

V A N I T Y F A I R

February, 1919

THE RULERS *of the* MOVIES

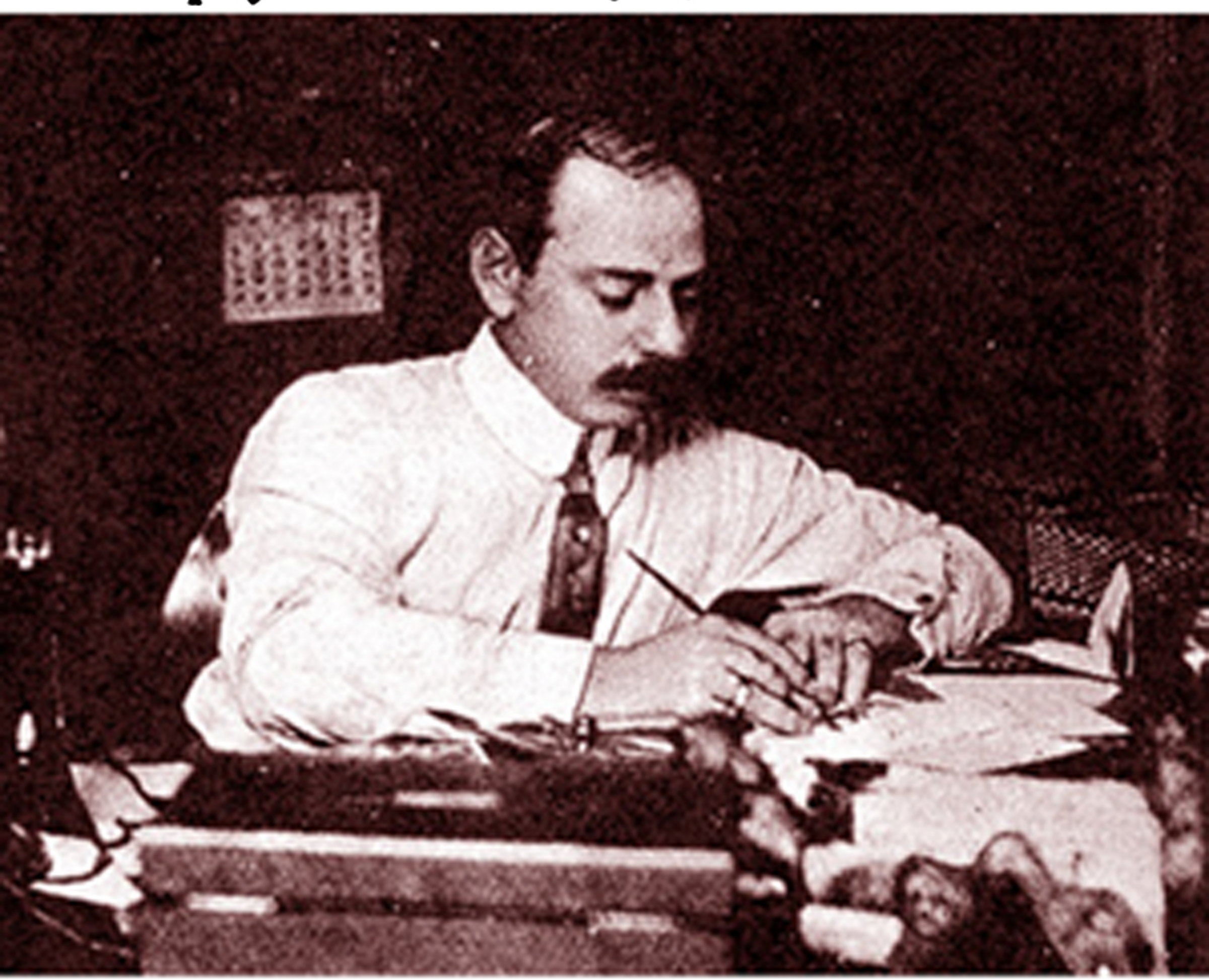
By

Robert Grau and Gerald Mygatt

MOST of us accept the movies. We never stop to consider that ten years ago such a thing as a theatre devoted to moving pictures exclusively was unknown to us in America. It makes little enough impression upon us when we are told that the manufacture and exhibition of motion pictures has so grown in scope and magnitude that it is now said to be sixth in importance of all of our industries. Living in our age of miracles we simply give a wise nod of the head, remark sagely that somebody or other must be making a lot of money and pass on. Or stopping, we give up our dime and pass in. That dime goes somewhere. And that is where this story begins.

The first magnate who came to the front in the movies was Henry N. Marvin, who, with Herman Casler of Canastota, New York, launched, in 1897, the American Biograph. This was the second of the "graphs," the first—the Lumière Cinematograph—having been revealed at Keith's Union Square Theatre in 1896. Marvin's film interests are now colossal.

After the Biograph came the Vitagraph. It was founded by J. Stuart Blackton, Albert Smith and William T. Rock. Blackton was a lyceum entertainer who had been playing dates in vaudeville in the early nineties. Smith also was an entertainer. Both had a knowledge of photography, Blackton having proved himself a good deal of an artist with brush and crayon as well. These two men started their motion picture careers in an office building on Nassau Street, New York, and did practically all their own acting before the camera. Rock did not actually join Blackton and Smith until 1899. Rock was the man who provided the capital for the Vitagraph's earliest expansion. At the present time the Vitagraph Company has a pay-roll exceeding \$30,000 a week.



MARCUS LOEW

*a commanding figure among
movie magnates*

Movie Moguls

THE successful film men have almost invariably brought to their calling a practical technical knowledge of the new art. George Kleine, who produced *Quo Vadis* and *Anthony and Cleopatra*—productions costing \$150,000 each—was trained as an optician. Kleine's film holdings are almost beyond computation. From the profits of *Quo Vadis* alone the new Candler Theatre in New York was built.

Siegmund Lubin thirty years ago had an optical store in Philadelphia, on Eighth Street. He started less than two decades ago by manufacturing one of the numerous projecting machines then being produced. He has now erected a film studio where seven hundred employees require an expenditure of over a million dollars a year.

Among the earliest film producers was W. N. Selig of Chicago, who like most other successful men of the movies began his career in a modest way. The Selig institution today is the wonder of all filmdom. In Los Angeles, where there are at least two score film studios, Selig has built a million dollar studio. To it he has



ADOLPH ZUKOR of
"The Famous Players"



J. STUART BLACKTON of
the Vitagraph Company

CHARLES O. BAUMANN and Ad Kessel were the first producers to present Wild-Western photo-plays, plays with cowboys and sheriffs and Indians. Now they own the New York Motion Picture Company and are accounted among the richest showmen in the added a zoo costing in the neighborhood of \$500,000.

Carl Laemmle is the head of the Universal Film Company. Ten years ago he was struggling to keep alive in the middle west after having gone to Chicago from Germany with only \$50 in his pocket. He decided to enter the manufacturing side of the industry. In 1909 he began to release plays from his New York studio. He chose his co-workers with wonderful discrimination. One of the very first players he selected was the famous Mary Pickford.

After Baumann and Kessel became millionaires themselves they began, as Laemmle had done, to mete out to some of their employees annual salaries almost unbelievable in size. Two of this firm's directors are paid between \$50,000 and \$100,000 a year. They are D. W. Griffith and Thomas H. Ince. Griffith began with the Biograph Company eight years ago at a daily wage of \$3. He is known today as the \$100,000 director. There are few who believe him overpaid.

Thomas H. Ince is one of three brothers (now all directing photoplays). He has recently stated with reluctance that his present earnings run between \$80,000 and \$100,000 a year. Near Los Angeles there is a movie town called Inceville. Here Thomas Ince stages the productions which have made his name a by-word among the motion picture fans of the country.

Movie Moguls

Adolph Zukor, now head of the Famous Players Film Company, hailed originally from New York's great East Side. He was one of the first to start in the nickelodeon phase of the motion picture industry. With Marcus Loew he inaugurated a campaign which converted a third of New York's playhouses into veritable gold mines. Zukor's interests in the Loew enterprises are still large enough to bring him dividends of \$100,000 a year. But Zukor's fame today rests not on his prodigious operations as an exhibitor; rather he is referred to as the man who immortalized the actor. Less than two years ago Zukor conceived the idea of establishing a film concern that would perpetuate the art of the world's greatest players and provide everlasting film records of plays of by-gone days. To put this idea into effect he secured the co-operation of Daniel Frohman.

Sarah Bernhardt was selected by Zukor and Frohman as the most representative artist of all the world to reveal and inaugurate the Famous Players' policy. The films of the "Divine Sarah" in classic drama created an epoch in the motion picture industry.

Many stage producers of New York's theatre zone have capitulated to the films. William A. Brady, the Shuberts, Henry W. Savage, and even Klaw and Erlanger, all are producing for the screen.

MARCUS LOEW—whom we have left to the last—has had a spectacular career.



D. W. GRIFFITH
*the \$100,000
Director*

Eight years ago he was operating a penny arcade in New York. By 1910 he had made millions, operating his theatres on a scale unparalleled in the history of public amusements. One day he happened to visit the site of his birthplace on Avenue A. He noted that the district was thickly populated; he noted also that it was without places of amusements, so he built a theatre there costing nearly a million dollars. It has always paid large dividends. A few months ago, while Loew was out West on a pleasure trip, he looked around and bought twenty-seven theatres.