

Looking at Hollywood with Ed Sullivan



(Scotty Welbourne photo.)
Pat O'Brien and his daughter, Margaret Mavourneen.

By ED SULLIVAN

WHAD lunch in Loretta Young's bungalow at the Twentieth Century-Fox lot the other noon. It was a very good lunch, too—meat balls and spaghetti with a very palatable tomato sauce. Director William Seiter, Joel McCrea, and Stu Erwin were Loretta's guests, and I thought to myself,

thought I, this will be a good place to get an earful of inside studio stuff.

"Were your children at the Jack Warners' youngsters' party?" Director Seiter asked McCrea. "No, they weren't," said McCrea, helping himself to the meat balls and spilling some gravy on the tablecloth. "Frank Capra's youngsters were out at

The Real Rulers of Wild and Woolly Hollywood—the Actors' Children

the ranch, and they were riding around all afternoon in that miniature Wells-Fargo stagecoach. Here are some pictures I took of them." Miss Young bubbled as she looked at them. "Don't get me talking about my baby," she said, "because she says the cutest things any little girl ever said." Loretta's little girl is an adopted infant.

For one solid hour they talked about their children, and when they got into the studio car to drive back to the stage they were still telling each other what Junior said and how he said it. That, my friends, is what is going on out here in wild and woolly Hollywood day in and day out. I've never seen such a town for babies, and if you don't think these actors and actresses are devoted parents you have another think coming. Hollywood is the west coast proof that "a little child shall lead them."

The adopted babies in this town are legion, and a number of these mites come from the Cradle in Evanston, Ill. No grander thing has been done by Hollywood, to my way of thinking, than to adopt these little tikes who otherwise would start out in life with two strikes on them before they went to bat. The movie stars bring them into homes that have every advantage. The children get the best of food and care, fine environment, and, most important of all, they get a very deep and sincere love.

Jack Benny the other night was talking about success. "Say, I'd trade it all in," he said, "to have that little girl upstairs wrap her arms around me." The little girl is Joan Benny, an adopted daughter. It is amusing to hear Benny talk about Joanie, because he is just as conceited as a real father. He showed us some pictures of her and said seriously: "Mary says that Joanie looks a little like me. What do you think?" We assured him that there was a resemblance, and he was delighted. When foster-fatherhood reaches that stage it is marvelous, and it testifies anew to the fact that a baby's helplessness is the most compelling form of salesmanship in the world. Little Joanie Benny has taken over the Benny home lock, stock, and barrel, and in their new home now building the little adopted daughter will have a nursery that is the last word in scientific design.

To appreciate the thrill that



Gretchen, daughter of Norman and Sally Blane Foster.

these childless actors and actresses get from their adopted children you must understand the people of the stage. For years most of them trouped through vaudeville, medicine shows, burlesque, and musical comedies. They lived in hotels and on trains and became older in the process of earning a living.

Then along came the movies and radio and they didn't have

resultant scramble for children. It wasn't a fad or a whim of the moment. They had to go before the courts of the various states to prove their fitness as parents, and in most instances they had to file their applications and then wait for a year or two years or even three years. No lovelier story ever has been written in Hollywood than this true story of the movie stars in quest of children to mother and father. They had fame and fortune, but they were lonely for children's voices in their homes, for tiny arms around their necks, and their sense of frustration was understandable.

So now Hollywood is full of adopted babies and other babies, and it's a nicer place to live in, because the babies have brought permanency to the colony and a thrilling interest. Actors who once sat in the Lambs club and Friars club and played rummy or shot pool now rush home to play with the youngsters. And you ought to hear them carry on about their children! When



Norman and his mother, Joan Blondell, greet Dick Powell at the railroad station.

to troupe any longer. They settled down in Hollywood, and it was almost pathetic to see how eagerly they went out with real estate agents to find a HOME. They had enjoyed every experience, but not since childhood had any of them had a home. So they bought or rented homes in Beverly and Bel-Air and Brenwood and invited their vaudeville friends in to look the place over with a pardonable pride. They engaged Bill Haines and others in the interior decorating business to come in and slick the places up. By the time they got finished the actors and actresses had their homes—magnificent homes, too—but they were conscious of something that was missing to make their homes complete—children.

At first they were abashed to bring up the subject of children. But they looked into it and investigated and learned that there were orphanages that had babies that could be adopted. Not since the California gold rush has there been anything to compare with the

Wallace Beery starts talking about his Carol Ann, or Virginia Bruce displays Susan Ann Gilbert, aged 5, they are changed people. George Burns of Burns and Allen almost struts sitting down when Sandra and Ronnie come into the living room to kiss Gracie and him good night. The Academy award dinner was rendered memorable when Mrs. Spencer Tracy accepted the statuette for "Spencer, Susan, Johnnie and me."



Wallace Beery's daughter, Carol Ann.



Susan, Frank McHugh's daughter.



Fear of kidnapers has been a natural reaction to the tidal wave of Hollywood babies. While this fear has abated, some of the stars still refuse to let their children be photographed. Fred Astaire is still adamant in this respect. Other stars (but these are in the minority) don't favor photographs because they believe glamor girls should not be publicized as mothers.

Groucho Marx is one of the very proudest pops in town, and with good reason. Mrs. Marx, a pretty Swedish girl, won the Beverly Hills tennis championship, and her son Arthur won the junior boys' championship of the club the same year. Groucho is prouder of the fact that his wife and boy won the club tennis titles than he is of anything he's ever achieved on stage or screen.

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Victor McLaglen, Harold Lloyd, Joe E. Brown, Eddie Cantor, Wally Beery, Charlie Chaplin, Bob Burns, Andy Devine, Gary Cooper, Joel McCrea, Pat O'Brien, Frank McHugh, Harpo Marx, Robert Young, Lewis Stone, Allan Jones, Robert Montgomery, William Powell, Don Ameche, John Carradine, Borrah Minnevitich, Norman Foster, Al Jolson, Phil Baker, Dick Arlen, Ben Lyon, Edward G. Robinson, and Roger Pryor are just a few of the fathers in this colony—with their own or adopted children. Norma Shearer, Leatrice Joy, Virginia Bruce, Marlene Dietrich, Barbara Stanwyck, Joan Bennett, Joan Blondell, Loretta Young, Gloria Swanson, and Irene Dunne are a few of the mothers—of their own or adopted children.

Let it be told to the world that the movie stars make grand parents and that the children live normal lives. They are not more pampered and petted than your youngster, and they get spanked just as regularly.

Let me conclude this article with a story that bears retelling because it is so charming a solution of a difficult problem. The stars who have adopted children always dread the day when it will be necessary to explain to

the youngsters that they are adopted. One star solved it very gracefully. He and his wife took their little adopted daughter out shopping and told her that she could have anything she chose in the store. She selected five or six articles, and when they returned home the mother asked her why, out of all the things in the store, the little girl had selected only five or six. "I chose these because



Sandra, daughter of George Burns and Gracie Allen.

I wanted them most," said the little girl logically. So then the mother explained that once upon a time they went out to find a little daughter, and that they saw hundreds of little girls, but that they had chosen her because she was the only one they desired. "You wanted me most, mummy?" asked the little girl, and the mother nodded. That is the best picture I can give you of Hollywood's attitude toward its adopted children.



Susan Ann Gilbert, daughter of Virginia Bruce and the late John Gilbert.

SOCIETY GIRL WARNS THOSE WHO SEEK ROMANCE



"PROTECT YOUR PERSONAL DAINTINESS" ...says Jo Ann Robinson of Kansas City

"A GIRL MUST PROTECT HER PERSONAL DAINTINESS AT ALL TIMES IF SHE WANTS TO BE POPULAR"



"IF IT'S ROMANCE YOU'RE AFTER, DON'T DEPEND ON ORDINARY SOAP TO KEEP YOU DAINTY. NO ORDINARY SOAP STOPS 'B.O.' AS LIFEBOUY DOES"



"AFTER HORSEBACK RIDING I FIND LIFEBOUY INVALUABLE IN RESTORING MY FRESHNESS AND PEPPIING ME UP"



"YEARS AS A LIFEBOUY USER HAVE TAUGHT ME I CAN DEPEND ON IT FOR THE MOST LUXURIOUS BATH IMAGINABLE!"



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radiant... And scientific tests prove Lifebuoy Health Soap over 20% milder than many leading "beauty" and "baby" soaps!

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Voice of the Movie Fan

Letters published in this department should be written on one side of the paper. If you wish a personal reply please inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Dear Miss Tinée: I have found Rhett Butler! After viewing the splendid performance of George Sanders in "Lancer Spy" I wonder why directors look farther for a perfect Rhett. Of course, his accent would have to be changed. But directors can do anything!

Will you please give me a brief biography of that splendid actor Oscar Homolka? Is he from the stage? The "Movie News" wrote that he is an Englishman. That is a mistake—he is a Czech.

I like your column very, very much and hope you can spare a few lines for me.

Sincerely,

MRS. A. F. P.

Editor's note: Mrs. Columbus, eh! Oscar Homolka was born in Vienna in 1901. Educated at Vienna Dramatic academy. Mr. Homolka played comedian roles until the war. He enlisted and when he returned portrayed dramatic rôles. He has appeared in many stage productions, including "Emperor Jones."... I'm very, very glad you like the column.

Dear Miss Tinée: I have just read Miss Alyce L. Millard's note about Annabella.

I didn't see "The Baroness and the Butler," but I read it, and I didn't think I'd care for it. I do think, however, that the part of the baroness wasn't the kind of a part for Annabella. I saw her in "Wings of the Morning," which was absolutely tops. I believe if Miss Millard had seen that she wouldn't dislike her so much. I think she is a grand actress, and I hope to see much more of her.

As for foreigners, I suppose Colbert,

Simone Simon, and all the rest are punk, too.

P. S.—Let's have a picture and some information about Henry Wilcoxon, who played King Richard in "The Crusades." Thanks.

Editor's note: Miss Millard please reply. Henry Wilcoxon was born in the British West Indies, Sept. 8, 1905. He's 6 feet 2 inches tall and has brown hair and hazel eyes. In 1927 he made his debut on the London stage. His screen career started in 1931.

Dear Mae Tinée: Three cheers for Tim Holt for the splendid work he did in "Stella Dallas" and "Gold Is Where You Find It." I find his acting most enjoyable and hope he will carry the Holt name on to greater glory. Will you please print a brief biography of his life and also describe him? Thanks for listening.

Yours truly,
D. E. C.
Editor's note: Thanks for writing! Tim is the son of Jack Holt, screen star. He's



HENRY WILCOXON
The King Richard of
"The Crusades."

5 feet 11 inches tall, weighs 165 pounds, and has brown hair and eyes. Educated Carl Curtis grammar school and Culver Military academy. His hobby is raising cocker spaniels.

Dear Miss Tinée: I saw the picture "Big Broadcast of 1938" and must say I was disappointed. In the first place, W. C. Fields has been playing that same old golf and pool game since 'way back in the "Ziegfeld Follies." It's time he got something new.

Dorothy Lamour in a sarong costume was a hit in "Hurricane" and "Jungle Princess," but doesn't go over big singing in "Big Broadcast." A good deal of the picture was poor.

I have been going to movies since Biograph days, and the recent picture, "The Awful Truth," was the only movie I ever saw four times and liked better each time.

Yours very truly,
HARRY T. JOHNSON.
Editor's note: Now, don't you go getting blasé!