

THIS STORY HAS A MORAL

Special to the "Record"

by

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LESLIE HOWARD.

... He started it all.

PERHAPS you have sometimes wondered where the newspapers and film magazines find those extraordinary stories you are asked to believe about the film stars and their doings. The ramblings of a super-stimulated angler in an inland town never reached quite such flights of fancy and achievement as the greatest masterpieces of film ballyhoo.

Even the lesser creations of Hollywood journalism surpass our commonplace imaginations. There are, for example, endless little paragraphs which tell you: That Ronald Colman collects peanut shells because his mother once travelled in Italy.

That Shirley Temple signed 8567 autographs in one morning, then spent the rest of the day copying pothooks at school.

That John Barrymore might never have had a profile at all if he had not so quickly fallen out of love when five years old with Mary Jones at the corner. He used to press his nose against the window-pane in his father's drawing-room, waiting to see her go by, but she played "hookey" one day with Lionel and John never forgave her. His nose, no longer pressed against the window-pane, was permitted to develop as Hollywood intended.

That Jon Hall keeps a sucker preserved in alcohol on his mantelpiece. He cut it off an 18-foot octopus with which he once battled under water for 22 minutes by the stop-watch.

That Deanna Durbin still goes to bed with a teddy bear given her by an aunt nine years ago.

That Greta Garbo, at the age of 15 months, bit her nurse in the calf because she wouldn't let her alone.

THIS is the sort of information that is circulated from Hollywood to every corner of the earth where there's paper and printer's ink. It reads like nonsense (and much of it is), but a fair proportion, nevertheless, is actually fact, heavily embellished, that has been solemnly dug up and solemnly recorded by the hundreds of journalists who exist upon the public's insatiable appetite to learn the least detail about their film favourites' lives and loves.

In no other place on earth, surely, are there such strange values on news as Hollywood sets. In no other place do journalists make so much money from writing about such

utter trivialities. If you are interested to know how they do it, read the following little story (which has a moral if you can find it) that originated from a Hollywood reporter, and is probably typical of news-gathering methods in the City Under Camera:—

A CHARMING young woman walked jauntily into the Warner Bros.' offices. "Good morning," she said brightly to the man at the inquiry desk.

"Good morning."

She dropped her bright voice quickly and leaned across to him. "I want some information," she whispered.

"Certainly, miss, what is it you want to know?"

She thought a moment. "Have you ever seen any of the male stars without their clothes?"

The inquiry man glared. "No!"

The young woman made a moue. She suggested he might visit them in their dressing-rooms.

"But why should I? What do you want?"

"Well, to be frank," she admitted, speaking well into his ear, "I want to know how many hairs they have on their chests. I want a story about the stars' hairy chests."

"They won't tell you," said the inquiry man firmly. "You'll never find out. I think it's a silly story anyway."

She persisted. "Leslie Howard started it. Claims there are hairs under his shirt. Surely, your players must have some!"

She spoke scornfully, but the inquiry man was sulky, not to be drawn. She waited; then, as the silence grew, made an opening. "I read that Pat O'Brien has hairs."

"He'd beat a gorilla," conceded the inquiry man.

The young woman seized her advantage and went on eagerly. "Then is it true he's tattooed on his chest, and that he had the tattooed skin removed and made into a lampshade? A lampshade with a green border that matched the other furnishings of his home?"

"Not true," said the man. "He never was tattooed on his chest."

"And there isn't any lampshade?"

"There is not." (Contd. on p. 30.)



ROBERT TAYLOR.

... Is he laughing because there are hairs on his chest?