

vaudeville when it was really good.

You don't have to be thirty-five, though, to remember what happened to it. One year it was there, and the next it had melted as quickly as an ice cream cone in a kid's hot hand. And not many of the troupers believed in that saving-for-a-rainy-day stuff either.

"Gee, Katie," Georgie used to say, numb with the first shock, "it was only last December that Hollywood dame,

Hollywood dirt-disher hold out to the inheritor of Chaplin's mantle?"

"Miss Lagrande," Georgie corrected stiffly, "says that we—I—ought to get into the movies as soon as she can get a good spot for me."

"Not—we?" Katie questioned.

"Well, you know, Katie," Georgie softened, "she says it might be hard to work it for the two of us, but later—"

"I see," said Katie slowly.

## by JOHN W. ALEXANDER

Claudia Lagrande, that writes for "Stage and Film," said my art was a living expression of the—the great comic muse of Aris—Aristoph—"

"Forget all that stuff, Georgie," Katie returned. "Lord knows, you're funny, but do you know why? No. Neither do I. Nobody knows. You know what troupers say: 'When a comedian begins to take himself serious, he's no longer a comedian.'"

Gradually they worked west, and one night, after the last turn in one of the plaster-and-gilt palaces, Katie was dressed first and went to find Georgie.

She knocked at his unpainted pine door, heard a murmur of voices, and then Georgie calling, "Come in."

"Nearly ready?" Katie began, pushing the door open. Then she stopped short. There was Georgie in his soup-and-fish

For the next three months she watched him silently. Once or twice a week there was a square gray envelope for Georgie which he concealed awkwardly, but Katie knew it was from Claudia.

In Denver, Georgie rushed from the telephone one day. "Claudia's in town, Katie," he said. "She wants me to go to the coast and meet Herman Goldfarb of Diamond Pictures."

"When?" Katie said. She was white.

"Tomorrow," Georgie said. "I hate to break up, Katie . . ."

"Okay," Katie cut him off brightly. "Let's break the news over at the theater."

IN THE MOVIES, build-up counts for a lot, and give Claudia credit—she built Georgie up. "The greatest since Chaplin," her column trumpeted, day after



Katie stopped short. There was Georgie in a soup-and-fish and a Barrymore pose.

# AND BELLS

and a Barrymore pose, and leaning eagerly forward was—

"Meet Miss Claudia Lagrande, Miss Cobbett," Georgie said.

A willowy brunet undulated toward her.

"My dear Miss—Cobbett, isn't it?" The brown eyes above Katie rolled. "It's—I am only the instrument—the articulate voice of the great miming art. It's a labor of love. I mean that never since Chaplin has there been a player like Mr. Kearns, with the divine fire of the old comedy. Even the vulgarities he has to give the rabble"—she swung a clanking arm toward the darkened stage—"are softened by his subtle, wistful interpretation."

IT WAS NOON the next day when Georgie met Katie, sleepy-eyed and a little sheepish. Over their lunch Katie questioned him ironically. "What does the

day. She saw to it that Georgie met the right people, and in the evenings, though he dressed wearily now, he was never out of his white tie and tails.

Perhaps it was because of the old vaudeville pull of Georgie's name that his first two pictures made money at the box-office. The third, however, didn't go.

Give Georgie credit for one thing. He tried to keep in touch with Katie. At first her letters were frequent and cheerful, but brief. Then suddenly they stopped, and Georgie's last one was returned with one of those scrawled "Not ats."

I didn't know any more than Georgie did where Katie was. That winter got pretty cold, the booking business was shot, and instead of buying an overcoat, I thought I'd keep warm in Hollywood.

I found lots of my friends were in the movie-town, but they were friends in need. So after a few days of dodging touches I couldn't give I stuck close to

my theatrical boarding house, where the worst you had to do was listen, and look at stage scrapbooks.

One night late I was cornered by old Pat Dorio, the equilibrist. A half hour later he ended his monologue on hard luck. "Some of them were lucky, though," Pat ended. "There's that little worm, Georgie Kearns."

"Worm?" I said. "Why, Pat!" After all, I had helped to bring Georgie up.

"Well, he has all the gray markings," Pat said. "The way he let a nice girl go downhill till she's sweating to make a living in the same town where he's a big shot!"

"You mean Katie Cobbett's here?"

"Yeah," said Pat. He rattled through a newspaper and found the small theater's address. "It's just squirrel-cage vaudeville and movies," he said.

"Georgie doesn't know," I yelled, and snatched my hat.

It was close to midnight when I found Katie. When she saw me she gave a scream. "Pete!" she said. "Gee, it's good to see a face that's not celluloid." There were tears in her eyes.

"No," Katie said half an hour later, making rings with her coffee cup. "I can't do it, Pete. I don't want him to see me like this." She pointed to her shabby sleeve.

I couldn't change her, so we rose to leave, and I stopped to pay the check. Katie kept on, and when I got outside she was gone! I did that block three times, but no luck. I stopped in a drug-store and called Georgie's place.

"He go out," an oriental voice kept saying at the other end.

"Tell him Katie's in town," I said. That was the best I could do.

THE NEXT AFTERNOON I went around to Katie's theater. The manager shook his head. "She came 'round this morning to say she was quitting," he said.

That was a tough winter for Thespians—so tough that the film Croesuses decided to give a benefit for out-of-luck vaudeville performers.

It would make your eyes go all funny to see them—many of them headliners once—come shuffling on, then take heart at the applause.

But before the first juggling act, a guy in a dress suit came out. It was Georgie! I wondered if he had found Katie. Then I began to listen. His speech was as stiff as his shirt. When he had finished there was a polite patter of applause—for Georgie Kearns who had wowed 'em from tank town to subway!

Down front I spotted Claudia Lagrande. I could see her making notes, probably for tomorrow's lecture to Georgie. He looked timidly at her, bowed till his chin hit his stiff collar, and sidled off. Then the fun started.

The Tranco family of trapeze artists had just bowed off. A gaunt man in a comedy coat walked on and sank down on a bench. In a moment a cute little number came tripping out. I straightened up. It was Katie!

Nobody'll ever know what their act was, for as she made her third trip past the bench she looked worried, then tiptoed up to it. Then she gave a strangled cry and started shaking him. If it had been straight acting it would have been good, but it wasn't. It was only an old comedian involuntarily playing the tragedy of the hungry.

If it had been a regular performance the curtain would have come down with a snap, but this was a benefit. Before you could say Greta Garbo, though, stage hands carried the old-timer off.

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## TOWN QUIZ: STIMULATING MENTAL CONTEST FOR ALL THE FAMILY

CREDIT YOURSELF with one point for each question answered correctly. 10 is average, 12 good, 15 or more excellent. The correct answers to these questions appear on page 11.

1—In which of these sentences is "cache" used correctly?

- (a) A cache is a delicious nut.
- (b) Cache is used to denote winnings in a game.
- (c) A cache is a place for concealing or storing.

2—If you're up on current events you should be able to match the names of these Cabinet officers with the departments they head:

|                       |          |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Cordell Hull          | Treasury |
| Harold L. Ickes       | State    |
| Frances Perkins       | Labor    |
| Henry Morgenthau, Jr. | Interior |

3—Answer "true" or "false" to the following statements:

- (a) The Dewey Decimal System is a method of computing interest.
- (b) Lines of longitude measure distance east and west on the earth's surface.
- (c) A peccadillo is a little sin.

4—Which of these statesmen is associated with Queen Victoria of England?

|           |                |
|-----------|----------------|
| Bismarck  | Robert Walpole |
| Richelieu | Disraeli       |

5—Nursery rhymes are now popular in new songs, so you should be able to tell . . .

- (a) Who had a great fall?
- (b) Who called for fiddlers three?
- (c) Who ran after the farmer's wife?

6—The mumble-jumble man receives more invitations than he can accept because he's so good at indoor games. He's an expert in . . .

|            |          |
|------------|----------|
| MMNBKCAAOG | HSRAECDA |
| MASRAGAN   | EECCRSH  |

7—The capital of Canada is . . .

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| Montreal | Toronto |
| Ottawa   | Quebec  |

8—The names Montague and Capulet are immortalized in Shakespeare's . . .

|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| As You Like It | Hamlet           |
| Twelfth Night  | Romeo and Juliet |

9—Esperanto is a . . .

|         |          |
|---------|----------|
| country | language |
| cheese  | ship     |

10—Another word for "mendicant" is . . .

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| physician  | treatment |
| dressmaker | beggar    |

11—Each of these sentences contains an error in spelling. Can you find it?

- (a) The committee will canvas the town for votes.
- (b) The tourists admired the beautiful alter.
- (c) The medicine had a startling affect.

12—A person who steals the literary or artistic work of another and gives it out as his own is a . . .

|            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| parodist   | protagonist |
| pragmatist | plagiarist  |

13—The Adriatic Sea lies between . . .

|                      |
|----------------------|
| England and France   |
| Sweden and Denmark   |
| Jugoslavia and Italy |
| Russia and Japan     |

14—The expedition which set out to find the Golden Fleece of Greek mythology was led by . . .

|         |       |
|---------|-------|
| Ulysses | Jason |
| Aeneas  | Paris |

15—Klieg is a name for a type of . . .

|         |           |
|---------|-----------|
| furnace | light     |
| match   | furniture |

16—Which of the following are known as "common carriers"?

|            |                       |
|------------|-----------------------|
| mosquitoes | persons in quarantine |
| baskets    | freight companies     |

17—Rockwell Kent is famous for . . .

|               |
|---------------|
| music         |
| dancing       |
| illustrations |
| acting        |

18—Devil's Island is off the coast of . . .

|               |
|---------------|
| Africa        |
| Europe        |
| Asia          |
| South America |

19—In which of these sentences is the expression "casus belli" used correctly?

- (a) Casus belli is a type of musical composition.
- (b) Grounds for one country to war against another are called casus belli.
- (c) Casus belli is a flower.

20—What is the name of the system which enables the blind people to read?