

MOTHERS IN THE MOVIES

The movie people think they are up to date, or even a little ahead of it. The players are mostly young and try to set the styles. The actresses bob their hair a little closer, wear their skirts a little shorter and get divorces a little more often than society ladies. The actors wear gaudy ties and socks, striped shoes and spats and occasionally a bracelet. They think, and would have us believe, that they are the advance wrinkle of all that is most modern, most up-to-date in this rapidly advancing age. But, in fact, they often show themselves deplorably behind the times.

Ever notice a mother in the movies? No matter how young her hero-son or heroine-daughter may be the mother is a gentle, sweet-faced, gray-haired old lady seemingly retired from all worldly interests except that of being worried about her child, or children. She may sometimes be a little active, may even outwit the villain or get killed, but if she is the mother she must always be a gray-head.

Everybody else knows that in real life the mother and a marriageable daughter are often hard to distinguish, at the distance of the screen from the spectator. Nor is it due entirely to natural health and skillful make-up, but the mother of a flapper is usually in the thirties, a young woman in the most literal sense of the term. They do not begin to look old these days until they are way past 50, but the movie people do not seem to have noticed that. They are still thinking in the past.

A recent occurrence in the city of Chicago certainly ought to be enough to open their eyes. The new curfew law there forbids girls under 16—in some sections under 18—to be out on the streets after 10 o'clock at night. But when the police started in to enforce the regulation they got into all kinds of hot water. The "flappers" they stopped and ordered home often turned out to be mothers, and even grandmothers. These gave the police some nasty looks and some very sharp words that flustered them.

The law officers had evidently got their ideas of grown-up women at the movies.