

## THE CHILD AND THE MOVIE

"WHAT is it you don't like about the movies?" I asked my neighbor's thirteen-year-old lad, who had just finished saying that he didn't care for the things they were showing at the local picture house. "Why, it's this way," he began. "The little children can't read the headings fast enough to make head or tail out of them, and so do not understand what it is all about; then the serial pictures are too exciting—many of the kids go home and dream about the episodes at night; and those old foolish love stories!" One could read the disgust on his face. "They never show us the things we would really like."

"Oh, mountain climbing, stories of adventure, funny pictures that make the children laugh, fairy stories. But not fairy stories like 'Jack and the Beanstalk,'" he hastened to add. "Mother took us to see that, and I closed my eyes during part of it."

Here is the opinion of an average American boy of thirteen whose taste has not yet been ruined by the lurid realism of the movies and who has a definite idea as to what he wants. A great deal is being said and written on the subject of motion pictures, and some there are who contend that the children want just the things that are being shown at the movie theaters; that they want exciting serial stories, love stories, the vulgar comedies, and so on. No greater injustice could be done our American kiddies than this gross misrepresentation of the truth. An interesting experiment for those wishing a spontaneous expression from the children on the subject of motion pictures would be to perch themselves outside of a public school, say, at the noon recess, when the children are joyously piling out of the school, and as they run by you halt one or two of them and ply them with a couple of questions on the subject. Before you are through a crowd of kids will have congregated on the scene, and you will be astounded by the revelations of the mental processes going on in the minds of these youngsters.

It is said that over thirteen million people—men, women, and children—attend the motion-picture houses daily, and over two million dollars are collected daily in box-office receipts. What do these thirteen million souls see on the "silver sheet" each day? If a statistical record could be made of the nature of the pictures shown, it would undoubtedly reveal the fact that the bulk of the filmed stories are nothing more nor less than the adventures of the Diamond Dicks and Jesse Jameses of twenty years ago, vitalized and visualized for vastly larger audiences than ever could have been reached by the paper-covered detective and wild West stories of those days.

There isn't a motion-picture house where a mother can safely take her

children at random, or even when a supposedly good children's picture has been advertised, without risking the danger of having some impossible, foolish, hair-raising picture thrown in.

And are the pictures that are often advertised as being good for the children always dependable? How many people have gone to see a classic, with happy memories of the book and author, and found, to their sad disappointment, immortal scenes and situations desecrated and mutilated beyond recognition! How many mothers have sorely regretted taking their impressionable eight and ten year olds to see Robert Louis Stevenson's "Treasure Island"! A similar experience was in store for those mothers who hopefully trotted their youngsters over to the theater to see "Jack and the Beanstalk." A child's sense of justice may be satisfied at having the giant's head cut off, but the effect of visualizing this on the screen proves quite disastrous to its mental equilibrium.

How many times, mothers, have you found yourselves sitting in a motion-picture house, with your youngsters beside you, absolutely ashamed of being there—unable to give your child a satisfactory explanation of what the picture was all about? You and Dad wouldn't talk of these things in the presence of your children—would you? You want your children to grow up with wholesome concepts of life. You want them to have faith in simple, every-day values. You face the problems of sex tremulously. You yearn to instill your children with a reverence for sacred relationships. As they grow older, you become ever more anxious to guard your boys and girls from the pitfalls that surround adolescents.

The evils are so apparent to all that argument on the question seems almost unnecessary. What is the solution?

For the child there is an immediate solution. There is one fundamental, important change that can and should be worked out at once. It is the recommendation contained in the report of the special committee of the New York State Conference of Mayors, adopted by that Conference at Albany, on February 24, 1920. "Special performances," says the report, "for children and young people are the only permanent solution of a community motion-picture problem."

Through the efforts of various groups in the community (with the co-operation of the local motion-picture house where possible) special, carefully selected programmes for children should be arranged. This is not an idle dream. It is practical and can be worked out at once. It needs but the combined efforts of parents, teachers, and all public-spirited citizens to get together and work out a plan whereby the children of the community, rich and poor alike, may be provided with a clean, wholesome, artistic, and joyous form of visual entertainment.

DOROTHY C. FOX.

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# The Outlook

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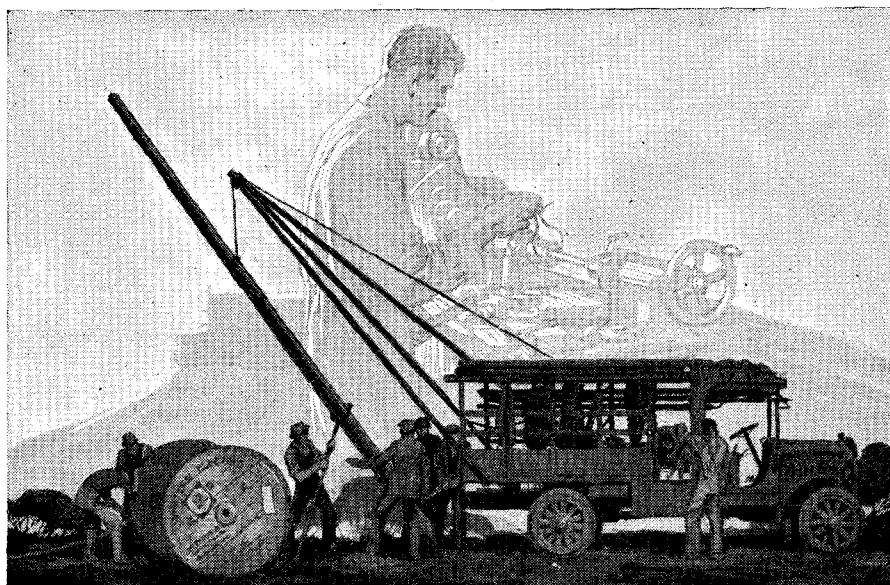
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## SALES TAXES

BY HUGH SATTERLEE

OF THE NEW YORK BAR

CONGRESS, as a practical matter, is limited to three forms of taxation, namely, import taxes or customs duties, the income tax, and indirect or excise taxes.

For several years the Federal Government will probably need to spend in the neighborhood of \$4,000,000,000 annually. The problem is how to levy the taxes available to Congress so as to raise the required amount, whether it be this or some other estimate, with a maximum of certainty, equality, and simplicity.

With the Republican party in power the tariff is sure of full

utilization. But there is a point, soon reached, beyond which high rates prevent importation and produce no revenue. It is safe guess that customs duties can be relied upon for not much more than \$400,000,000.

For 1920 the income tax and the excess profits tax, which is an income tax, alone produced \$4,000,000,000, but the estimate of their yield for the next year or so, even if continue at the same rates, promises less than \$2,000,000,000. Moreover with substantial unanimity the country demands that the excess

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