

The Film World

CHARLES LAUGHTON'S PITUITARY GLAND

Secret Of His Success

CREDIT the pituitary! That troublesome gland, responsible for so many of the freaks of sideshows and circuses, has largely redeemed itself by supplying Hollywood with the amorphous, the protean, the chameleon-like character, Charles Laughton.

According to medical men, Laughton owes to the pituitary gland his unusual physical appearance, his ability to change shape like any cloud, his body's quick adjustment to the role of clerk or monarch, Gaspar Milquetoast or Nero. His amazingly heavy, slumberous head—the pituitary gland has been at work there also. The nostrils can shiver like a sensitive rabbit's, or expand like a monster's. The eyes, glazed and unseeing, or burning with hidden desire, transform at will to fit the part. Nature has been unusually generous; Laughton was born to play character roles.

In fact, from the very beginning it was the pituitary gland that guided Laughton along his predestined path. His sluggishness, his aversion for

sports, traced again to the self-same gland, led him, in school, to take a dramatic course. It excused him from Rugby. It saved him from putting his heart into the hotel business. It singled him out of the crowd. It led him to triumph in his earliest roles.



CHARLES LAUGHTON.

To the pituitary gland he owes his ability to change shape like a cloud.

The pituitary was responsible for Laughton's startling resemblance to the Tudor monarch in "The Private Life

of Henry VIII." It enabled his jowls to distend, his chest to swell, his shoulders to broaden, his face to adapt itself to the coarse joviality of the 16th century. It permitted this same body completely to transform itself into the shape of the household tyrant of "The Barretts of Wimpole Street." Now the shoulders drooped, became round and narrow, the whole framework sagged. All the strength, all the purpose, all the malice, now became centred in the gleaming, terrifying eyes.

As Nero, Laughton was a flabby clown. In his latest role, as the detective Javert in the screen version of Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables," Laughton appears as the very incarnation of brute power and relentlessness.

"No woman should be called an actress if she requires a wig or hair dye to change her personality. I've played everything from ingenues to hags on the stage without resorting to either, and I can do the same on the screen," says the Australian actress, Mona Barrie. "Fortunately for me, Mr. Darryl Zanuck sees the matter as I do. I don't see why I can't be just as alluring to the handsome hero whether my hair is blonde, black, brown or red. Cleopatra, Salome, and some of the other girls of days gone by made fair progress without bleaching their hair—and just look at Mrs. Dionne!"

If the Chinese dialect spoken by Warner Oland in "Charlie Chan in Shanghai" strikes upon the ear of some cultured mandarin or erudite student of Oriental languages with an unfamiliar ring, the actor who portrays Chan may not be to blame. There are more than 300 distinct Chinese dialects, and it isn't known just which one was used by the original Charlie Chan. "It's the same way in English," explains Tom Gabbins, technical adviser on this Fox picture, who taught Oland the elements of the language. "On Park Avenue, New York, you will hear a very cultured American version of English, while three blocks east, on Third Avenue, you hear a 'dese dem and dese' accent which is scarcely intelligible to the bluebloods."

COUNT TULLIO CARMINATI DI BRAMBILLA is the full name of Tullio Carminati, who appears with Mary Ellis in the new Paramount picture, "Paris in Spring." He hails from Dalmatia, a province of Italy.

KATHARINE HEPBURN has made one of Hollywood's big sacrifices to artistic realism by submitting her long chestnut tresses to the barber's shears and emerging with a boyish bob for her role in RKO Radio's forthcoming production of "Sylvia Scarlett," from the famed novel by Compton Mackenzie, which follows her recently completed "Alice Adams."

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