BASIL RATHBONE, WITH HIS FIERY ENTHUSIASM, HAS THE KNACK OF ADAPTING HIMSELF TO ANY ENVIRONMENT. HE LIVES EVERY MOMENT.

I was unfashionably early when I arrived at Basil Rathbone's home. A servant showed me into the living room, begged my acceptance of a glass of sherry, and left me. I sipped the wine and looked through the windows over a tree-shaded lawn. I felt that I was home in England—relaxed and placid. In fact, I was loosening a tight shoe lace when the door opened and Rathbone erupted from somewhere. "Erupted" is the word. Sports-coated, flanneled, sun-bronzed, he erupted into the room with a sort of zumph!

"Awfully sorry to keep you waiting. Have they brought you something to drink? Ha! Sherry! Think I'll join you!"

He joined me, and we settled down—as much as one can settle down with Rathbone. From the moment he erupted, I felt a crackling in the room, something electric. It behooved your interviewer to keep on his toes. I would have felt easier could I have reached for my blunderbuss, broadsword, claymore, buckler, or whatnot, and shouted "S'Death" or "S'Blood," or, maybe, merely "Hola!" Not having any of these weapons of mayhem at my finger tips, or any interjections at my tongue tip, I contented myself with sipping my sherry and complimenting him upon his gustatory eclecticism.

But, really, so help me, I seemed to see knights in shining armor, Roman statesmen, centurions, lictors, Montagues, Capulets, scribes, pharisees, and even Bards of Avon floating all over the place.

And now I'm afraid I've made him sound as though he were an uncomfortable kind of fellow with whom to pass the declining hours of daylight. He isn't at all. I knew I was going to like him from the moment he erupted. His firm handclasp, his warm welcome, were sufficient to warm the cockles of the heart. It was with an effort that I reminded

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Basil Rathbone convinces us that there are no more so-called villains or heavies on the screen.

Pictures are rapidly progressing to the point where there will be no leading man, no leading woman, no heavy, sums up the experienced Mr. Rathbone.
Gentleman Firebrand

Fernand Gravet made such a favorable impression in "The King and the Chorus Girl" that he is being recalled from France to make another picture.

os so many of my fans would like to behave had they the opportunity and the pluck. He went round the town with his hand on the hilt of his sword ready to defend the honor of his family. ’Tybalt’ a heavy? Never!

"No, your true heavy belonged to the dim, dark days of the drama. He are rapidly progressing to the point where there will be no leading man, no leading woman, no heavy, all going through their paces according to pattern. Pictures are getting to the point where these three behave like real characters in everyday life. They acknowledge no pattern. They behave as you and I would behave, not as leading men, leading women, and heavies would behave. In other words, they are true-to-life characters.

"Was Pontius Pilate in The Last Days of Pompeii a true-to-life character?" I inquired mockly. There I had him on the hip, or so I supposed.

"Pontius Pilate? Of course he was true to life. You can’t call him a ‘heavy’! He did his best to prevent the Crucifixion. He was merely overwhelmed by odds. You and I could not have stood up before such opposition. Incidentally, I think that that character was one of the best, if not the best, that I have ever portrayed upon the screen.

"It was only a week’s work, and I told my manager that I would not consider a week’s work. Anyhow, he persuaded me to read the script. Well, before I had read to the end I felt that I was Pilate, and told him to go ahead and get that part for me.

"What can you do with such a man? I felt that I was getting nowhere very fast. He convinced me that, in these enlightened days, there are no heavies as such. They are ordinary human beings, even as you and I, and they behave on the screen even as you and I would behave in real life. And when this Rathbone sets himself out to be convincing, one stays convinced! And having been convinced that there are no more villains or heavies, I thought that I would guide the conversation through other channels.

"As a good Englishman, tell me what you do to preserve the traditions of your native land in your habits and method of living."

If Basil had had any warning of the question, his answer couldn’t have come cleaner, sharper.

"Of course I’m an Englishman, but I’m afraid I’m too much of a tramp to conform to any tradition. I think it’s much more interesting to conform to conditions wherever one finds oneself."

Stronge talk for an Englishman, who, according to Beatrice Lillie’s song, is, with mad dogs, quite likely to “go out in the noontide sun.” To say nothing of dressing for dinner in the jungle. All in accordance with tradition.

Not that Basil lacks tradition. For
from it. We talked at the beautiful county at Buckinghamshire, where he made his residence on his last visit to his native land. It is a county particularly significant to Americans on account of its association with William Penn. We had both gazed with admiration upon the ceiling in the old mill house at The Jordans painted by Rubens when he sauntered there for a time. We had both visited Beaconsfield Churchyard, not far from where Milton wrote "Paradise Lost," and Grey his "Elegy."

But this isn’t a travelogue; it’s a story about Basil Rathbone. However, I wanted you to know that Basil, when he talks about his homeland, is absorbed in things other than pining upstart "Mantagues" in the stomach with a rapier, or putting little Freddie David Bartholomew Capperfield across his knee andspanking him. He becomes illuminated with the beauty of the English countryside over which, he told me, he liked to walk. I looked out of his window onto Las Feliz Boulevard. I saw the cars go whizzing by in an endless procession.

"But," I inquired lamely, "where can you walk in this part of the country?"

"Just across the Boulevard Griffith Park begins, and one can get all the walking one requires. I walk miles every day when work permits."

Then he became illuminated with the countryside of southern California. And I would like to tell you that between the countryside of England and that of southern California there is a great gulf fixed. They are both beautiful. But they are so different. Basil, with his fiery enthusiasm, seems to have the knack of adapting himself, nay, of living to the limit of his capacity in any environment under any circumstances. And Basil has the capacity for living. He lives every moment of his life, intensely, enthusiastically.

Should you have the pleasure of meeting him to-morrow you would not say, "He’s an actor always treading the boards," as you would with many screen celebrities. You would say, "He’s a great guy." And, considering the parts he is called upon to play, this is a tribute to Rathbone, the man.

Adolphe Menjou refreshes his memory of the coming scene in "100 Men and a Girl" in a secluded portion of the set.

WINDSTORM

Movie moguls are in despair, in frenzy, rant and tear their hair. While scouts are scampering far and wide to find a "Scarlett," emerald-eyed. Who shall play insidious "Rhett"? "Melanie," "Ashley," too, to get. Now Gable surely fits the case, and Leslie Howard, "Ashley's" place. While blind "Melanies" da abound, na black-haired "Scarletts" can be found. And so they're hunting far and wide to find a "Scarlett," emerald-eyed.

Bee Buckley.