

HOLLYWOOD

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THROUGH THE LENS

Editorial Comment

THE hegira is on again. Once more the great trek from all corners of the United States is in full swing with every train arriving in Los Angeles contributing its quota of hopeful but tragically undesired femininity. Girls from the great cities, girls from the lesser towns, girls from the villages come flocking into Hollywood bent on crashing the pearly cinema gates.

To some extent the picture studios are responsible, aided and abetted by newspapers willing to print the tale of the young sales-girl from the ten-cent store who so appealed to a famous director that he signed her at a thousand a week, or the soprano from the village choir whose dulcet notes set every microphone throbbing. But also responsibility lies in the pitiful lure stage and screen possess for every daughter of Eve from eight to eighty.

The advent of talking pictures has enormously increased the number of those who vision a fairyland of fame and fortune if they can only reach Hollywood. Once every passably good looking young woman who could raise the railroad fare and a little over packed her trunk or suitcase and came to anchor within sight of Hollywood Boulevard. Just beauty was supposed to be enough to win preferment in a community where beauty of face and figure was among the druggiest drugs on a surfeited market. Periodically the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce broadcast warnings.

The restaurants, cafes and laundries profited mightily, however. The best looking waitresses and shirt ironers in the world are to be found in Hollywood. They did not come to wait and to iron, but to conquer. Then they found that starvation is unpleasant, and that crashing the studios was largely a matter of training and equipment most extraordinary. Not one attribute but many talents were needful, and unfortunately most of them had but appearance.

Then rumor had it that voice was important for the new talkies, and every female whose misguided family had "cultivated" Mamie's vocal resources, usually without the faintest reasonable excuse, realized where her destiny lay. The rush was on again.

Recently a famous director deplored the efforts to stem the tide, but he considered the situation solely from his own angle. The more aspirants there were to choose from, the better chance there was of picking a winner. Good for him, but terribly hard on the girls. The facts are that the whole picture acting business is tremendously overcrowded. There are a dozen or more applicants for every job, even in the upper ranks, and fifty for every minor opportunity. Not one face, figure or voice in fifteen thousand is worth a second thought, and the chance that even that one will catch the attention of the officials is remote indeed.

Several organizations in Hollywood find it possible to send girls back home before the tragedy point is reached, but others stay, and do their best to find jobs in a community that has few such opportunities. The best advice to the young girl whose eyes are turned screenward is to discount all success yarns and stay at home!

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