



*Mary Pickford and Owen Moore in "The Wife," an Imp photoplay directed by Thomas H. Ince.*



# Mary Pickford:

## *Herself and Her Career*

### Part III

*Illustrated by Rare and Authentic Photographs*

HER PHOTOPLAY BEGINNINGS, WITH  
BIOGRAPH; HER SUCCESSES, HER ROMANCE,  
AND THE IMP EXPEDITION TO CUBA

By Julian Johnson



**D**URING the comparatively short period between Mary Pickford's two Belasco engagements came the most momentous hours of her life; neither fame, fortune nor artistic progress can vouchsafe again such wonders as those brought by the Biograph-Imp years, which introduced her to the medium of expression in which she was destined to be supreme, brought love into her life, and laid at her shy young feet the laurel of world-wide renown.

So this division of the story begins with Belasco and ends with Belasco. It starts at the conclusion of her long and successful portrayal of the little girl *Betty Warren*, in "The Warrens of Virginia," and terminates as Mr. Belasco persuades her to come back to Broadway in the flesh—a return to stardom, an incandescent name, and *Juliet*, the most remarkable figure in "A Good Little Devil." The stories of both these engagements Mr. Belasco has already told readers of PHOTOPLAY MAGAZINE, with most engaging and inimitable literary simplicity. Here is a brief account of the

great days between—the hours in which Mary Pickford found herself, and in which the world found Mary Pickford.

In the almost rural quiet of the northernmost part of New York City rises a temple of cinematic art which is to the early picture-making places as the Parthenon was to the groveland temples of the Druids. It is the new Biograph studio: a magnificent building, inhabited by pretty much the same organization, managerially, which prevailed at the historic first studio at 11 East Fourteenth street, the same municipality. That first studio, now abandoned, has had a lot of figurative names. It has been called "the cradle of the movies," "the kindergarten of photoplay," and "the birthplace of screen celebrity."

The last synonym is astonishingly factual. Not everyone who has contributed substantially to directing or acting art in motion pictures came out of the old Biograph studio, but for a large per cent of today's great ones it was the starting place.

When "The Warrens of Virginia" began to wane as a first-magnitude attraction, little Mary Pickford cast about for something



"Little Mary"  
in the center  
of the origin-  
al Imp Com-  
pany

*Left to right—  
top row—George  
L. Tucker, David  
Miles, Mrs. Smith,  
mother of the  
Pickfords; Bob  
Daly, Tony Gau-  
dio.*

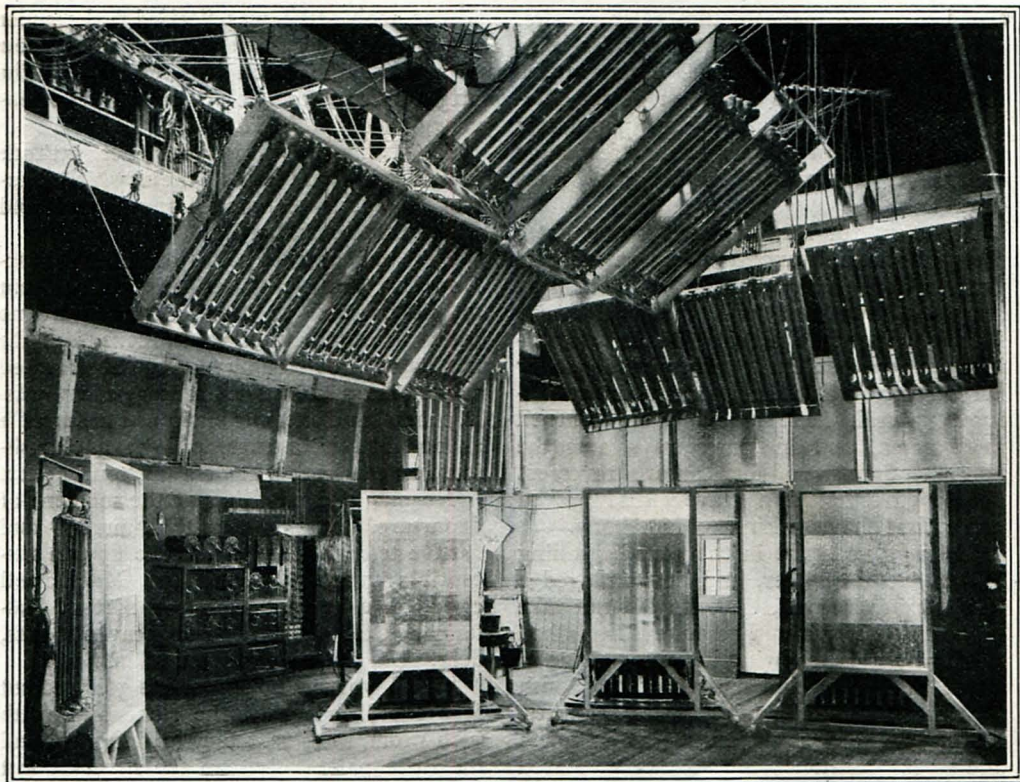
*Second row—  
William E. Shay,  
Anita Herndon, J.  
Farrell MacDon-  
ald, Hayward  
Mack, Mrs. Mac-  
Donald, Jack Har-  
vey.*

*Third row (seat-  
ed)—Tom Ince,  
Owen Moore,  
Mary Pickford,  
King Baggot, Col.  
Joe Smiley.*

*Bottom row—  
Isabel Rea, Jack  
Pickford, Lottie  
Pickford.*







*Interior of the old Biograph studio, New York. This is "the Cradle of the Movies." Here are the earliest Cooper-Hewitt lamps in a studio.*

else to do. She had made good, but she was not rich, by no means famous, and the maintenance of the family depended upon the efforts of its individual members.

Mary had no particular acquaintance with anyone connected with the motion picture industry, but the Biograph was the obvious place for a picture beginner, and to Fourteenth street she went. It was to General Manager Dougherty—the same who now rules the shadow-palace far uptown—that she introduced herself.

There was nothing for her.

But Dougherty was so impressed with her quaint sweetness and charm; with her forceful, yet mouselike little personality, that he took her name and address and kept her in mind.

She took success as it came, and the camera felt out her possibilities with deliberate caution: Mary Pickford was an "extra." She was a prompt, obedient, uncomplaining and *on time* extra day after day.

Then came the first part. Recollective

authorities differ as to just what the play was, but Mr. Dougherty, who is probably right, says that it was "The Violin-Maker of Cremona."

Mary's account of this, as a terror and nightmare, is droll.

"It was particularly awful to make love to my play sweetheart," she avers; "not because I was afraid of him, especially, but because the camera confused and frightened me, the empty studio and the mechanically silent camera man embarrassed me, and I held back, and trembled, until the director shouted: 'For heaven's sake, do you love this man, or hate him? Put your arms around him, and let him put his arms around you!'"

"This man" was Owen Moore. The director, David Wark Griffith.

David Myles played the Cripple, and that completed the little cast of principals.

Mary Pickford was an immediate and instantaneous success with the Biograph company, which then had a redoubtable phalanx of future world-beaters in all de-



partments, and made picture after picture.

Yet, anecdotes of this sweet wonder-child are few and far between. Even in the jubilee of her reign as queen of the Biograph studios—enjoying a popularity among her fellow-players such as few stage folk have ever won—"Little Mary" was not a mixer.

Made up for her part, she would enter the studio and sit unobtrusively on one side until called. Occasionally her very real sense of humor would prompt her to speech. Once in a great while the resounding temper that lurks unsuspected under her serenity would smash forth in an abrupt, natural, flashing explosion. Much more often, and in many ways, was the large tenderness of her nature revealed. She loved a few and gravely disapproved a few, but she was kind to everybody.

She was an artist in the very beginning of her picture career, and never played a part, however small, that she did not take seriously—how seriously was revealed when a fellow-player, showing her a magazine in which some half-clad natives of the South Seas were shown looking at her pictures, remarked lightly: "You see your social circle is millions big!" Mary stared awhile into infinity, and then answered, softly: "That thought is so big that it frightens me."

At least one Biograph reminiscence illustrates her depth of regard for a casual acquaintance.

It was after she had attained success. A girl of about her own age, given her first chance as an extra in a mob scene, was ready to go on when word was brought that she must return at once to the bedside of an ailing mother for whose sake she was making desperate endeavors to earn five dollars a day. The message meant not only that her mother had suffered a turn for the worse; it meant that just so much greater would be the need of five dollars that day—and, too, that there would be none!

As the girl went out, furtively dabbing her eyes, someone touched her shoulder. She turned around to face Mary Pickford. "Don't cry!" whispered Mary. "Go home smiling, for your mother's sake, and your five dollars will be here tomorrow." The girl stared in noncomprehension. "Come back just a minute," whispered the little Pickford, more gently, "and leave your costume and your make-up in my room!"

The mob scene was "called," the super responded to her name, and very few knew that under the black wig and within the bright Neapolitan colors stood the *sotto-voce* Queen of the Movies.

In striking contrast was her attitude toward her own serious illness, which overtook her at Beechhurst, Long Island, and which threatened her life.

She was at the home of Claire MacDowell. The physicians ordered her sent to the hospital at once. There were no trains making proper connections, and the trip had to be made by motor. She refused to ride in an ambulance because of its gruesomeness, and she was made as comfortable as possible, with rugs, pillows and cushions, on the back seat of a big touring car.

No one said anything at the moment of departure. It was terribly funeral, and furtive tears were beginning to flow in susceptible quarters when Miss MacDowell cried, in a voice that was a sort of hysterical little shout: "For heaven's sake, dear, hold on to your sense of humor!"

"Well, you bet no surgeon is going to cut *that* out!" shot back the sick child, with such promptness that they all laughed, and the little patient sent up the silvery ghost of a chortle herself. Contemporary history renders it quite unnecessary to add that she returned alive and well.

When Mary came to the Biograph studio there was already in the company the young man destined to be the winning contestant of the many who made marital overtures. Owen Moore, now her husband, became smitten with the dainty "new girl," and made ardent love to her in many a picture which doubtless impressed the audience as the real thing. It was the real thing.

The romance of Owen Moore and Mary Pickford is one of three which ripened under the lurid blaze of those East Eleventh street Cooper-Hewitts. Other targets of Cupid were Florence Lawrence, who married Harry Solter; and Gretchen Hartman, in private life Mrs. Alan Hale.

Apropos of Moore and the Moore-to-be is a characteristic story of Mr. Griffith, their director. He had a situation in which it was necessary for Mary to register very real anger. Mary was in a particularly angelic mood that day, and nothing could ruffle her brow and temperament to the pitch Griffith desired. Owen Moore happened to be working in this scene, and, as



# Mary Pickford in Biograph Days



*"Little Mary" and Blanche Sweet in "With the Enemy's Help."*



*Mary Pickford and W. Chrystie Miller in "The Unwelcome Guest."*



*It was "All On Account of the Milk," with Arthur Johnson, Mary Pickford, Mack Sennett.*



*Mary and Lionel (Ethel Barrymore's brother) in "The New York Hat."*



*In "The Mender of Nets," one scene showed Mary with Mabel Normand as Charles H. West burst into the room.*



*Another notable who Biographed opposite Mary was Henry Walthall. Above is a quaint scene from "The Reformer."*





Thomas H. Ince (left) and Ray Smallwood, during their *Imp* days.

everyone had noticed, he was playing particularly well. Suddenly, without changing the position of the characters or calling a halt in the action, Griffith, with no apparent cause, began a furious and insulting tirade against Moore.

There was absolutely no justice in the torrent of vehement abuse being sustained by the astonished actor—but everyone failed to notice that while the playmaster was deriding and belittling the young man, he kept his eye steadily on the young man's sweetheart. Moore didn't know what to do, but Mary's astonishment quickly turned to exasperation, and her exasperation to positive rage—here Griffith suddenly cried "Camera!" And Mary's coy anger, called out of its little secret kennel by trickery, was potted for perpetuity and the proletariat.

It was not often, however, that false expedients were necessary to make the wee artist put feeling and power into any scene. Her Biograph engagement demonstrated, in the language of General Manager Dougherty, who discovered her as a picture possibility:—"that she is a born actress, capable of dainty comedy, rollicking farce,

deep sentiment, and the heights of tragedy."

Her success was more amazing in view of the fact that she came to Biograph untutored in camera arts, and had immediately pitted against her such players as Arthur Johnson, Blanche Sweet, Mack Sennett, Harry Carey, Mae Marsh, Mabel Normand and Florence Lawrence.

One of the secrets of that and later success has been the frank sincerity in which she has accepted either the conscious or unconscious instruction of others at all stages of her career. She has never been too wise to learn. With this, she possesses the faculty of selection, and something of a director's ability, so there is no occasion for surprise in the fact that her late contracts give her the right to accept or reject plays in which she may appear. Many an incident or bit of business is the result of her own keen analysis of situation.

And she has to her credit the discovery of a brace of future stars at a time when she herself was low on the ladder of fame. Having met two young girls on a pleasure excursion, she saw in them the makings of capable photoplay actresses. Accordingly, she persuaded them to visit the Biograph studios. They came, Griffith saw, and Mary conquered. They were engaged to appear in a picture called "An Unseen Enemy," in which they played sisters. They *were* sisters, and their names were, and are, Lillian and Dorothy Gish.

Mary Pickford's days with the redoubtable old "Imp" company, following her Biograph beginnings, are less known, but no less adventurous, and were fraught with much further knowledge and experience for her.

The most important part of this engagement was the Cuban season, begun upon the S. S. Havana, of the Ward line. Among the departees were Owen Moore and Mary Pickford as a very surreptitious husband and wife. They had been married by a justice of the peace, and not even Mrs. Pickford, Mary's mother—who had some time since rejoined her daughter—knew until they were at sea that young Moore had actually made her daughter his bride. To accord with the usages of the Catholic church, of which both are communicants, they were remarried by a Franciscan friar last spring, at Mission San Juan, Capistrano, California. Allan



Dwan and Pauine Bush were married at the same time, by the same friar.

It has been said, quite often, that Mary Pickford's mother objected to this marriage. She did. But not in the usual narrow, conventional way. Familiar with her daughter's every thought since babyhood she, perhaps alone of all who knew or had seen her, felt keenly the tremendous career impending, and did not wish the girl's best interests jeopardized by any swiftly taken bond she might regret but could not release. Besides, Mary was very, very young.

It has been said that she has continued to object to this marriage and has been an obstacle in the path of the Moore-Pickford domesticity. To prove what a cheap calumny this is, and to reveal as well the staunch and admirable character of Mrs. Pickford, I need only relate a critical incident which occurred but a few weeks after her discovery of her daughter's wedding—while there existed between herself and Mr. Moore at least a state of preparedness.

One of the directors intensely disliked Moore, and let slip but few opportunities to show his hatred. Moore was seized with a sort of tropic fever, and, in a continuous state of moderate temperature and hard work, was probably no more angelic than he should have been. Cuban jails at that time were frequently fatal to the acclimated natives, and, pestilential places of no ventilation that they were, would assuredly be fatal to an unaccustomed person from the United States who had the additional handicap of illness. Gaining a quick familiarity with the local laws governing cases of assault, Moore's director-enemy framed a fake case with the native steward. Properly incited, Moore turned on his baiters, and quickly gave cause for the issuance of a jail warrant. Mrs. Pickford saw through the whole thing at once. And here the conspirators had reckoned without destiny's leading lady. Knowing that the news of Mary's marriage had been the bitterest of surprises, they counted at least on the passive acquiescence of Mrs. Pickford in their effort to cart Owen Moore off to the penitentiary and doom. Moore's fever had now risen until he was unable to leave his bed. His wife knew nothing of the affair, but Mrs. Pickford, exercising every wile



*Lottie Pickford (seated) and Mary in the Imp production, "The Prince's Portrait," taken in Cuba.*

that she had learned in a fighting lifetime, using all the force of a rugged and unafraid personality, refused to permit the service of anything like a warrant, stood off the conniving "authorities" with weapons and a valiantly heralded American citizenship, and undoubtedly saved the life of the son-in-law she has been falsely accused of hating.

The Imp organization at this time was assuredly a splendid and distinguished company. Here the Pickford family was again reunited, Lottie, Jack and Mrs. Pickford joining Mary in her photoplay work, and among those who sailed with them on the Havana were J. Farrel Macdonald, Robert William Dailey, King Baggott, Joseph Smiley, Dave Myles and Elizabeth Rhea, an ingenue. J. Parker Reed went as a representative of the Edison company.

Twelve pictures were made, and among the most important were "The Message in the Bottle," "The Prince's Portrait," and "Memories of Yesterday." The principal places which the company chose for studios were Pinar del Rio and Matanzas.



One of the younger directors and actors of this island excursion was Thomas H. Ince, then just climbing from the ranks toward his present place in the front line of photographic playmakers.

Miss Pickford joined the Biograph company approximately in June, 1909, and concluded that particular engagement in December, 1910. She rejoined the Biograph forces in December, 1911, and left

in the autumn of 1912. You will note the interlude. Here came the Imp engagement, which lasted seven or eight months.

After Biograph, Mary Pickford's next venture of great public interest was her return to David Belasco, and her stellar appearance in "A Good Little Devil," which, as has been said, was described by Mr. Belasco himself, in the December issue of PHOTOPLAY MAGAZINE.

## Stars

**T**WINKLE, twinkle, little star,  
 In the sky so high and far!  
 You, though bright and shining, very,  
 Can't compare with Little Mary!  
 —*Mary Carolyn Davies.*

# THE FEBRUARY NUMBER OF Photoplay Magazine

will contain an absorbing and  
 vividly illustrated account of

## Mary Pickford's

ultimate triumphs with The  
 Famous Players—the mountain  
 top of her career, under a  
 new searchlight.