year; and second, that waters have different tints during the colder and warmer months.

A number of examples occur to prove the first phenomenon. Who has not noticed the contrast in the noise of the wind in different seasons when it blows around the corner of the house—in summer what a soft, mellow tone it has and in winter what a harsh, rough whistle?

Then, again, let us stroll along the banks of a stream in May, June or July, and we will observe that the water will then make a gentle, babbling sound, while in November or winter it will, with not great volume, make a hoarse, gurgling noise.

Still again, if we ramble in the woods during late spring or early summer, we can not but notice what a softness and mildness the wind has when blowing through the tops of the trees; on the other hand, what a roaring it makes in cold weather.

Perhaps the trees being with or

without foliage may cause some difference, but it will be observed in May, before the leaves are out to any extent, there is even then a marked difference between that time and December. Often we have heard it along telegraph wires during the summer and winter, and have noted the contrast.

Again listen to the water fall on milldams. The water in the warm season seems to fall in smooth, murmuring tones, but in cold weather it seems harsh enough to make chills run down one's spine.

Then take the ocean; many of us know, while strolling along the beach or sitting on the sand during the warm season, with what a mellow sound the waves splash upon the sandy beach, while in winter, with no higher tide, what a roaring and hissing they make.

As to the various tints of water, let us take the brook again. As we ramble along its banks in June or July we see that the water has a silvery-white look as it merrily dances on its way, but in cold weather it has more or less of a bluish tint, on some days quite a dark blue.

The same is true of lakes and ponds. What a soft, silvery appearance they

have in early summer—then in November or December what a dull, leaden color!

Still, again, take waterfalls or milldams—then the water seems to fall in a glistening white sheet during the warm season, but in winter they have more or less of the blue tint again, sometimes real dark; although at Niagara Falls I never recollect of seeing any other but the two colors, emerald green and white—the white greatly predominating in the summer, but more of the green in late fall.

I have never seen the Falls later in the year than November; even they, too, may have the bluish tints during the winter.

And lastly, take the ocean. We have noted particularly the difference in aspect there—in summer, pale green and silvery; in winter a much darker shade of green or a dark blue.

Boot making and brush making have developed greatly in Italy since the war. That country formerly had to rely on the United States for the shoes to supply her first armies, but now they mostly are made at home.