

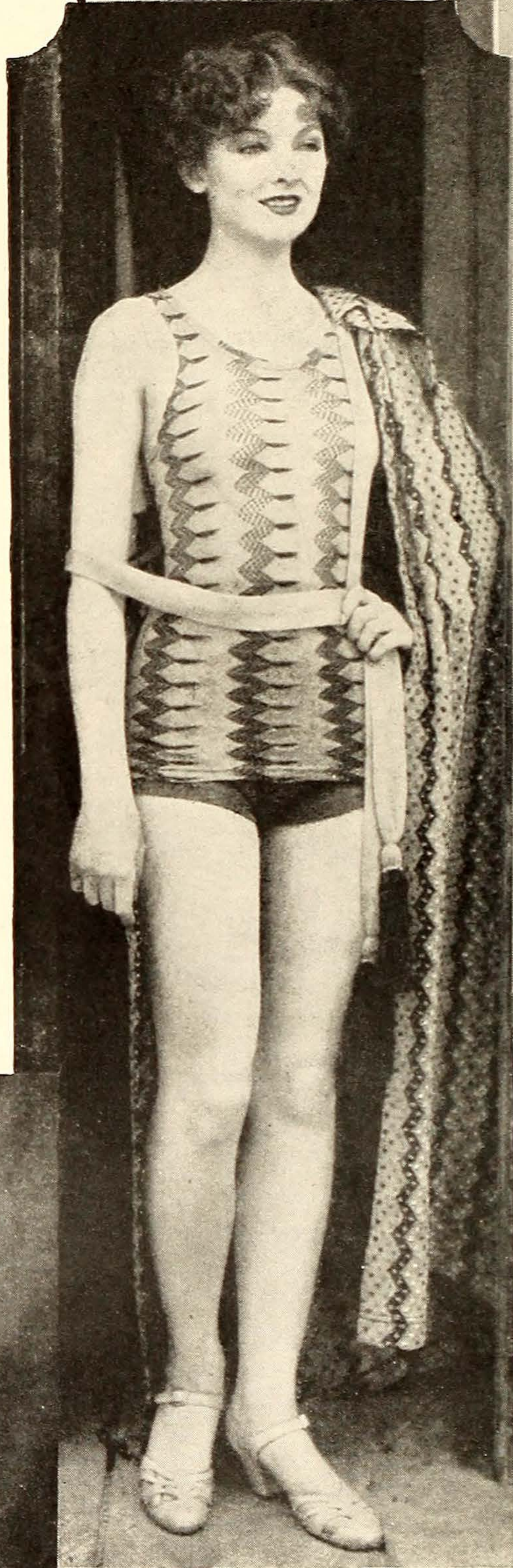
Myrna from MONTANA

☞ Myrna Loy finds that to get the breaks it is well to be pretty in a different way—then if you've got the goods—

By Eve Bernstein

YOU'D expect to see a sinuous sort of person with long heavy ear rings and oriental beads. Certainly you would expect to find her bathed in the most exotic of perfumes and wearing the most ravishing of gowns.

But Myrna proves to be a complete surprise. You don't get the idea that she is a sophisticated woman of the world or that she is a calculating siren. There is a spontaneity about her that you simply cannot associate with her screen personality, but which rather reminds you of a naughty school girl. She has almond shaped green eyes which make the best vamping eyes that ever vamped on the screen, but in real life they're just devilish. She has red hair and a freckled face. I was glad to see that she didn't lounge on soft couches and wear flowing garments. When I saw her she was sitting on a wicker rocking chair with one foot under her, reading a book and munching chocolates. She was wearing a green canton crepe two piece sport frock with a pleated skirt. A white collar and cuffs gave the dress a distinctly school girl appearance. Her hair was a bit awry, and her face was unpowdered, but she didn't seem to mind a bit. In fact, she did not even think of it. So



☞ Exotic Myrna and Monte Blue in 'Across the Pacific.'

☞ Myrna Loy fears neither the glancing waves of the Pacific nor the admiring glances from the sand sheiks.

different from the Myrna I had expected to see.

She told me her people were Welsh and Scotch, and that she came from a small town in Montana.

"I cut the funniest figure, with my red hair and freckled face, dancing ecstatically with a flowing veil thrown over my skinny arms and shoulders. When the other girls were mothering their dolls and playing games, I danced. I had



☞ Her next picture is 'If I Were Single.'

☞ Her hair is red, her eyes are green—something had to happen after that and it did.





☞ Myrna inspires every actor, cameraman and stagehand to strive for something touched, at least, with the gossamer wing of Art.

set my heart on going on the stage."

"And how did you get there—from that town in Montana?" I wanted to know.

"Well, we moved to Los Angeles where I studied dancing first with a teacher from India and then with Ruth St. Denis. After that things happened pretty quickly. I worked as a sculptor's model for a time, and then was given a part in Syd Granman's ballet for *The Thief of Bagdad*."

I knew what happened after that. Somebody introduced her to Natacha Rambova, who gave her a part in *What Price Beauty*, and dressed her up in the strangest fashion with skin tight gowns and a grotesque blonde wig with straggling bangs over her forehead. Then Warner Bros., seeing that she photographed so excellently, put her under contract.

And suddenly the Myrna of the freckled face and red hair became something she had never even thought about—a slant eyed, oriental looking vamp who has it all over the Vasca Suratt, Theda Bara, and Nita Naldi type. One wonders if her ancestors were Chinese or Egyptian. She is submerged in a flood of fan letter asking her for the secret of



☞ Her first big part is 'The Girl From Chicago.'



☞ Miss Loy herself not a movie.

her origin. The fans would need to see her in real life only once to know that she is not oriental. There is a charming directness about her speech that immediately brands her as a practical, ambitious young girl who

knows what she's talking about and won't stand for any monkey business from anyone. Contrary to the languorous atmosphere she creates on the screen, there is not the slightest suggestion of languor about her when you talk to her. She speaks rather quickly and

(Cont. on page 84)

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The Stage Coach—Continued from page 57

Phoebe Foster is adequate as the wife with the past. And Kathlene Macdonell does as well as you could expect with the Gail Kane lines that have been thrust upon her. Still, the part remains full of holes. And yet *Interference* gave us a nice evening.

"The Taming of the Shrew"

We doubt that the New York police will close the comedy at the Garrick, but the fact remains that it is the most radical, most inimical to our modern standards, most dangerous to our American attitude, most fascinating play on our boards to-day. Indeed, except for the fact that the name William Shakespeare, a man who has done some notable dramas, is attached to it, we should believe that it was written by some sworn foe of Americana like H. L. Mencken.

Shakespeare flourished circa 1564-1616, which was sometime before the American Mercury, or even Smart Set had been established, however, and Mencken has a clean alibi. As presented by the Garrick players, it is not what we motion picture fans would call a costume play. The clothes are strictly up-to-date and there is even a Ford in it.

But there is more in it than that. There is an evening of perfectly gorgeous entertainment, made even more enjoyable by the realization that Shakespeare's comedy is ageless and dateless; that it is just as true and just as funny in 1928 as it was back in the 16th century. It might have been written yesterday by Frank Craven, who wrote *The First Year*.

And, while we're about it, let's give some boosts to the Garrick players, who do so

well by the Bard of Avon. From Basil Sydney and Mary Ellis down, they give their excellent best. We have gone on record before as believing that many of Shakespeare's works are better read than acted. *The Taming of the Shrew* in modern clothes is not one of them.

"Ink"

Ink is supposed to be a play about newspaper life. We are among the legion who used to be a newspaper man himself, and we doubt it. Not that the plot is absurd, but the authors have couched most of it in language that may very well be spoken some place on land or sea, but never in a newspaper office.

And not only that, but as a result of the frightful dialogue, the characters become silly automatons. The publisher is just a bunch of hooey as far as any likeliness is concerned. William Harrigan does very well in the main role, but the handicap of the play is a little too much for him. Clara Bandick, as usual, is superb, in a small but effective role.

We have a suggestion for the movies, however. Let them buy *Ink*; the situations are there for a corking film, and the picture could do away with some of the blarney of the dialogue. In fact, we suggest giving it to one of the German directors who has learned to get along with no dialogue at all. In that case, it might very well turn out to be a sardonic take-off on the newspaper game. For though there is hooey and blah a-plenty in the films, there is even more on the stage.

Myrna from Montana

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very vivaciously. Her almond shaped eyes that are so enigmatic on the screen, sparkle with delightful ingenuousness.

You would be surprised too, about the way she dresses her hair. On the screen she often wears straight blonde wigs with peculiarly cut bangs over her forehead, but off the screen her own hair which is naturally wavy is bobbed in a very conservative fashion, with her ears not showing the least bit. She doesn't wear ear rings or elaborate bracelets or necklaces, as she usually does in pictures, and she does not like the heavy exotic perfume that is so reminiscent of her as a character. However, I shall always admire her choice of colors. She wears green usually because it matches her eyes and goes very well with her red hair. She never wears other bright colors, but confines herself to pastel shades and black.

She took me through her house, and again I received the same surprise that I did when I saw Myrna herself. Her bedroom is furnished simply in early American furniture with colorful hook rugs and ruffled tie-back curtains in soft yellow, and the walls are decorated with charming water colors. She has no chaise longue in her room. The same period design is carried out throughout the house, with the utmost simplicity and charm. She has a garden of asters and tulips, and tiny red roses climbing up the porch. Myrna is not averse to kitchen work. When her maid is out, she puts on an apron and starts experimenting with all sorts of recipes. She likes to try difficult ones just to see how they will turn out. Myrna admits to many failures,

but says she is not ashamed of her pies.

The more I talked to her, the more different she seemed from the Myrna I had known on the screen. She giggled once in a while, and always she talked with refreshing enthusiasm. She told me she loved sports, and I understand she is an inveterate horsewoman. Can you imagine a vamp loving sports? She confessed to a strong desire to travel, but that just now is impossible because she is sending a brother to school on her salary. And, of course, she has bought a house out of her earnings.

She served coffee and sandwiches and rich chocolate cake, late in the afternoon, for we had made quite a visit of it. I noticed that she ate everything, even the cake, apparently not thinking of calories.

I asked Myrna how it was that she was perfectly willing to give up her dancing which she had really intended to pursue from childhood.

"Well, you see," she explained, "when I wanted to dance, I knew nothing of pictures. Now that I have tried them, I find them so much to my liking that I am willing to abandon my dancing. In pictures there is a marvelous opportunity to portray character roles, and that is the kind of work I want to make a specialty of."

"And you have given up dancing entirely?" I asked.

"Not at all. I dance every day at home. Dancing is my recreation as well as my daily exercise. It keeps me fit and gives me more pleasure than any other kind of exercise I can think of. I am very fond of tennis, but it is more strenuous and I can't

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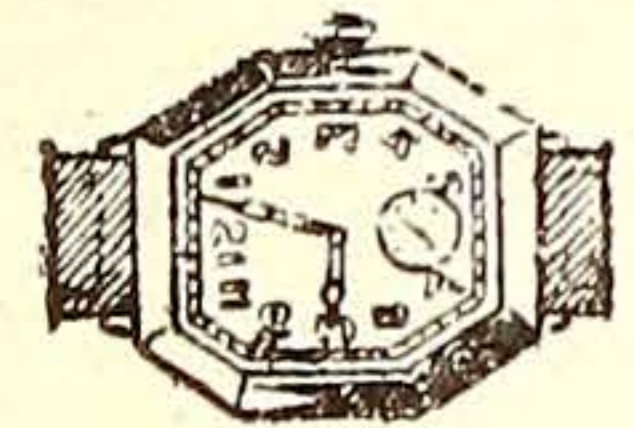
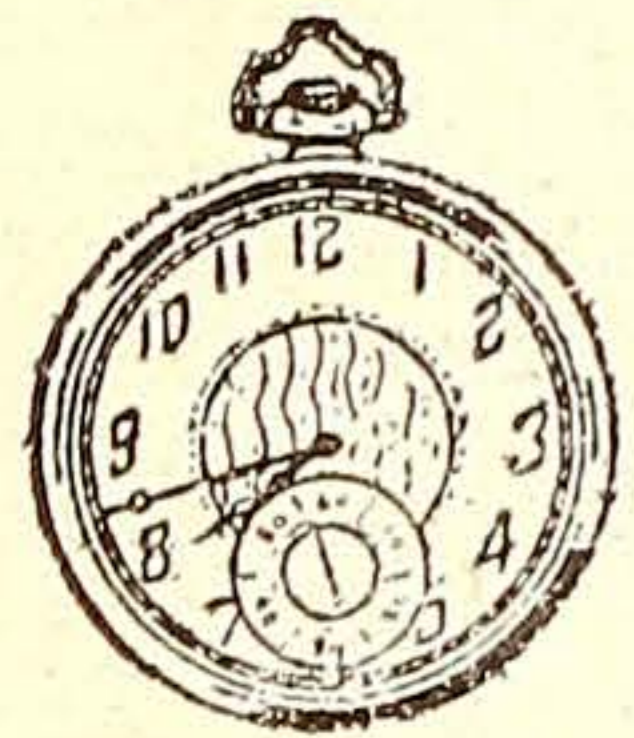
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play tennis as often as I can dance. Dancing is really, I think, the very best form of exercise for a woman."

"But when I compared the two to make my decision as to which I should pursue, I saw that pictures were something that would keep me busy, something to study as long as I am in them. Each part is like studying another subject in school, and demands so much work and concentration that I enjoy it. One usually enjoys the kind of work that must be studied, the kind of work that is a little above one, for that is the only way to avoid monotony."

"I like to take the roll of a new picture I am to do and read it at home. Then I go over it again in detail, visualizing myself in the scenes I am reading. Sometimes I even act them out at home before going to the studio. In this way I have quite a complete knowledge of what I am going to do before the director calls upon me to do it, and save many rehearsals on the set."

It was a long time after Myrna Loy signed her name to a contract with Warner Bros., that she was given a chance to do a real part. They gave her bits to do in many pictures, the most important of which was the role of maid to Lucretia Borgia in *Don Juan*. Even in the few scenes in which she appeared, one could see that this girl could do bigger things than she was doing

in the picture. It was the way she handled even the most insignificant character that made people notice her and made the producers realize there was a quality about her that was worthy of better opportunities.

Her first featured role was as the half caste girl in *Across the Pacific* in which Monte Blue was starred. As the sensuous, plotting, native girl she gave such an outstanding performance that she was discussed as a character actress of tremendous possibilities. To test her versatility, the producers gave her the featured role opposite Monte Blue once more in *Bitter Apples*, in which she was an American Sicilian girl with a revengeful nature. Now Myrna is to play opposite Conrad Nagel in an entirely different type of picture, called *The Girl from Chicago*, a story of the Chicago underworld.

There is no predicting what a girl like Myrna Loy will do. She may be starting as a vamp of the new era, but what she has done so far proves conclusively that she will be an outstanding figure in doing character portrayals. She is too energetic and ambitious, always to confine herself to the same kind of roles.

So this is the story of Myrna of the red hair and green eyes—the story of Myrna of Montana.

I Sold a Scenario—Continued from page 18

A short time ago two young playwrights decided that they would do some originals for the screen. They set to work and in a little over three months time they sold three original stories to the picture companies. The names of the stories are: *Sky Scraper*, sold to Buster Keaton but never produced. *Oh, What a Nurse*, sold to Syd Chaplin which was produced under that title, and *Lucky Lady*, sold to Famous Players Lasky. The first two of these stories were sold more or less to order. By that I mean, these authors visited the editors of the respective companies and learned first hand that they were in need of a special kind of story. The last named however was written and sold entirely on its own merit. It was a good story.

Now let us see what sort of a magic carpet these writers used. Let's see how they did it. I may as well tell you though, that it was not so easy to accomplish as it seems to be in the telling. Bertram Bloch, who since then has become Editor of the Dramatic Department at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Picture Company, and Robert Sherwood, Editor of Life Magazine, had their difficulties the same as any one else. Even though you may write a good story, you are still a long way from a sale.

But here's what Mr. Bloch and Mr. Sherwood did. First of all they made a careful study of the current pictures of the various companies. Next their plan of attack was to go to the editors personally and get an idea as to the exact kind of material they wanted. You can do this. Any writer who has worth while merchandise to sell will be able to get the information at the editorial offices of the picture companies.

After Mr. Bloch and Mr. Sherwood had gotten the information as to the type of material wanted and the star such material would be considered for, they set to work to write. Contrary to the belief which many have that the only sure way of selling an original is to get a cash advance first and then do your writing, Mr. Bloch and Mr. Sherwood took their places along

side thousands of others who were storming the editorial doors for acceptance of their stories.

But these writers were skilled workers. They didn't have any baskets of tricks. They knew their trade and knew how to assemble and write fresh dramatic stories which were in line with the particular needs of the picture companies.

Let me put in a little word of advice here. It is probably this lack on the part of the writer in not knowing the particular needs of the picture companies, which keeps more stories from being accepted. Why send a Biblical story to a company which only produces sex melodrama! Writers as a rule do not study the individual needs of the picture companies and write of subjects and people which are foreign to their policy. When they do this, no matter how good the story is, it cannot be used by the company.

I know of several instances where a manuscript has been received at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer offices with a note saying that the enclosed story would make a wonderful vehicle for Reginald Denny who is a Universal Star, or suggesting some other star who was not with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

But let us get on with the people who have sold to the screen. Only last summer a young writer by the name of F. W. Rath who is in the advertising business and has written numerous vaudeville sketches and also a couple of plays which are going to be produced soon, submitted an original story called *Young Blood* to several of the picture companies. It was a good story and had a corking original idea.

For quite some time this story kicked around from one picture company to another. Each company the story went to expressed an interest but they were not interested enough to buy. Finally the latter part of October the story sold to Universal and will soon be produced with George Lewis, the young Universal Star, in the lead. In this case, unlike Mr. Bloch and Mr. Sherwood, Mr. Rath did not go