

Most of those involved in the events reported herein are today occupying high places in motion pictures—popular idols—applauded, lauded and showered with gold by millions of men, women and children—**ESPECIALLY THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN!**

To the boys and girls of the land these mock heroes and heroines have been pictured and painted, for box office purposes, as the living symbols of all the virtues—

An avalanche of propaganda by screen and press has imbued them with every ennobling trait.

Privately they have lived, and are still living, lives of wild debauchery. In more than one case licentiousness and incest have been the only rungs in the ladders on which they have climbed to fame and fortune!

Unfaithful and cruelly indifferent to the worship of the youth of the land, they have led or are leading such lives as may, any day, precipitate yet another nation-wide scandal and again shatter the ideals, the dreams, the castles, the faith of our boys and girls!

It is for these reasons that the SINS OF HOLLYWOOD are given to the public—

That a great medium of national expression may be purified—taken from the hands of those who have misused it—that the childish faith of our boys and girls may again be made sacred!

Fully eighty per cent of those engaged in motion pictures are high-grade citizens—self-respecting and respected.

In foolish fear of injuring the industry, Hollywood has permitted less than one per cent of its population to stain its name.

The facts reported in these stories have long been an open book to the organized producers—No need to tell them—they knew!

They knew of the horde of creatures of easy morals who hovered about the industry and set the standard of price—decided what good, clean women would have to pay—have to give—in order to succeed—

They knew of the macquetaux—of the scum that constituted the camp followers of their great stars. They knew of the wantonness of their leading women—

They knew about the yachting parties—the wild orgies at road houses and private homes—

They knew about Vernon and his wild life—Tia Juana and his mad, drunken revels—

They knew about the “kept” women—and the “kept” men—
They knew about the prominent people among them who were living in illicit relationship—

There was a time at one studio when every star, male and female, was carrying on an open liason—The producer could not help knowing it.



THE SINS OF HOLLYWOOD (1922)

The Sins of Hollywood was a small pamphlet, published anonymously in 1922, just after the Rappe-Arbuckle murder case hit the headlines. Subtitled, “An Exposé of Movie Vice,” the book presents a series of the most salacious and scandalous Hollywood clichés (without naming any actual names), including detailed descriptions of drinking, dope smoking and taking, sex orgies, strip-poker parties, kept men and women, sodomy, and so forth. These are the first two chapters of (as the title page announces) “A Group of Actual Happenings Reported and Written by a Hollywood Newspaper Man.”

THE REASONS FOR THE “SINS OF HOLLYWOOD”

TO THE PUBLIC:

The sins of Hollywood are facts—NOT FICTION!

The stories in this volume are true stories—the people are real people—

The Sins of Hollywood (Hollywood Publishing Co., 1922).

Eight months before the crash that culminated in the Arbuckle calamity they knew the kind of parties Roscoe was giving—and some of them were glad to participate in them—

They knew conditions—knew about the “hop” and the “dope”—but they took the stand that it was “none of our business”—

Their business was piling up advance deposits from theater owners and manipulating the motion picture stock market.

They frowned on all attempts to speak the truth—

Any publication that attempted to reveal the real conditions—to cleanse the festering sores—was quickly pounced upon as an “enemy of the industry.”—A subsidized trade press helped in this work!

Any attempt to bring about reform was called “hurting the industry.”

It was the lapses and laxities of the producer that precipitated the censorship agitation—that led a nauseated nation, determined to cleanse the Augean stables of the screen, into the dangerous notion of censorship—almost fatally imperilling two sacred principles of democracy—freedom of speech and freedom of the press!

They have made “box office” capital of everything—Nothing has been too vile to exploit—

They created the male vamp—

Nothing was sacred—nothing was personal—if it had publicity possibilities—

In the Daniels case they exploited the courts and made them a laughing stock—

At this moment Taylor’s tragic death is being exploited in connection with his last production—

* * *

If the screen is to be “cleaned-up,” the sores must be cut open—the pus and corruption removed—This always hurts! But it is the only known way!

THE AUTHOR

Hollywood, April 1, 1922

Dope!

During the throbbing, feverish years of the World War all roads led to France or—Hollywood.

The conglomerate, nondescript mass of beings of every hue and type that swept over the battlefields was no more complex in its composition, no more a mixture of oil and water, than were the high and the low, the vile, the vain and the vicious that made up the mob which swarmed into Hollywood to dip its fingers into the pot of gold that was being poured from the movie crucible.

No mining camp ever equalled it. No mad, lurid, wild and woolly border town ever attracted so many men and women of so high a station in life or so vilely sunk as did Hollywood.

None of the country’s historic bonanza towns ever beheld one half the real money that Moviedom bathed in.

The Hollywood of those days will go down in history as the Rainbow Age of the mountebank and the mummer.

The circus, the Uncle Tom show, the medicine show, the carnivals, the physical culture fakes, the pony shows, the wild west outfits, the concert halls, the dives, the honk-a-tonks—and in many cases—the bawdy houses—all contributed their quota to the studios of Hollywood.

With them came men and women who had achieved world wide fame—actors, authors, dramatists, composers, dancers, whose names are indelibly written in the list of the world’s great artists.

When the shower of gold fell this latter group held its wits—in the main. Here and there one dropped into the mire of licentiousness and incest. But this was rare.

The great actor of the spoken drama rarely got very far in the movies. He refused to fit into the scheme as laid out by those who held the purse strings.

It was the upstarts, the poor uncouth, ill-bred “roughnecks,” many of whom are to-day famous stars, and who never knew there was so much money in the world, who made the Sins of Hollywood the glaring, red sins they are to-day.

After the first few weeks of plenty, of full feeding, the days of penury and vagabondage faded into the dim vistas of the past. Then came indulgence in the common, ordinary vices of the average being. And still the money lasted and even increased. Then the appetites became jaded and each tried to outdisparate the other.

Strip poker parties of both sexes, wild drinking debauches and lewdness, motor cars in designs and colors that screamed and shrieked—dogs and cats as aids to stimulate the imagination. The odors of the Tenderloin and the Jobster palaces. Poor, futile mimicry!

Then one day a certain well-known and muchly adored heart-breaking star of the so-called “manly” type taught them something new. And this is how it came about:

This star—who shall be called Walter¹—had tried out something. In his mad endeavor to provide for himself a thrill not written down in the Movie Vitecalogue, Walter sought out several habitués of the underworld of Los Angeles and visited with them, consorted with them for the purpose, he explained, of obtaining “local color.”

1. Ed. Note: “Walter” is probably Wallace Reid.

Once they induced him to try "a shot of hop." It was great, he told some of his friends and "Yes men." They agreed that if he said it was great, it was indeed great.

Yes, Walter smoked an opium pipe and went back for more. He then tried "snuffing" a bit of cocaine. That too gave him the desired kick. He "took a few shots in the arm." Ah, that was still better. He was getting on.

But why have his pleasures all alone? Walter was a good sort. He wanted his friends to taste of the sweets of life as he found them. Here's what he would do—he would give a "dope party."

Obviously he could not hold this party at his own home. His wife—she, too, a star—would object. She didn't even know that Walter had been trying out various kinds of dope.

But that was easy. Walter merely leased a cabin in Laurel Canyon and invited a few select friends to come and enjoy something new. Many attended: Margaret and Mae, Vincent and Jay, Frank and Louise, Mary and Jack and Juanita—all good fellows and friends of Walter.

Oh, yes, there was a Chinaman there with his layout—pipes and little pellets of opium.

But first they must try "a shot in the arm." My! How they enjoyed that "shot in the arm." It thrilled the blasé actor folk as they had not been thrilled since Clara Kimball Young auctioned off her red-dyed bears, removing them right before all the crowd.

"Sniffing cocaine" through a little tube, one end of which hung inside a vial of "snow," was another pastime which all hugely enjoyed. It exalted and made other beings of them. It was thoroughly a worth-while party, his guests told Walter, and he was pleased—very pleased, indeed, if he had succeeded in bringing a few thrills into their uneventful lives—lives, too, made up of many thrills, but little else.

But the crowning event was when the Chinaman entered and gave each of them a pipe and a pellet of opium.

Walter had fitted up cosy lounges for them to lie in. Soft, clinging curtains hung about them, pink-shaded lamps shed a soft glow, and the Chinaman worked fast and soft-footedly.

Luckily the night was long—it was Saturday. None of them had to appear for work on Sunday. So all the rest of the night and far into the next day did they lo! there upon the soft cushions and dream—and—well, there are things that cannot be printed even for truth's sake.

One by one they staggered homeward, vowing to return—any time—and partake of handsome Walter's hospitality.

And they did. For that was but the beginning. Today the Chinaman has increased his output of pipes and pellets. He has two assistants and he holds himself in readiness to answer a summons at a moment's notice to

appear at somebody's home and help to make the night short and the dreams long.

Today the dope peddler is a common sight around the streets of Hollywood. And once, not so long ago, the Federal officers called upon Handsome Walter and talked things over with him. They wanted to know if he was the go-between—the man who acted as middleman for the actors and the peddlars of drugs. Somehow he got out of it. At least, he is still in pictures and out of jail.

But the dope users are increasing; dope peddlars prevail.

There is a handsome home, closed temporarily, on a certain fashionable street in Los Angeles, where if you could enter you would find the finest equipped dope outfit in America.

Here come the players—mostly stars and near stars—to revel in Poppyland; here are held high revels—or such was the case only a few months ago—and here are the wildest of wild parties staged.

Not so long ago Dorrie Pitchfork fought a duel with a former Follies girl with fist and vases; though it is claimed that hair pulling constituted and really ended the argument.

But they are interesting parties for all that. They must be interesting, for there have been as many as a hundred guests at these "affairs," not all of them dope fiends, but many of them are.

Most of them are easy to pick out. Their nervousness betrays them. The twitching of their mouths, the "snuffles," the listless air of many of them.

A rather new and somewhat unusual dope lately employed is that of bromidia, a drug which taken in reaspoonful drives the user to continuous sleepiness, swelling of the limbs and a lassitude that brings great surcease.

There are but a few of these, however; more of them preferring cocaine, a "shot in the arm," and an occasional drag at the pipe.

Take for instance a certain young actor, son of one of the country's foremost exponents of the spoken drama. His face is yellow as saffron. He is a pipe smoker. Twice his father has had him committed to sanitariums. When his father's company comes to Los Angeles now the son secretes himself and after his father's departure writes and tells him how sorry he was to be away on location during his stay in the city.

Then there is the case of the blonde with the Scandinavian name. Last year it cost her a thousand dollars a month for her dope supply. She uses cocaine and heroin, goes to sleep on the set, slips over to her dressing room, takes a few "sniffs" and returns full of ginger, only to fade away in a short time again.

A once noted song writer, now a movie scribbler, spends the greater part of his income for drugs.

An actor who has had a long and successful career with two of the big companies is one of the list.

A well known director is another.

A young woman star, whose name has been very much in the public print of late, is still another.

The list is interminable—almost inexhaustable.

These indulgences are not always confined to the privacy of the home, either. In certain more or less public resorts one may upon occasion find well known movie people partaking of ether cocktails or other concoctions—perfume dripped on sugar, for instance. Anything and everything in the nature of what the jazz mad world knows as a "kick."

Walter, they say, still persists in giving an occasional party, though his wife has long since learned of his condition. But Walter has stamina. He is still the handsome young devil he always was. He gets away with it.

And even whiskey still has a thrill for him. He dearly loves to go out—to some other town, of course—and fight a couple of policemen, rear out sections of the hotel lobby and throw dishes at the head waiter.

But there are two young girls who regret that they ever attended one of Walter's parties. They were new at the game, but they wanted to be "good fellows." They "hit the pipe," they "took a shot in the arm," they snuffed cocaine, just as the others did.

One has returned to her home in Illinois—back to her parents—where they say that the drugs have so eaten into her system that she is dying of tuberculosis.

The other, driven to desperation because of the insistent demand of her nerves calling for the drugs, is now an ordinary street walker. Her place of "business" is a shabby rooming house in the underworld district of Los Angeles; her "bear" is Main and Los Angeles streets. Occasionally when she can lure a sailor or a stranger to her room she gets from him whatever money she can and then, as soon as she can rid herself of her companion, she rushes frantically down to "John" and buys another "shot." It is all she lives for, that "shot." And she prays nights that she will not live very long.

There are other cases, of course. For it is the young and inexperienced who suffer most. It is they who are driven to despair, and there are many in Hollywood today.

The Federal officers are trying to stamp out the plague, but somehow the dope users manage to obtain enough to keep them happy. It has made wrecks of several once good men. One of them, in his efforts to break off the habit, has gone into the wilderness. He is trying to make a little farm pay him a livelihood, and his estimable wife is helping him. She has had a hard fight, but they say she is winning over the drug.

But Walter, handsome, debonaire, smiling Walter, goes serenely on, having a handsome salary, feeling, no doubt, that he is a benefactor to his friends.

Didn't he give them a new thrill?