

Hot From Hollywood

OZ FELLOWS

The Metro studio lately has been a weird jumble of giants and midgets, animals and scarecrows, green faces, and aluminum costumes. It was not the revolution that had come, it was Frank Baum's hearty fantasy, *The Wizard of Oz*, that was in process of being put upon a Technicolor screen. The cast was extraordinary, from the stars—Frank Morgan, Judy Garland, Ray Bolger, Bert Lahr, Jack Haley—to Toto, the Cairn Terrier. But of them all, the most utterly enchanting were the midgets, two hundred and twenty five of them, with their doll faces, their plastered hair that looked as though it had been painted on their heads, the little felt flowers that grew out of their shoes, the bells that jingled from their sleeves. They, of course, were in costume for the good little Munchkins.

One hundred and seventy-five of them are Singer Midgets. They arrived one morning by bus, three on a seat. They brought along their own chef, and sent him scurrying around Culver City looking for hotel accommodations while they disembarked at the studio. One of them, Geegee the Gunner, walked up to the gatekeeper, held out his hand and said, "How do you do, Mr. Mayer."

In spite of this, they were whisked to their dressing-rooms where they donned their weird Munchkin paint and paraphernalia. Since the studio was constructed with players of normal height and weight in mind, there was some difficulty in finding chairs and dressing tables and bathroom fixtures of sufficient nearness to the ground to be utilitarian. In fact, there was so much difficulty that it was found necessary to hire a man for the sole purpose of picking the midgets up and putting them

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down again on designated spots. He was called the "midget elevator" and the local unions were in a temporary dither over his salary classification. One of the young lady midgets swooned when she saw Clark Gable. All of them put small feet down when it came to gag photographs. They refused, with minute but effective fury, to be pictured in any but the most conventional still formation. They worked hard, for two months, at regular studio rates, although they could have demanded almost anything their little hearts desired, since Mr. Singer's troupe plus the extra fifty combed the professional field of midgets.

They have enormous appetites, eating three meals a day, none of *them* midget. The girls have a bad time buying silk stockings. People in the studio like to tell this story: "I didn't get a wink of sleep last night on the train. There was a midget pacing the berth above me."

STAGE

May 1, 1939

p. 46

