

# Film Charm in Frailty and High Cheekbones

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STYLES in hats, styles in music, styles in automobiles! Why not styles in beauty? Hollywood, the world's market for pulchritude, where a pretty face can net a third of a million dollars a year without ever mussing the water wave, has a current style of beauty. It is the girl with the high cheek bones and sunken cheeks. That certain blase, exotic effect so sought after by the admirers of Dietrich and Garbo is a thing traceable to various causes, differing somewhat in the case of each girl, but in the main ascribable to dieting and physical frailty. Some authorities would scream at the thought of a modern screen star lacking in healthy ruggedness, claiming that such a charge would be unfair and tend to rob her of the glamor she possesses.

This would not be the first time in the history of style or of beauty that some bodily peculiarity or misfortune had influence a style trend. What French king was it who, because he was so short, introduced high heels to general favor to lend him dignity? Legend has it that it was a lisp king of Spain who made popular the present Castilian accent, now so hotly disputed by South Americans, who claim it is a wrong to foist such a standard of Spanish pronunciation on a more virile populace.

Motion picture always have had a type of beauty slightly different from the stage variety, because of the fact that things look a little different when seen through the eye of a camera, which has a tendency to enlarge a figure in apparent height and weight ten to twenty per cent.

## Stars of Old Statuesque

The early belles of the screen, who slew 'em in their seats, had very feminine figures. Theda Bara, a great box office personality, was of statuesquely rounded build, as were Kathlyn Williams, Betty Blythe, Ethel Clayton, Barbara La Marr, Clara Kimball Young, Valeska Suratt, and others of their time. Perhaps because of the vogue of siren melodramas in that era, the film favorites tended to be brunette and to show their femininity plainly. A blonde in that era always played a sympathetic role. A brunette might or might not, but a blonde? Always!

The vogue for the smaller girls grew apace. The sleek-haired, plump



"Joan Crawford's story is practically the same." (That foreign look largely due to high cheek bones and drawn-in cheeks.)

brunette became passe, except for lady villains. There was a practical reason for that, too. Many of the men who were playing leading roles in those days, who had made names for themselves with the public, were, like Richard Barthelmess, Douglas Fairbanks, Harold Lloyd, and Charles Chaplin, short men. A leading lady simply had to be small, or she could only play with a limited number of male luminaries, like William S. Hart, Wallace Reid, and others, whose six feet and over made it safe for a leading lady to be full sized.

## New Type Emerges

Nearly all of the Sennett beauties in those years were small—Mabel Normand and Gloria Swanson being outstanding examples. The dramatic leading ladies were best represented by Shirley Mason, five feet; her sister, Viola Dana, four feet ten; Mary Pickford, five feet; Bebe Daniels, the same; Betty Compson, five feet two; Bessie Love, five feet; Mary Miles Minter, five feet two; Blanche Sweet, five feet. This was the "ideal height." After the war the vogue for flat-chested boyish figures found tall and short girls vying with each other in diets to reduce to the desired standard. Something had happened to the world; a new type of woman was emerging, and she quickly found her counterpart on the screen. This strange type of beauty has hung on in various forms until the present outcropping of sunken-cheeked, high cheek boned beauties.

With the increasing sophistication of the American public, it became obvious that the short screen star was not the ideal clothes horse. Folks demanded smart drawing room dramas with the advent of talkies. Taller women became the vogue. With the coming of the long skirt, and the elaborations that have been popular in women's clothes since the passing of the knee-length chemise type of gown, a taller type became much in demand at



"Katharine Hepburn has experienced a lack of physical robustness which has accentuated the natural tendency of her face to be of the prevailing type." (Sunken cheeks here made more pronounced by peculiar lighting effect employed in the photography.)



"Marlene Dietrich . . . reduced her German rotundity to the American standards . . ."



"Dolores Del Rio . . . extreme slenderness and the attendant sunken cheeks."



"Claudette Colbert, endowed with high cheek bones, has obtained that shadowy cheeked effect through lapsing from the pink of condition a number of times during the last year."



"Adrienne Ames . . . retains her extreme slenderness . . . by diet."



"Lupe Velez . . . physical frailty has accentuated the feature . . ."

the casting offices. For the last six years casting directors have been demanding taller leading men, which made it possible for the taller type of girl to come into her own. Carole Lombard, Adrienne Ames, and Kay Francis represented the show girl type that wore clothes well and was tall enough to make an effect in them. A girl five feet six or even more became the ideal, contrasting with the five-foot and five-foot-two damsel of pre-talkie days.

Of course there always are smaller girls and taller girls than the prevalent type. Girls who, through sheer acting ability and beauty, claim attention, always can overcome the tendency to be too tall or too short. Garbo represents the extreme height; Claudette Colbert is on the other extreme.

There is a strong trend in Hollywood today toward the girl with the high cheek bones and slightly sunken cheeks. Artistically there is a reason for the popularity of this type. Cameramen claim that beauty in the films is most easily obtained with a face that has strong contrasts of light and shadow,

which this type of face supplies more completely than any other. A certain elusive, glamorous, wistful quality is its charm. Psychologically, can it be said that the American public through the depression has been mentally "conditioned" to see beauty in sunken cheeks? Perhaps. These high cheek bones and shadowy cheeks are the result of heredity plus environment. Environment refers to diet or a disregard of the rules of health.

## Glamor in Frailty

Dolores Del Rio and Lupe Velez, like all good Mexicans, boast of their Indian blood. This supplies both of them with the high cheek bones; in both cases physical frailty has accentuated the feature by coupling with it extreme slenderness and the attendant sunken cheeks.

Greta Garbo has high cheek bones and slightly indented cheeks, aided and abetted by dimples and dieting.

Marlene Dietrich always showed this feature in her appearance, but it became accented when she came to Hollywood and reduced her German rotundity to the American standards of 20 per cent under medical weight.

Carole Lombard showed herself as a plump-cheeked miss when with Mack



"Alice White comes by the high cheek bones naturally but diet produced the shadowed cheeks."

Sennett years ago, but her drastic reduction at the start of her career as a dramatic actress at Paramount produced the exotic lines you see today. Joan Crawford's story is the same.

Adrienne Ames retains her extreme slenderness to the point of mania by diet. Alice White comes by the high cheek bones naturally, but diet produced the shadowed cheeks.

Claudette Colbert, endowed with high cheek bones, has obtained that shadowy cheeked effect through lapsing from the pink of condition a number of times during the last year.

Katharine Hepburn has experienced a lack of physical robustness which has accentuated the natural tendency of her face to be of the prevailing type. Constance Bennett, too, can blame or thank fragility for her exotic face.



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