

Secret Griefs and Cankers in the Bosom

Charlie Chaplin Claims That He Is Full of Them
By IVAN GADDIS



THE troubles of Charlie Chaplin, the merry vagabond of the Moving Pictures, are becoming acute. He doesn't know any more whether he is Charlie Chaplin or whether several other fellows, who are daily getting kicked in various uproarious ways, but always in the same anatomical place, are "him." It makes him sore to see his other selves getting all the kicks, for, like Byron, he feels: "The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone!"

The little comedian has read the big billboard query at the entrance to a theater, "Did You Ever Know That Charlie Chaplin Played the Violin?"

He saw another sign asking, "Is He Really Charlie Chaplin?"

"Come In and See Charlie Chaplin Fight the Bull" was the call of red fudge type at another place. And to add to his misery, there are the dozen or more "Original Charlie Chaplins."

Several New York newspapers really found him out. They compiled proofs from various sources to the effect that he is an Irishman, a German, a Russian, an Englishman. He

was discovered to be Charles Fitzgerald, Otto Barger, Patrick O'Flaherty and Nicolai Lapidovitch.

He says he talked to a young woman journalist for five minutes, and the story of his life soon began to appear. It ran as a serial in several newspapers, and is still running. This "biography" described piteously the neglect of a drunken father.

But these are the least of Charlie's troubles. He has been accused of "borrowing" what he thought he owned. The season's large crop of "Original Charlie Chaplins" each comes forward and claims to have discovered the little pot hat, the dinky cane, the baggy trousers, the "tooth-brush" mustache, and those shabby but historical shoes.

"Is he deaf and dumb?" is the earnest query from one magazine, which makes out a strong affirmative case in five full pages.

It seems that space writers go crazy trying to invent a new fable about Charlie. He has read recently that he spent some time in an asylum; that he is a dope fiend; that he is married.

Not that the last goes with the others, but he happened to mention it in that way. Also, he has been startled to hear that he had died; but with Mark Twain he says that the report of his death is greatly exaggerated.

Sometimes C. Chaplin gets his maltreated back up for fair. The occasions fully warrant it. He is about to bring an injunction against the production of a picture play called "The Mix-up." He says that this is a patchwork of old scenes which were used in different plays.

"There's going to be a decided mix-up on that," he told me. "The film don't represent me at all. A fellow has to work too hard for a reputation to have a thing like that try to camp out on his trail."

There is also a matter of some ragged, spotty films, taken eighteen months ago, and now being widely advertised, to which Chaplin objects. However, his biggest "trouble" symptoms are of three distinct kinds. One is biographies. Another is provided by that host of men willing to sustain bumps and kicks for art's sake, who do turns on the vaudeville stage and in shows of various kinds under the guise of the original Charlie Chaplin. The third big trouble emanates from the "Originals."

"The Originals," said Charlie, "are always trying to pick an argument with me in controversies about make-ups, about who discovered the hat, who invented the walk, who conceived the funny way to walk when kicked, and who first learnt to flirt a cane my way, and all the rest of it.

"What they really want," he avowed with a far-away look, "is for me to come back, hot under the collar, and denounce them. Then their stock will soar under the advertising. But no controversies for me. I get enough in front of the camera.

"But where it hurts the hardest," he went on, "is that these fellows bamboozle part of the public. The result is this: If the audience see an actor, got up as I am, being chased by a bull, and the bull is the only funny part of

the scene, the crowd goes away saying, 'Why, I thought that' fellow Charlie Chaplin was funny. Wish the bull had got him.' "

Chaplin indicates that art suffers and a crimp is put in his funniness when these pretenders get busy. They are a real sorrow to him and to every one else.

Some of his public libelers take the view that he is a boob, an ignoramus, a simp of the first water. He says he has even read that Charlie Chaplin is so ignorant that he cant sign a check. If this wasn't nonsense it would be a serious misstatement, as Chaplin does know how to do this so well that he signs checks on the back most frequently. He confesses one of the neatest things he does during the year is to endorse about \$75,000 in checks. Nobody as yet has tried to forge his signature, tho several have offered to help him get rid of his salary. But if Charlie didn't take the thorns with the roses, he would most likely have been suffering with an awful and protracted case of "swelled head" long ago.

