

Of Interest to Women.

GOING TO THE PICTURES.

It is hardly twenty years since we first went to "the pictures." The "movies" of America are to us merely the "pictures," by the way, and no one in New Zealand or America that I know of talks about the cinematograph. That fine long word, even when shortened to "cinema" has only a kind of "Sunday-best" use. Just twenty years—not that; and how we laughed our selves sore—does anyone remember?—over the wild-goose chase in which all cinema-town joined from the policeman to the old lady from over the road. It increased like a snowball as it rolled along, that chase; everything and everyone it bumped into, joined in and the more and the faster they ran, the louder we laughed. It was the first cinema joke and has been dead many years. Sometimes a modern film resuscitates it and we greet it with a feeble groan. There have been so many joke and so many films since.

Probably no invention ever made such a revolution in popular amusements as the cinematograph, certainly no invention has greater possibilities as a public educator. Under existing circumstances, however, there are many who seriously think that the pictures are productive of much harm. Exhibited under private control, or rather as a commercial enterprise, the pictures have naturally one chief law or standard of character, namely, "What will draw the crowd?" and too often the melodramatic story exhibited is full of impossible absurdities and the comedy which you are expected to find funny, is full of nothing but vulgarity.

On the other hand, there is much to be said for the general picture programme. It furnishes variety, something of real life in graphic scenic or educative films, with a picture story or two picture stories, one serious or tragic, the other lighter. A programme full of scenery and industries would be enormously uninteresting and consequently uneducative. One film on top of another of the same character would only prove an extinguisher. I shall never forget how with high hopes of being educated, I went to see a much advertised picture of my native country; and with what a groan I found the Christchurch soap-works following on the heels of the Glaxo factory. On the other hand, a series of films showing famous beauty spots of New Zealand, proved really educative because there was not too much of the good thing all at once.

Superior persons are apt to sniff at the ordinary film drama and comedy. I suppose the people like its jokes in a large and somewhat crude form. There are still the "groundlings" as in Shakespeare's day; and they still love the fat man and the practical joke; but film-makers should remember Shakespeare's advice to players and keep them within bounds. As for the dramas, they have the same faults as popular fiction. They are either fatuously moral or stuffed with sentimentality, or else got up as a mere opportunity to hang fine clothes round a pretty woman. Incidentally they convey often an utterly false idea of life. The chief end of man in film-land, and especially the chief end of woman, is to be or become rich, handsome, and idle.

After all, grown-up persons may be left to look after themselves in the matter of pictures. At any rate they are of age and supposed, however rashly, to be possessed of some discrimination. It is the children and adolescents that we women, as mothers and as teachers, need to consider.

How often should the young people be allowed to go to the pictures? What good or harm do they get there? These are questions demanding some thought.

Now there is one principle that appears to me of the highest importance in the education of young people. They should be brought up in such a way that when they reach the age of, say, twenty-one, their natural capacity for enjoyment is unimpaired. There are certain pleasures, those that bring us into the fresh air, and into contact with nature, that never pall but renew and strengthen our delight in them with the passing of time. With these, familiarity does not breed contempt. Such are outdoor games, picnics, and hobbies, such as gardening, botanising, and so forth. There are other, artificial pleasures that if indulged in too freely in early youth bring inevitable and deplorable boredom and spoil the wholesome zest for life that all youths and girls should have. Parties and dances and pictures are such.

Children and young persons of school age then should not be allowed to go frequently to the pictures for that main reason. There will come a time no doubt when a cinematograph will be an important accessory in every school, and the moving pictures will become a record to the young people of the world they live in, the real world, so much more truly in-

teresting than the sham world of the sentimental melodrama.

Then there are physical considerations that should make parents keep their children away from the pictures as a rule, at any rate from the evening programmes. The eyes are apt to suffer from too frequent attendance at picture shows, and the hour at which the programme ends is usually the hour at which children under fifteen at any rate should be in their beds.

Remember the old saw:—

"Early to bed and early to rise
Makes a man healthy,
And wealthy, and wise."

And then the atmosphere in a picture theatre, especially on a first night, is generally thick, and sometimes positively nauseous. For health's sake, children are well out of it.

A carefully restrained moderation is the ideal here as elsewhere.

Children's Column.

MATER'S LETTER BOX.

Mater invites children to send in stories for this column, or correspondence which will be replied to through these columns. All matter to be clearly written in ink, and on one side of the paper only. Name, age, and address, must be clearly given, and correspondence directed to "Mater," care of Editor, "The Digger," Box 310, Invercargill.

Mavis, Gala street (aged 10).

Your story is very good and you have displayed a great deal of neatness in your work. If I remember correctly this is the first time you have entered the children's column, and I hope we shall hear from you again in the near future.—Mater.

Helen, Elles road, East Invercargill (aged 12).

I am glad to welcome you to the Children's Column, and hope to hear from you again. Your story is very good and your work is very neat.—Mater.

Patricia, Etrick street.

Your story is very length and we will publish it next week. In the meantime we hope you will be writing another one.—Mater.

Rose, Jackson street, East Invercargill.

Your selection is very nice and I trust we shall hear from you again.—Mater.

THE SAUCEPAN HELMET.

By Mavis, Gala street Invercargill.

"Look at my helmet," said Billy to his chum Tommy. "It's a real helmet. Now we can play soldiers!"

"I have not got a helmet, if you have," said Tommy enviously, "and you can't be a soldier without a helmet."

"Yes, you can," replied Billy; "you can pretend you lost it in battle. I have seen pictures of soldiers fighting bare-headed, and they looked more brave than the others," he said eagerly, trying to coax Tommy to play the game.

"I shall not play without a helmet," said Tommy gloomily.

Billy felt desperate. He must think of something, he could not be disappointed of his game. "I have thought of something!" he cried, after a minute's pause. "Something which will make you a splendid helmet! Get a saucepan, and wear it on your head. It will look just like a real helmet in front, and the handle will be at the back where it will not show one little bit."

"I might do that!" said Tommy, brightening. "We have a good saucepan and mother is out, and won't be back before twelve; and we shall have finished with it before then."

"Of course," said Billy eagerly. "Go in and fetch the saucepan, and then we can begin our game."

So Tommy fetched the saucepan; it fitted comfortably on his head, and he felt as happy as Billy. The two boys played happily together all the morning. At last the big factory bell rang, Tommy stopped chasing Billy round the house, "It's twelve o'clock! There goes the bell. I must run home, mother may be back any minute, and she will want the saucepan for the potatoes. As he spoke he was tugging at the saucepan, but it stuck to his head and refused to come off. "Help me, Billy," he said at last, nervously, "I cannot get the saucepan off, and I must get it off!" said Tommy, "Mother will be so angry, she will want the saucepan, and besides, I can't go about with a saucepan on my head."

"Tommy howled aloud. "Don't cry, let's run home, we shall find something in the kitchen to get it off with," said Billy with astonishment, and he led the still sobbing Tommy home. His mother had just returned and seeing the boys, she said sharply, "Now then, take that saucepan off your head, you naughty boy! How dared you put it on!" Mrs White did her very best and nearly dragged Tommy's head off his shoulders. She called in the policeman, but his strength was not strong enough. "I suppose I must take him to the hospital," said Mrs White. So with Tommy still sobbing loudly Mrs White got into the bus. Tommy cried so bitterly that a lady took pity on him and said: "Here is sixpence for you," and he eagerly turned round to take it, when the saucepan handle went crashing through the window. Soon afterwards the conductor put his head inside the door and said, "I will have to charge you two shillings for his damage."

"I have not got it," said Mrs White, "I shall have to go to goal, I can't pay it." The lady came to the rescue again and said, "As it was partly my fault I will pay the damage." So that matter was easily settled, and now the bus stopped at the hospital gates. Mrs White and Tommy went home carrying the saucepan in their hands and not on Tommy's head.

THE THREE SISTERS.

By Helen, Elles Road, East Invercargill.

There was once a woman who had three daughters, the eldest of whom had only one eye, the second had two eyes, while the third had three eyes. Now the mother and sisters did not like the child with the two eyes because she was common like other children, so her mother said, "You with two eyes are not better than other children we see in the world, you do not belong to us!"

They only gave her old clothes to wear and the scraps to eat. Her mother made her go to the field to look after the goat, and feeling very hungry she sat down and began to cry. Suddenly she heard a soft voice say, "Why are you crying?" The little girl said, "I have, unfortunately, two eyes like other people, which causes my mother and sisters to hate me. They dress me in rags and only give me the scraps to eat."

"Dry your tears away, my child," said the woman, "and I will teach you something that will prevent your hunger. Say to your goat: 'Little goat bleat, and pray let me eat, then a little table will stand before you, full of nice things to eat. When you have had enough to eat, say to your goat: 'Little goat pray, take the table away,' and it will vanish from before you." So the kind woman went away. When the little girl went home, her mother wondered how she got food, so she sent one of her sisters with her to see how she got food. Now the little girl knew why her sister had come. After they had fed the goat they sat down by a stream. Then the girl with two eyes, whose name was Elsie, said to her sister, whose name was Mavis, "Come sister, let us sit down here, and I will sing you something." Mavis, feeling very sleepy, soon fell to sleep. Now this was Elsie's chance. She said to her goat what the woman had told her, and the table appeared as usual, but Mavis had been pretending to be asleep, and went home to tell her mother all what had happened. "Oh!" cried the envious parent, "she wishes to have better things than us; I will soon hinder that." With these words she stabbed the poor goat. When Elsie saw that she was betrayed, and her goat killed, she went back to the field and cried bitterly. Suddenly, the good woman she had seen before stood by her, and said, "Why are you crying?" Then Elsie said, "The goat who every day covered my table when I repeated the words you taught me, has been killed by my mother, and I must again starve."

"I will try and do something for you," replied the woman. "Ask your mother for the inside of the goat and then bury it before the house door, it will bring you luck," saying this, the woman vanished out of sight. Elsie returned home and begged her mother to do her a favour in giving her the inside of the goat. Then her mother laughed, but said, "Since you ask nothing more, you may take it." In the evening, she buried it at the door. The next morning they saw before the door, a beautiful tree with silver leaves and golden fruit hanging from the branches. They could not think where the tree had come from, but Elsie thought it must have grown from the inside of the goat, for it stood exactly on the spot where she buried it. "Child," said her mother to Mavis, "go up the tree and bring us down some fruit." The girl obeyed, but she seized a branch of it and directly it escaped from her hand; this happened each time she went to pick the fruit. "Well," said her mother, "I will try myself," but she was just as unfortunate as Mavis. The only one

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who could pull the fruit was Elsie.

It happened one day as a knight passed by, he admired the beautiful tree. The knight said, "to whom does this beautiful tree belong?"

"It belongs to me," said Mavis, "and I will break you off a branch." She gave herself a great deal of trouble because every time she touched a branch, it sprang back. "It is strange," said the knight, "that tree belongs to you and yet you cannot gather even a branch."

Now Elsie heard her tell the lie so she told the knight that it was her tree, and that she would give him a branch. Then she climbed up the tree, broke off a branch and gave it to the knight. Then he said, "Maiden, what shall I give you for this?" Then she said, "I suffer from hunger and thirst, and if you would only take me with you, I will be happy." The knight then lifted her on his horse, and rode home with her to his castle where they were married with great rejoicing.

BABY.

(By Rose).

Where did you come from baby dear? Out of the everywhere into here. Where did you get those eyes so blue? Out of the sky as I came through. What makes the light in them sparkle and spin?

Some of the starry twinkles left in. Where did you get that little tear? I found it waiting when I got here. What makes your forehead so smooth and high?

A soft hand stroked it as I went by. What makes your cheek like a warm white rose?

I saw something better than anyone knows.

Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss?

Three angels gave me at once a kiss.

Where did you get this pearly ear? God spake, and it came out to hear.

Where did you get those arms and hands?

Love made itself into bonds and bands.

Feet, whence did you come, you darling things?

From the same box as the cherubs' wings.

How did they all come to be you?

God thought about me, and so I grew.

But how did you come to us, you dear? God thought about you, and so I am here.

George McDonald.

BOW-WOW.

The would-be M.P. was addressing an important meeting, and was greatly annoyed by the needless interruptions of the local butcher. At last he could stand it no longer, so in no uncertain manner he told that worthy exactly his opinion of him.

Angrily, the butcher replied, "You? Why I could make mincemeat of you!" Back came the swift and sarcastic reply: "Is thy servant a dog that thou shouldst treat him thus?"

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MILITARY FILES.

Replying to representatives by the Returned Soldiers' Association that the handling and investigation of military files at the Base Records Office by women be discontinued, the Minister of Defence states that women have been employed in Base Records Office, and have kept the files during the whole period of the war, and it is not considered desirable at that late stage to substitute by male clerks the comparatively small number of women now employed there, especially in view of the fact that the employment is only of a temporary nature. In reply to a request from the Association that the Government should publicly reaffirm that the files were absolutely inviolable, even to the police, the Minister has stated that the files are not open to the police, nor is any information as to anything detrimental in a soldier's military history disclosed.

Dredging machines are being manufactured by Krupps in order to keep the works employed.