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MARY PICKFORD

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# Mary Pickford Plus "Silent Money Talk"

By EDNA WRIGHT



ONEY talks in many instances, particularly when the owner is extremely wealthy, so one is not surprised often to read of the philanthropic work of John D.

Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie and others equally as well off in worldly goods. Characters such as the foregoing have made a name for themselves, so much of a one that their charity will long be remembered by future generations. While I would not condemn such worthy work by word or thought, there are many other persons of distinction deserving mention, who are continually opening their purses; yet in such cases the language of the money is known to but few, as it is "silent." Happening to know one, as charitable a little person as could be found, and who is beloved by the entire world, it occurred to me that others less fortunate in intimate friendship than myself might be interested in learning just what kind of language "silent money talk" is. The petite

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mademoiselle to whom I refer is none other than the most popular of all screen favorites, Mary Pickford.

Having kept to the smallest degree the familiar maxim, "Charity begins at home," Mary has strewn many a sad path with her small but continual little touches, leaving roses where once there were thorns. Only a word or two is necessary concerning her home life, as that field has been well covered by various writers from time to time. When the little Gladys Smith, for so she was called at the time of her stage debut, commenced her career as a professional entertainer, she was guided by the best of instructors—her mother. Sitting up late at night, sewing by a dim light, Mrs. Pickford made and designed all the costumes worn by the child actress. Every part was taught by her, and, never weary, laboring with untiring energy, she coached the girl who was later to become so famous. Thus she persevered on thru the days when Gladys Smith joined the Biograph Company, and became Mary Pickford, following her closely, assisting and directing at all times. After attaining

the position of the highest-salaried star in filmdom, Mary did not forget the one to whom she owes an endless debt, and "Mother" is the most precious in the household of Mary Pickford. This small, dark-haired woman, who still retains the energy so characteristic of her, is never permitted to long for a thing, and her desires are the first looked after, all because Mary believes in "Charity begins at home." One may think this not strange, and only a duty, yet from personal knowledge I might cite many instances where film favorites possessing fortunes have forgotten their mothers, who starved and struggled, assisting them to the heights they have now mounted to. So on thru the family does Mary allow her thoughtfulness to wander, and almost every branch can quote the unselfish help she has given them. But it is after attending to those most dear to her that Miss Pickford permits her money to do "silent talking."

One seldom reads or hears of Mary Pickford donating vast sums, such as \$25,000, or even \$10,000, as it is not thru these enormous amounts, which



MARY PICKFORD IN "THE FOUNDLING"

invariably attract public attention, that she has become so well loved. Unlike many, she does not think large checks always best, so, tho sums equivalent are distributed by her, few know of it. Only recently she presented a check for \$2,000 to the Home for Aged Actors and Actresses, which is probably one of the few times she has donated such a sum at a single instance. However, it is in the following seemingly small yet in reality

large charity work that Mary's "silent money" speaks loudest.

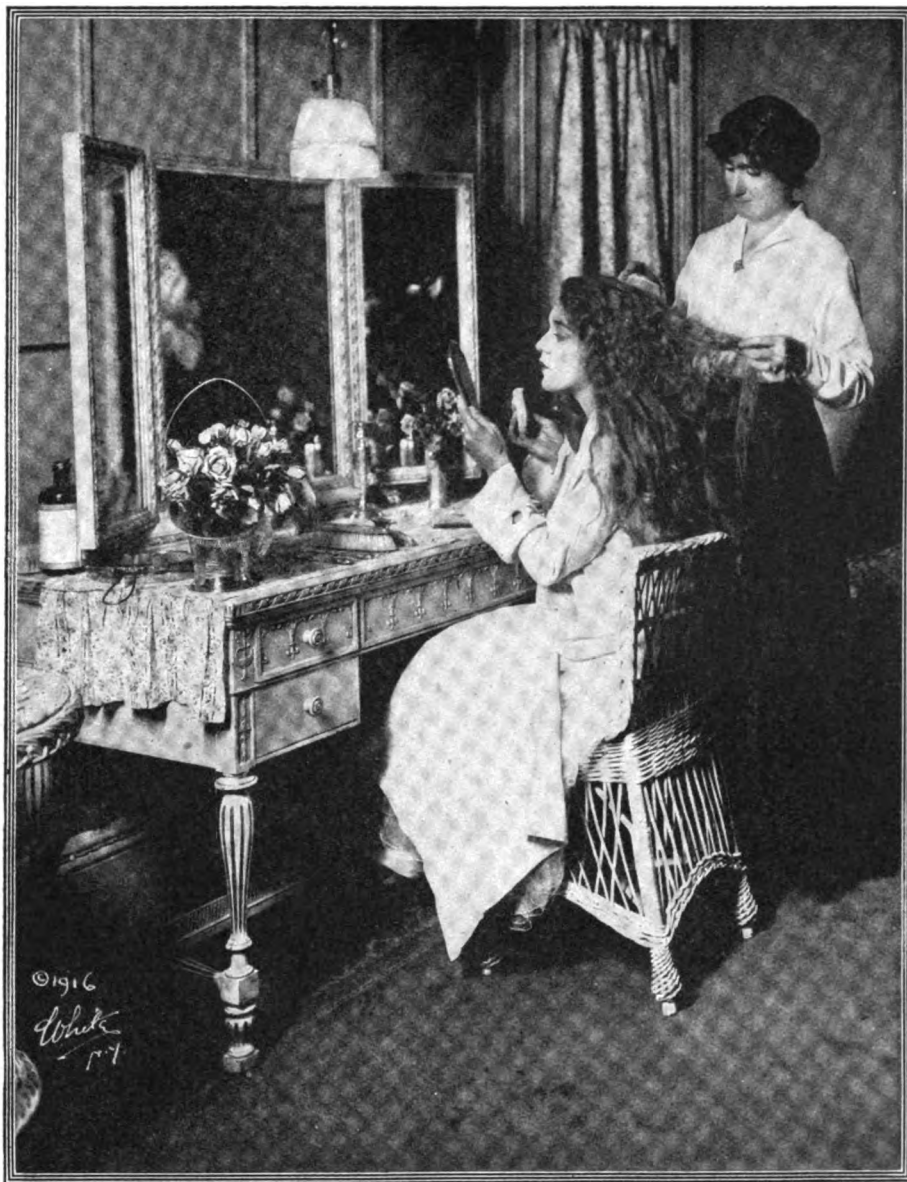
In a simple little dress or suit she jumps into her machine, and managing to steal an hour or so from her pressing studio work, she motors into the slums of New York. Here, having become to these poor unfortunate people an angel on earth, she finds eager and expectant faces awaiting her. Forgetting the world to which she belongs, and casting aside her position in life, she conforms herself to the wishes of the slum people. A dirty child means but little to her spot-

less attire, so, in consequence, it must suffer, while the tiny urchin, perched happily on her lap, munches the fruit or cake mysteriously concealed in the "angel's" car. Surrounded by the smiling tots, she hears their stories, some pathetic, others interesting, and when these stories are finally investigated she awards to the worthy ones the comforts of life. Perhaps it is fuel or food, maybe money for a studious boy's education, or yet again clothes; but, whatever the need, it is sure to be met to the satisfaction of all. Loving their golden-haired bene-



WHO CAN BLAME LITTLE MARY IF SHE, TOO, SOMETIMES ADMIRES WHAT HER MIRROR REVEALS?

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MARY PICKFORD IN HER DRESSING-ROOM MAKING UP

factress with hearts overflowing, they show their gratitude as best they can, and many are the gifts devised by their own hands that find their way to Mary. She cherishes them among her most valuable treasures, for, possessing that sterling quality seldom found these days, she prizes the "thought" more than the article itself.

Numerous "newsies" are proud of the fact that they can count "Little Mary" as one of their friends, and frequently when buying a paper a large bill is given with no change asked for. This form of "silent money talk" is, however, thoroly searched into by her lawyer, so that the money is always well placed, and it is in this way that another form of charity is carried on. They wait for her when catching a glimpse of her well-known car, and crowd around, almost mobbing in their eagerness, for to them she is not Mary Pickford, but "de pretty little lady."

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One bleak December day, coming out to her waiting limousine from the modiste, she found a tiny tot of about eight, a ragged fellow, blue with cold and hunger. His poor thin chest was cruelly exposed to the bleating, piercing New York wind, while altogether he presented a most pathetic picture. Heeding not that she had on a costly suit, she handed me her muff, and in a moment was down on her knees in the snow, pinning, with a pin begged from the chauffeur, the thin, threadbare jacket tightly over the chest so blue. Her purse, containing a tidy little sum in change, she next emptied into the yet bluer hand; then, immediately making note of the lad's address, we left. Why the latter? Because in due time warm woollens, mittens, a nice jacket, money, etc., found their way to the meager place the lad called home. Tears came to my eyes as I grieved that to many this beautiful character is a closed book.

New York is not the only place that has felt the kindly hand of "Everybody's Favorite," as Los Angeles, where she spends the majority of her winters, is frequently the haven for her charity. Orphan asylums have learnt to expect her assistance, and past experiences give reason for knowing that they will *not* expect in vain. Aside from money presented to the heads, repeatedly the children are given outings in machines, when on such occasions they are taken into the country or to the seaside, and are permitted to enjoy to their hearts' content all the goodies so kindly prepared by Miss Pickford.

Then, too, as in New York, there are many poor families who can relate happy reliefs in stressful times, when they have been tided safely over life's rough sea to safe harbors.

But Mary Pickford's "silent money talk" does not cease to talk in these cities alone, for not content with having brought so much comfort and joy to humanity here, she daily sends money, etc., to other towns less prominent. It is thru the hundreds of letters which swamp her mails at each delivery that her attention is called to suffering ones in different lands. While many are but requests for photographs and replies, there are among them untold pleadings for assistance in the many problems of living. True, every case is first probed; but when her lawyer gives the final word, with that sweet nature so salient at all times, the assistance is given. Sums equal to the salaries of many a big business man are given away yearly by this unselfish little lady.

Quoting from the greatest of all books, "Freely ye have received, freely shall ye give" is one of Miss Pickford's reasons for her ceaseless giving, but to those associated with her the reason is only too evident. It is because, unspoiled by fame, success and wealth, this mere child-woman has not fallen to the rank of a snob, for this she is not. That sweet naturalness which since a baby has shaped her course along the road of success, which has aided her in piloting around the rocks of problems, this it is which still dominates her character in the form of "Doing unto others as ye would that they should do unto you."

Space does not permit me to describe further how this "talk" goes on, but go on it does; so I will merely say in conclusion, that now when you read of the great donations of the world's financiers and do not see a large check from Mary Pickford, stop just long enough to realize that somewhere, at that very instant, numerous ones are enjoying the "silent talk" of Mary Pickford's open purse.