

THE FLAPPER

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"Nice People"



Bebe Daniels, star of "Nice People," wearing dress of tricolette, trimmed with cire ribbon

This is one of those themes that "old fogies" usually delight in—the "reformation" of the flapper. Bebe Daniels in the production by William De Mille assumes the role in which Francine Larrimore carried off honors in the stage play.

It's all about a flapper who went on a joyride to the country and happened to be caught in a storm, wherefore she was obliged to stay overnight in the same house with her escort. Come her parents hotfooted in pursuit and the old man demands that she wed him to save her reputation. She refuses, her mother stays behind with her, and eventually she weds Wallie Reid, who had also ventured in the house during the storm, and who was persuaded that despite her flappish tendencies in a cabaret she belonged to "nice people."

It doesn't ring true to present-day life. When "Nice People" was first staged it was probably still the custom to extol the old-fashioned girl as a paragon of virtue and model of manners, but thank goodness that day is passed, never to return. "If I promise to be a regular old-fashioned wife, will you marry me?" is the question with which Bebe wins her husband. Chances are she didn't change her modernity the day after the ceremony—and why should she? The old-fashioned girl would never have had the nerve to propose—which would have been unfortunate for our hero.

Also we doubt very much whether the average city flapper can suddenly be transformed into an industrious farmer. It isn't done.

The picture is replete with pithy subtitles, such as "The smart girl of today removes the rouge from her lips only to kiss and make up"; "The way girls act nowadays it is hard to tell whether they are all right or not"; "Society is charitable only to those who have kept their sins out of the papers"; "Today it is the children who say elders should be seen and not heard."

Symbolic of the entire play is a kewpie doll that bobs up at various intervals, bearing the following inscription, "The modern girl with as little in her head and heart as she has on her body." This is as slanderous as it is false—and it is false.

—T. L.

Marie Prevost and Dorothy Gish are both 24 years old, proving that flappers have no age limit.