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# NEWS OF THE MONTH

**T**HIS is our new page. You saw it in August, it skipped September, and now it appears again. It will appear at intervals—of irregular frequency as the statisticians say; and it will tell you some of the background of the magazine, the sort of thing the editors tell their friends and families but that somehow rarely gets itself printed.

## Gene Gauntier Again

**I**T IS not her first appearance. Though you may not remember her name it was blazoned on the movies when they were Cinderella in the ashes by the fireside, long before they turned into Cinderella at the ball. And in those days she turned down Mary Pickford! But for that episode you must wait till a later installment.

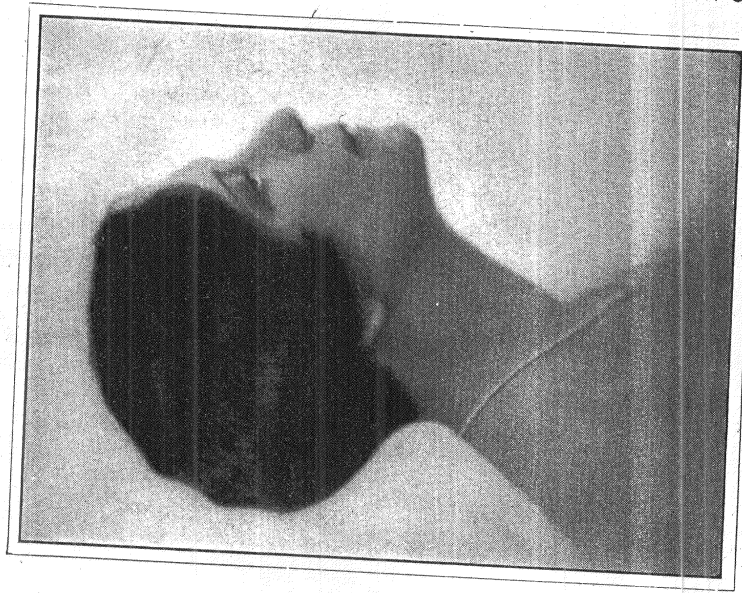
One of the editors was talking of Miss Gauntier's manuscript to Epes Winthrop Sargent, lately managing editor of the Moving Picture World but once, like Gene Gauntier herself, in at the start of coming events that cast quivering shadows before them. "Why—Gene Gauntier," said Mr. Sargent, "she was there when—" and he went on to say so much that was so fascinating that we got the editor to write it down for us. Mr. Sargent:

"So Gene Gauntier is writing her memoirs. Gene Gauntier came into the pictures when it was regarded as something akin to disgrace to be connected with this newest amusement industry.

"Miss Gauntier was one of the few who had the vision and the faith to look ahead and she was one of the few who brought about the justification of that faith.

"While Blazing the Trail deals chiefly with the story of Kalem, it is in a way the story of those early days in all the studios, though Kalem of all the production units had no place to call home. Started with little capital the company could not possibly go to the expense of a studio, so all the scenes were made in the open. Kalem made pictures cheaply even for those days when \$350 was the average production cost.

"You who read the story Miss Gauntier has written will have a new conception of the motion picture industry in the making; of the brave souls who brought it into being.



A 1928 photograph of Gene Gauntier, who wrote movies and acted in them in the dawn of their history

To Frederick Collins whom we asked to write its history it is plain to see it is an exciting adventure. He went to the big radio studios; he saw as well as heard the brilliant extempore broadcasting that McNamee does at a sporting event, he watched the figures of the radio world in their habit as they lived.

The thrill in capturing and tethering space is strikingly communicated in Mr. Collins' informal recital: Who can read coldly the broadcaster's comment on Shakespeare's fancy?

## There's More to Meet the Eye

**Y**ET with all Mr. Collins has told much remains untold, for radio is a world in itself.

This month is Lotta's last appearance in Troupers of the Gold Coast. It is also one of the most fascinating parts of the story; a mellow picture of the past of the American stage, as readable and as strange as a piece of fiction. You will enjoy it even if you have missed the previous chapters.

## The Story of a Story

**A** STORY in itself too is the story of Miss Lourke's research into this material. Like Lotta she got her first view of the lovely California city by sailing into San Francisco Bay and later she went up the Sacramento to the places Lotta had played. Holding fast the thread of California theatrical history, she searched files of papers, clippings, letters, diaries, in the state's fine public and private collections, and met and talked with many people, reporting to us as the work progressed: "I have now a fairly large acquaintance here in several walks of life. Yesterday I went to see an old song and dance man who, in the midst of a picturesque narrative, suddenly tilted back his chair and his head and bawled forth, 'Never take the horseshoe from the dawh!'" Her enthusiasm grew as she continued her research and at another date she wrote: "The background against which Lotta appeared is one of the most remarkable in the world—there just never was anything like it." In telling the story she blended personal and theatrical history hoping, as she said, that it would all "unroll much as it did for the people of the time, with Lotta as a curtain raiser, gradually coming forward more and more strongly and in the end epitomizing something of the gay spirit of the time—carrying it forward through years."

To our mind Miss Lourke's final act of devotion was the following of Lotta's trail into the mining camps. Many of them are still inaccessible judged by modern standards and when she started out the thermometer read 110 degrees. To every place in California where Lotta had played her historian went, sometimes rewarded by the sight of the boarding house Lotta had stayed at, sometimes finding in the disregarded files of a discarded

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### The Radio Steps Out

AND now the world has another founding of whose future we know as little as we knew of the movies in the days Miss Gauntier writes of. This is radio. Some people think it a toy, some find it a blessing, to others it is merely one more nuisance and yet others make it a cause and a crusade.

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YET with all Mr. Collins has told much remains untold, for radio is a world in itself with its own way of doing things—its own quirks and whims.

Watch the girl in the broadcasting studio reading into the microphone the lines of a play and you see her drop each sheet to the floor as she finishes it, until she stands in a small snowdrift of discarded paper. What you cannot see as you look through the soundproof glass wall of the studio are the pencil marks on the margin telling her how many seconds each speech should consume. And inside the tiny audition rooms to which the public is not admitted duplicate sheets are being held and discarded by an anxious director who checks the pencil marks against the two-faced clock on the wall. One face is a clock as you know it in your kitchen: the other quite as large has 60 figures, each a second long and its single hand completes its race round the big dial once a minute.

In New York this all goes on in a room fifteen stories above the street, but once in this room with floor, ceiling and three walls made of cement, you might be a hundred feet underground.

The sound comes from the near-by microphone, not directly, but through a loud speaker, so if the set is turned over for a moment you have the uncanny sensation of seeing speech form on lips, communications provoke silent laughter and performers glide noiselessly by on the other side of the glass wall.

Have you heard that the COMPANION Radio Hour comes back from its vacation this month? Be sure to listen in on September 26, at 8 P. M., Eastern Standard Time.

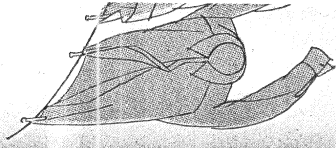
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Many appreciations of the results of this side of her work have come to Miss Rourke, and the California State Library has paid graceful tribute to that and to the COMPANION's presentation of the material by binding in a special volume the six issues in which Troupers of the Gold Coast appeared. They will of course have for their readers thought it a matter of historical record worthy of preservation to show the story as it looked on our larger pages and with the numerous drawings, paintings and sketches made specially for the COMPANION. In illustrating this biography Miss Rourke supplied us with scores of old prints, wood-cuts, engravings, miniatures, paintings, cartes des visites and studio photographs, and we used every variety of medium suitable to the different subjects. Eight artists contributed to the illustrations and their work ranged from a cover design in water colors to redrawn photographs in charcoal.

This in our opinion is true Americana: a presentation of a period in American life that has been faithfully sought out, related with a lively eye to its drama and published in the magazine with all the skill, accuracy and beauty we can command.

Well—Lotta goes and the movies come—and this page you are to expect when you see it: no sooner.



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