Broadway's Royal Family

Second and final instalment of the all-absorbing story of the Barrymores.

By ADA PATTERSON

A CELEBRATED magazine writer whom Ethel Barrymore had promised an interview on her theory of clothes went to the great actress' apartment at the appointed hour. She rapped. Silence. She knocked. More silence. She hammered. An engulfing quiet was the only response. She rapped on an adjacent door. A round head and fresh complexion enwrapped with preternatural solemnity appeared.

"I have an engagement with Miss Barrymore," said the visitor, "but no one answers."

"No, ma'am. Miss Barrymore's hout, ma'am."

"When did she go out?"

"I should say a quarter of an hour, ma'am."

"Where can I wait for her?"

"I don't know, ma'am."

"Who are you?"

"I am Mr. John Barrymore's man."

"Is that his apartment?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Can't I wait there?"

"But Mr. John isn't up yet."

The magazinist disposed herself with what dignity she could upon the stairs. Sixty minutes cramped her limbs. Ninety did the same with her temper. She rapped upon the door adjacent to Miss Barrymore's. The round head reappeared.

"Do you know where Miss Barrymore has gone?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied the servant blandly.

"Why didn't you tell me?" demanded the magazinist.

"You didn't awsk me."

"Well, I awsk you now." Her patience was exhausted.

"She's having her picture painted."

"Where?"

"At Bryant Park Studios. Here's the name of the artist."

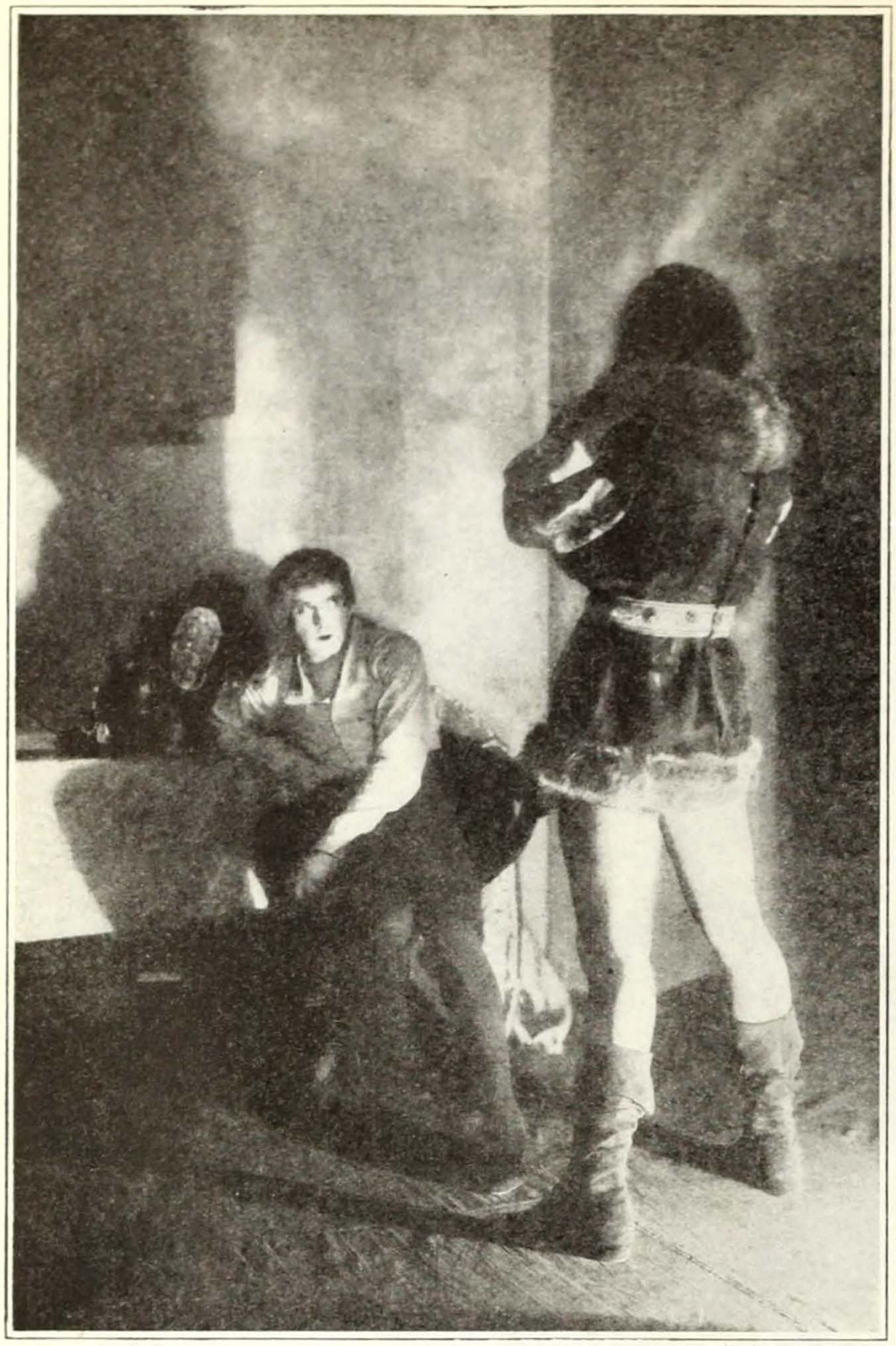
There the writer found her. Miss Barrymore smiled. Cold resentment evaporates in the sunshine of her smile. She apologized for the "delay." She accompanied the writer back to her apartment and gave her tea and a delightful hour and made her almost forget her two and a half coventry-like hours.

As her art, so Ethel Barrymore's personality grows more definite.

"I don't like New York; I do like Philadelphia," she said to a shocked New York interviewer. "And it isn't because I

Curtiss Bell

To her children — Virginia, Sammy and John Drew Colt — Ethel Barrymore is a mother as devoted as was her own mother.



Alfred Cheney Johnston

Family loyalty is one of the Barrymore characteristics. John and Lionel as co-stars in "The Jest."

was born there. I like its self better than New York's self."

She is sensitive to the printed word. She is hurt, fathoms deep, by unfavorable criticism. She declined to receive for an interview a man whose critique of her Camille displeased her. She severely punished a St. Louis writer for what she deemed a breach of confidence.

Miss Barrymore was playing in St. Louis. A young woman came from one of the newspapers seeking an interview. It was granted, given, finished. "I liked the girl and invited her to come next day and lunch with me," was the Barrymore version of the tale. "I told her we should simply talk as woman to woman."

There appeared next day Miss Barrymore's alleged opinions of that group of unhurried folk loosely characterized as "society."

Consequence: perturbation deeply and loudly expressed in the manager's office. Further consequence: a published denial by Miss Barrymore of the sentiments imputed to her.

"I never gave such an interview," being amplified meant "I never said it for publication. She who violates a pact should be punished."

The St. Louis newspaper defended its representative. Questions of veracity were asked. But society, Miss Barrymore's fervent admirer, was pacified.

HER keen sensitiveness to the printed page is no greater than her sensitiveness to eyes that are curious and may become critical. Because the gaze of her company makes her self-conscious, she rehearses her scenes behind a screen.

The conquering will that accompanies genius is hers. The mounting flesh that was hiding her girlish lines annoyed her but little until came the possibility of playing Camille. Who would lose the chance to portray the tormented tubercular heroine? Miss Barrymore had heard of a physician who melts flesh as an April sun a lingering snowbank. She rose before a window as the flesh dissolver entered.

"What do you want?" asked the gruff lord of lissomeness.

"I want to play Camille."

"Good Lord! When?"

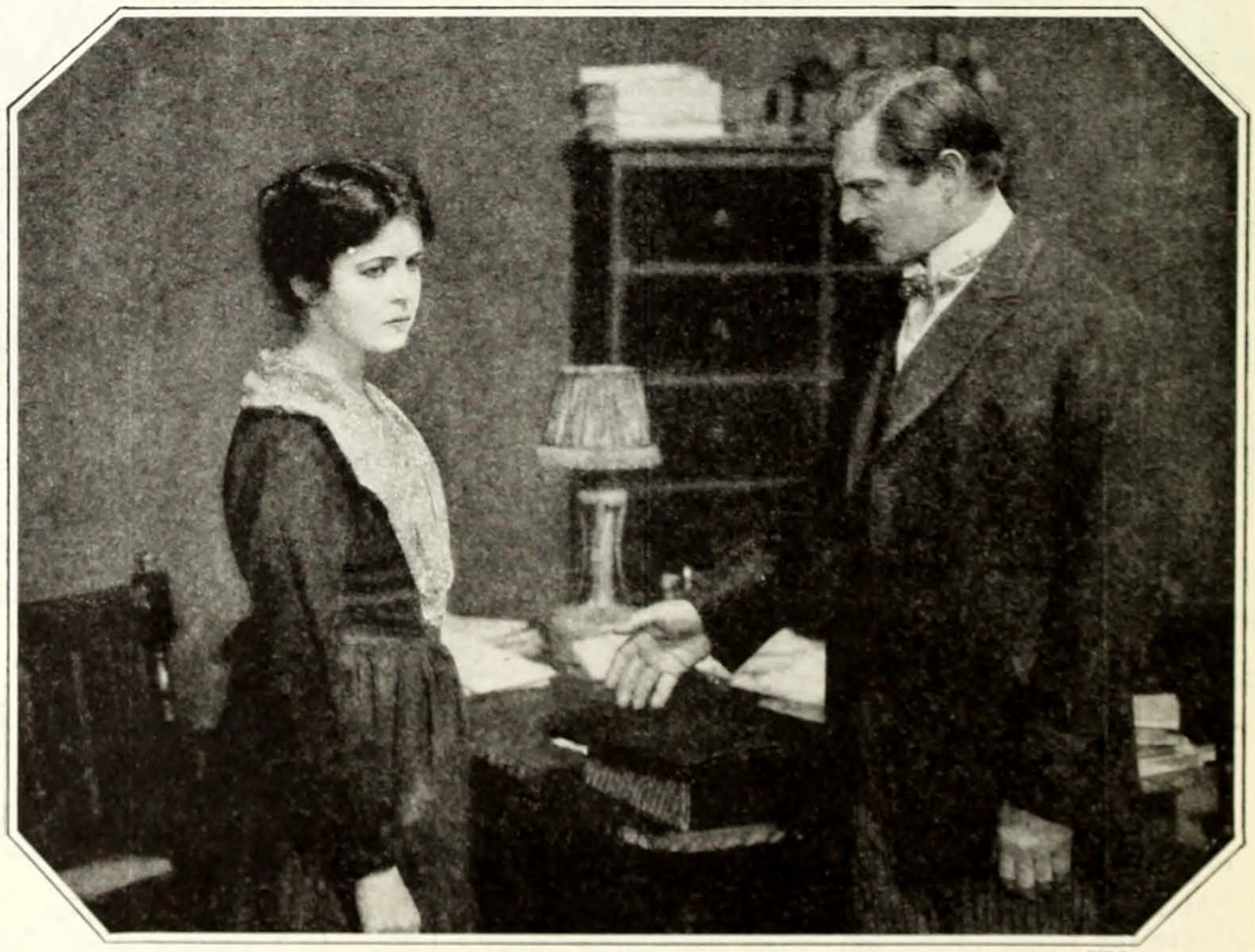
"In May. This is December. You must get me ready for it."

To his credit and hers, be it said that he did.

A fine recrudescence—or it were truer to term it a survival—of Ethel Barrymore the girl in Ethel Barrymore the woman, remnant of the girl who would be a pianiste and give concerts, in the transcendent artiste of today, is her superb loyalty to her own. Though Mrs. Russell Colt and mother of three fast growing children, she is still, as in her maidenhood, the head of the Barrymore family. Still she thrills with a pride half maternal in the success of "the boys."

"When you walk upon the stage are you conscious of your heredity? Does it bring a sense of power?" I asked her.

"I don't feel it myself," was her answer, "but I do for my brothers. I know they can't go far wrong. I feel that with three generations of experience behind them, all the way from Great Grandmamma Kindlock, they can't make many or great mistakes."



White

Lionel's marriage was a success and now he and his wife, Doris Rankin, are together in "The Letter of the Law." She played with him in the screen version of "The Copperhead."

Francis Bruguiere

In their latest plays, John in "Richard III.," and Ethel in "Declasse" — both at their best.

Beside this grace of abiding family loyalty, there dwells in her heart fellowship with her brother and sister mimes.

In that remembered girlhood on which I have dwelt she was addressed by one of the mimes.

"It's splendid that society is so kind to you," she said. "It is a tribute to your personality and to the guild that was once described in the statutes as 'rogues and vagabonds'."

"Yes, it is pleasant." Her arm went around the woman's shoulder. Her fresh young cheek was pressed against the sallow, older one. "For a little while I enjoy it. But for real happiness, give me the companionship with you, mine own people."

It was this spirit that led her into the Actors' Equity strike. It was what placed her on the platform with her shy monosyllabic speeches, her Jean d'Arc command: "Stick. You will win, for you are right." It led her into the final conferences wherein the five weeks war was ended.

She is the actors' daughter, the actors' sister, the actors' friend.

LIONEL, second of the shining, disappointed ones, served his apprenticeship to the art of the brush. He served it in a narrow rue across the Seine and near the playground of the Gardens of the Luxembourg.

May Irwin visited him and his bride, Doris Rankin, in their wee, high studio.

"You ought to see those dear young things beginning a painter's life in the Latin Quarter. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry," was the comedienne's summary of her visit.

But Lionel Barrymore learned that the rabbit's foot is swifter than the brush. He set his easel in the corner and tossed his brushes and paint tubes into a trunk. Swift is stage ascent to the feet of the gifted. Successively in "Peter Ibbetson," "The Copperhead," "The Jest," and "The Letter of the Law," he demonstrated that latent talent quickly reaches fruition. He shares the family gift of personal beauty and quick wit. His power is rugged and volcanic. His wit is of the swiftness of a sword and the crushing power of the bludgeon.

Lillian Russell and he were companions in a motion picture.

"Talk! Talk! No matter what you say!" cried the stage director. Barrymore leaned toward her and simulated conversation, entirely to the director's satisfaction. Miss Russell says he invented a story that was the best she ever heard. She declines to tell the story.

"He has the quickest wit I ever knew," is Miss Russell's appreciation.

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Broadway's Royal Family

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Baby Barrymore evolved into Jack, and, with serious roles, into John. He has the family gifts to such degree that while Ethel Barrymore is being acclaimed as the most popular actress now on the American stage he is described as the greatest of its younger actors.

He is the most Bohemian, the most nervous, the most temperamental of the trio. While his sister frequently hides herself in domesticity at Mamaroneck and Lionel and his wife of the sleek dark head seek seclusion at Hempstead on Long Island, the one time baby Barrymore abides near the bias street termed Broadway.

As near as when in the biographical lodging-house, since metamorphosed into a chop house, he made sketches in studioless days in his sister's room. That was when Evelyn Nesbit was sixteen and his model. He rejoices in the recollection of those days of Ethel's treasurership of the family. Often he and Lionel were forbidden to play the piano because an ancient above stairs in the house across the street from The Lambs objected to "that noise." He lifts his eyes to Heaven and thanks Deity that his prayers that he might become really an artist were unanswered.

He met Arthur Brisbane at the opera last year. He greeted the aggressive editor. He wrung his hand.

"You hired and fired me. I thank you for the last." He looked his gratitude. "You have done more for me than any other living man. When you fired me you forced me on the stage."

He is the matinee idol of three generations. Maids, their mothers and their grandmothers, write him confidential missives. A grandmother wrote to her granddaughter in Europe: "I saw him today. He is so handsome that I don't know how you can help loving him." Thus promoting a match that at that period was languishing, a dissenting father being the chief deterrent.

The marriage of his sister and that of his brother bear signs of permanency. Already his has been dissolved.

TO John is accredited the story of panic wrought in the home of his clergyman grandsire in England. Maurice Barrymore was a clergyman's son. The family name, a distinguished one, is Blythe. The Blythe family suffered more than the usual amount of parental mental colic when its scion went upon the stage. There were prayers for the wandering sheep. The prayers lessened in volume and intensity when Maurice Barrymore's manly beauty and brilliant acting won fame for him in the country the Blythes still regarded as "one of our colonies."

The Blythes were gradually and with less pain adjusting themselves to the order of having an actor in the family when it received a second shock. Their actor had married an actress. True she was of the bluest stage blood in America, the honored Drew family. But there was no denying the fact that she was a mime. More prayers. More adjustments. More of the aid of time in tempering the wind of circumstance to the unaccustomed.

It was twelve years before Maurice Barrymore brought his wife and their children to visit his elders in England. Speedily Georgie Drew's wit and charm and the appeal of childhood warmed the fearful hearts of the Blythes. All was going well. The goose hung at more than its accustomed altitude. The two elder Blythes sat happily about the family board. The door was pushed open. A head, small and dark and shapely, was thrust within. A small voice demanded:

"Mother, where in hell did you put my suspenders?"

The Blythes clasped their hands and looked upward. Georgie Drew Barrymore looked searchingly at her husband. Said Maurice Barrymore:

"My dear, I told you that if you allowed the children to roam the servants' quarters their diction would suffer."

WHEN John Barrymore, then "Jack," played "Toddles," they who knew the family best said: "Jack is playing a straight part." "Toddles" in the French farce was about to be married but was too wedded to his bed to be willing to leave it to dress for the ceremony. The "old uns" in the audience recalled that Maurice Barrymore once appeared clad in his pajamas and a great coat and an air of apology at rehearsal.

"You will pardon me," he said with his impressive urbanity. "But I over-slept and I could not cause you to wait while I dressed."

All the Barrymores are taking vocal lessons, but the lessons are intermittent. Lionel sings well and doesn't want to forget the art. John wants to strengthen his speaking voice. Ethel is a devotee of music. She has a more than fair mezzo soprano voice. She appears at her teacher's apartment a radiant vision after an evening performance.

"I know I had not an appointment for today," she says with her radiant smile. "But you will give me a lesson, won't you? Ah! Thank you. Shall we begin at once?"

When she leaves she says: "I've enjoyed this lesson tremendously. We shall go right on. I shall be in in the morning. Ten? Very well."

But weeks—or months—roll by and the studio sees her no more. Until another impulse grips her and circumstances permit a lesson.

But what margin is left an actress who gives eight performances a week, who "does pictures" and who has three fast growing chi'dren?

The oldest child, Sammy, has grown out of his knickerbockers Virginia, the only daughter, has much of her mother's beauty. When Virginia was sent to the hospital ill and the doctors pronounced her a victim of diphtheria, her mother went to the hospital with her and stayed there until the quarantine was lifted and both were permitted to return home. In vain physicians warned of peril. Ethel Barrymore is a mother as devoted as was her own mother. The youngest of the trio, still called "the baby," is small John Drew. It would have amazed those who knew her devotion to "Uncle Jack" had not Ethel Barrymore named one of her little ones in his honor.

She is the only one of this generation of Barrymores who is a parent. Mr. and Mrs. Lionel Barrymore had two sons, both of whom died.

John Barrymore's brief marriage was childless. He married the daughter of Sidney Harris, with what seemed the hearty cooperation of her mother and grandmother. Her grandmother's letter was quoted: "I can't see how you can resist him. He is so handsome." Sidney Harris didn't want an actor in the family. He opposed the marriage. It went forward without him. Katherine Harris Barrymore went on the stage. She appeared with her husband in "Kick In." The marriage was short lived. She obtained a divorce in the West. Directly after the divorce she supported her sister-in-law in a play at the Empire Theater.

It was significant of the brooding care Ethel Barrymore gives to her family, near and remote, that her former sister-in-law appeared on the stage in that post-divorce season under the borrowed family name, Katherine Blythe. When Sidney Drew's screen

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(Concluded)

comedies were tried out at the Criterion Theater, Ethel Barrymore witnessed them delightedly from a box.

I have said John Barrymore is the most nervous and temperamental of the trio. Witness his frequent placing of his hand on his face. Witness, too, his tearing to pieces of a set of photographs that displeased him, to prevent the further distribution of them by the press department. Yet while off-keyed at concert pitch, he has an essentially practical outlook, a piercing sincerity.

"There's a lot of guff spoken and written about acting," he has asserted. "It's just one way for a man to earn a living."

When he and his older brother appear in "Othello" we may expect as strong a family combination as we saw in "Peter Ibbetson" and "The Jest." Pity 'tis their sister, who, by the way, has just recently entered into a new motion picture contract, does not play "Desdemona"!

Briefly, Ethel Barrymore is the flower of the Barrymore family. Lionel is its immeasurable force. John is its quicksilver fineness.

Starring the Director

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His has an exquisite taste, a fine sense of proportion. He detests vulgarity; ostentation. That is why he never does a "poor" picture, a middle-class drama, or an optical study of the slums. His scenes of the accident in "On With the Dance"—in which the father of *Sonia* is run over and killed—is hurriedly gotten through with as being the least interesting detail of all that glittering pageant. Fitzmaurice has a naive philosophy, the Frenchman's childlike enjoyment of the beautiful. I venture to say he never screens a tale of violence if he can help himself.

Did you notice the impertinent acting canine in the street-car scenes? That's Scotti, his Airedale. When Scotti isn't acting, he is on the set anyway, with his tail wagging a mile a minute and his inquisitive nose upturned towards the high platform from which his master directs. For Fitzmaurice sets most of his interiors in the stately long high rooms that frame the actors in a sort of stage. They are built on a level with the platform and "shot" directly down their length.

His wife, Ouida Bergere, writes the scenarios for all his films. They live in a duplex apartment in the Hotel Des Artistes, one of Manhattan's most expensive and accordingly more exclusive apartment-hotels—and "Fitzy's" own drawing-room is his best set.

A Kick In It at That

DETERMINED to miss not one of the possible enjoyments of the movies, a confirmed addict chucked his job and went to a school where he took a long and difficult course in lip-reading. Then—he had waited till graduation that his ability might be perfect—he attended a movie.

It was late when he arrived at the theater and the story had started. Two cowboys, in full regalia, leaned against a typical western bar. The fan's mouth watered as they raised their glasses in a toast. Then the lips of one of the cowboys moved, and the fan leaned forward tense with expectation.

"Hell," said the cowboy's lips, "I wish this was the real thing!"