



Aileen Pringle is suspected of being a decoy employed by producers to meet all visiting authors

# A Lady

The Hollywood Boulevardier returns to PHOTOPLAY with his impressions of Aileen Pringle

By Herbert Howe

understand that these writers happen to be my friends?"

Nevertheless the legend endures: Pringle is an institution and *Pringling* a cult.

Club ladies come in delegations to view her reverentially. They all but lay a wreath. "It would be a terrible blow to come all the way to Hollywood and not see *the Pringle*."

"*Jesu!*" cries *the Pringle*, a clutch at her hair. "I feel like Grant's tomb."

I WAS one of the first to give her title. After the New York showing of "Three Weeks" I panted to PHOTOPLAY's belfry and proclaimed her The First Lady of the screen. The title was ambiguous and drew me buck-shot. But that's immaterial.

As soon as I could pack I left for Hollywood, though that likewise is nobody's business, and I only mention it to show that I've been authoring round Pringle for some time.

PRINGLE leaned over the luncheon table and swatted a fly on my chest. The fly expired and went to heaven. Presently his pal appeared for obsequies and buzzed mournfully around my head.

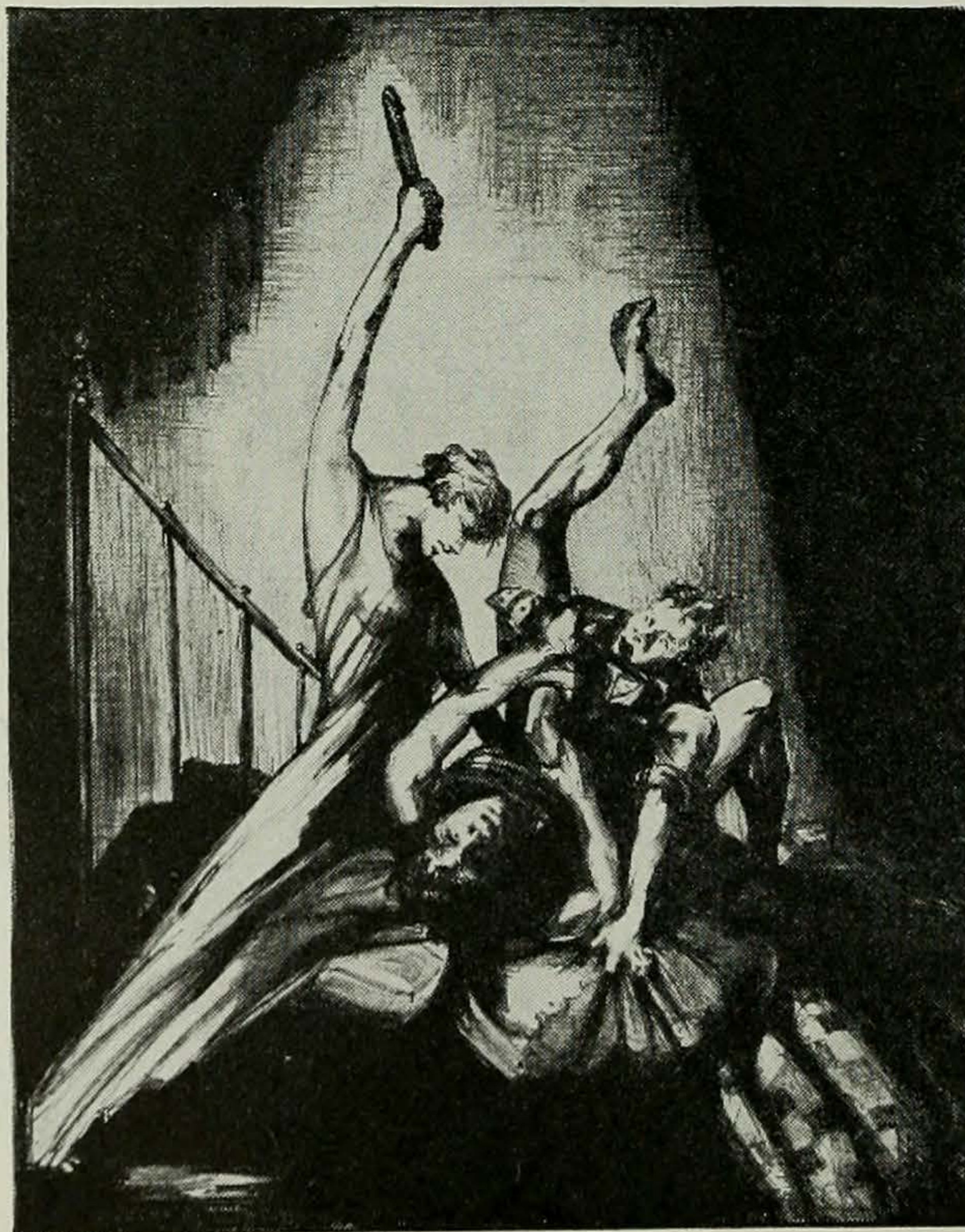
Pringle sprang up and whammed the air with an expert hand. The fly went West to join his buddy.

"Can't stand 'em," said Pringle. "They give me fits."

The beach club where we were lunching had hitherto been considered fashionable. It was Pringle's first appearance there. If anyone recognized the Author's Favorite in the person of the divine fly huntress I dare say his preconception underwent a swift reform.

She's suspected of being a decoy employed by producers to meet all incoming trains bearing Authors. Those who might pan Hollywood go back to praise Pringle, and Will Hays never served the home town better.

This intimation gives Pringle the furies. "*Bon Dieu!*" she cries or lusty equivalent on being placarded Favorite of the Literati or High Priestess of Highbrowism. "Can't they



"Make me a homelike picture," said Aileen Pringle, and Cedric Gibbons furnished a study of a recent sash-weight murder

My first impression remains as vivid as a poinsettia.

I was in a Hollywood party when Pringle entered. Pringle's entrance is something more than arrival; it's an event. The effect is that of a commanding officer entering the barracks of buck privates.

This night she was justly robed in sweeping flame.

Three youths sprang forward to arrange the train—others quickly gravitated—and soon there was a court.

It's always so, wherever Pringle sits there the throne is—and there the courtiers gather. Her popularity with women does not obviously follow. . . . She's known to give dinners where all guests are male.

In Pringle's lure for authors her dinners are not to be ignored. True, authors no longer starve unanimously in garrets, this being the day of "movie rights;" nevertheless it's safe to say that mortal man, literate



# Surrounded

## BY MEN

or illiterate, rarely partakes of such Lucullan fare. The daughter of a French mother, Aileen rates culinary genius among the gifts from God, and so her cuisine remains intact through all servant revolutions.

I received a royal command for dinner on the eve of one of her sudden departings for New York; suddenness amounts to regularity with Pringie, especially as regards her departures East.

The only other guests were her mother, whom she celebrates as "Julie," and Cedric Gibbons, the art director.

Pringie was in pajamas and pearls, and it was easy to see why she is the authors' favorite, authors being by profession the most discerning people.

She wears silk pajamas for tennis and achieves dinner dress by the simple addition of a string of pearls.

"I HAVE an offer to play *Caterina Sforza* in a new stage play," she said. "What do you think?"

*Caterina* was one of the girls I had forgot. With help I recalled a fifteenth century lady who captured the Castle of St. Angelo and wouldn't yield even to the pope until her husband made her.

Back home in Forli, where the Mussolinis now reside, she held her castle single-handed against terrific opposition. Upon her refusal to surrender, the besiegers threatened to bash the daylights out of her kiddies, whom they had in their power.

*Caterina's* reply was to the effect that she intended to hang on to her property, kiddies or no kiddies, as real estate values were sure to rise. Any reader of Arthur Brisbane's column will appreciate the foresight of this medieval dame. The enemy slew her husband before her unblinking eyes; a few weeks later *Caterina* ran amuck and killed the conspirators, their wives,



Through this door enter the famous authors of America. When they emerge, they are bearing glowing superlatives about Aileen Pringle. In the accompanying article, Herb Howe tells you why

children and dogs. Nor is this just Hollywood gossip. *Caterina*, like Pringie, was a forthright lady, dominant, fearless and sufficient.

"She had only one eye and went about slitting throats," added Pringie. "Oh, I think she's elegant!"

When Pringle presides in the red patent leather chair of her library—her conversation room, rather, since the autographed volumes [CONTINUED ON PAGE 90]



# A Lady Surrounded by Men

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are a minor note—here evenings are like unto seventeenth century salons, when Ninon d'Enclos reigned, and wit matched beauty. . . . So say authors with better memories than mine. I will confess, however, that when I regard the etchings on the walls—one of the Snyder Murder and another of Billy Sunday astride the pulpit—I distinctly recall what Moliere said of Ninon:

"She has the keenest sense of the absurd of any woman I know."

**P**RINGLE has a rapacious wit. It plays over Hollywood like the searchlight of the Carthay movie theater. No absurdity escapes it. With the selective eye of a dramatist she creates a revue of shams and foibles. Her frankness inspires an awful reverence among the fear-dumb moujiks. Terror of exile was not greater in tsaristic Russia. No one's position is secure; hence the flattery and the yes-men. Suppose you're given bum parts or your salary is not increased? "I'll go abroad and write a book," snaps Pringie, "and call it 'Sour Grapes.'"

**S**HE dissects with a scalpel and a cool objectivity. While she talks I have the feeling that slim bright knives are flying to their mark with death-dealing precision, and all the time her face has the marble serenity of a madonna's, offering no comment whatsoever on what she says—only now and then a swift bright gust of laughter, like an aside.

**S**HE might have been a surgeon. As a child, frilled out for Sunday school by a pious mother, little Aileen Bisbee would whisk away to a mortuary and there with the assistance of the mortician's little daughter she'd spend investigative hours sticking pins in the dead to see if they'd bleed.

As a debutante she bolted her first tea party in order to make the rounds of operating rooms with a surgeon, friend of the family.

**T**HE interest in surgery was supplanted by an ambition for the drama, but on that there was a paternal curb. So she created her own. She married Charles Pringle, son of Sir James Pringle, and went to New York to live while he went to war.

But she couldn't sit in a hotel all day and twiddle her thumbs and it wasn't the season for flûtes, so she decided to do pictures with the idea of correcting certain social errors.

With this determination she dispatched the family lawyer to live at the Lambs club for necessary contacts.

She supposed it was her histrionic talent that got her the first part. But the director had had other persuasion. The star of the company had a meagre wardrobe; Madame Pringle of the Ritz could dress up the picture with authentic gems and Paris gowns.

The extra arrived from the Ritz in a Rolls-Royce to take the boat for location. Her friends considering the thing a hilarious stunt had so filled her car with orchids and fruit that it resembled a prize float. "Bon Voyage!" went up with shrieks of laughter.

**P**RINGLE'S part consisted in walking through scenes with her fictional mother. But her artistic conscience was alert. When the director ordered her to enter a carriage ahead of her mother she cried, "Certainly not! I would never do such a thing!"

The director mumbled something about footage.

"That's of no importance to me," cried Madame, the extra, assisting her mother in. "What would my friends say if they

saw me entering a carriage before my mother? Simply impossible."

**A**S I've noted, she would be a queen were queens not out of season. Elinor Glyn so recognized and cast her for "Three Weeks."

Alice Terry and I dined with Queen Pringie shortly after a review appeared saying the Queen had the warmth of an Eskimo pie.

This ran up the royal temperature to a warmth which the reviewer would have found uncomfortable had he happened around.

Madame Glyn said it was the first touch of the common she had seen in Pringie—the reading of vulgar papers. "Go to the mirror at once," she urged, "and say I'm Pringie, I'm Elinor's Queen."

The advice was unnecessary. Pringie in wrath is majestic enough. The reviewer has since apologized, reformed, and become an Author.

**I** MIGHT expatiate indefinitely on the Lure, but, as the good 'a Kempis says of compunction, "I'd rather feel it than know its definition."

There's her beauty, imperial if not classic—but you have her pictures before you.

And not least in her spell for authors is her art of listening. I've often wondered what the sirens did to hold their victims after the come-hither song. Now I know they sat and listened to the gentlemen's croakings.

Pringie listens with an intensity that's mesmerizing. An author goes home feeling very proud of himself, and he who is not an author goes home feeling he's been made one.

Thank God I'm an Author . . . It's elegant!

## Brickbats and Bouquets

[ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10 ]

the movies as a menace if the little innocents want to know why the man is chasing the lady around the table. Libraries contain both the *Elsie* books and Balzac's novels, yet no one considers the libraries dangerous, except possibly Mayor Thompson of Chicago.

ELECTA A. SARGENT.

### All for Many

Salt Lake City, Utah.

"My Best Girl" excels any other star's picture. Once more the public will be loyal and steadfast to Mary Pickford. Let each and every one of us hope that Mary will produce "Joan of Arc" for her next picture.

R. ROTHERY.

### Not So Loyal

I read Kathleen Norris' "My Best Girl" and thought it a very sweet and appealing little story and looked forward with much

pleasure to seeing Mary Pickford in the movie version. And when I did, what a disappointment! It was just about as punk and mediocre a picture as possible. It was just a repetition of Mary Pickford in every other part I ever saw her play.

MRS. EDITH MADDOX.

### How to Keep Young

Los Angeles, Calif.

Your magazine is fine, but some of your articles lay too much stress on youth in years. If I'd believe all I read, I'd want to commit suicide before I ever reached the sublime old age of thirty. But, you see, I'm modern and young and always intend to be, so the articles don't worry me. Just because man invented years to keep some sort of record of events, is no sign that a year is anything in God's sight. Keeping track of one's own years and of others' is a good way to become old. Let's forget the stars' years, as they mean nothing, but

notice how well a life is lived, or how fine an art is portrayed for the world.

M. A. ROBINSON.

### Saving the Younger Generation

Kansas City, Mo.

People are always talking about the way the younger generation "carry on." Just think of all the extra time they would have to "carry on" if it weren't for the movies!

MRS. J. B. K.

### So Do We

Salt Lake City, Utah.

I feel indignant about the report that the missionary preacher in "Rain" is to be tamed. What beautiful conflict will be spoiled if that is done. So "Anna Karenina" is to be called "Love" because we morons must have our sex appeal! Really I wish they wouldn't do that.

J. H. ENGBECK.