

I BELIEVE there is very little women do not know about themselves," remarked Basil Rathbone in what is probably the most beautiful enunciation in Hollywood. "My great respect for feminine intuition forces me to that conclusion. But there are obvious things which women won't believe about themselves!"

It was a relief when the aristocratic Mr. Rathbone looked neither modest nor annoyed when the subject of Women came up. Most actors do—one or the other, or both. They're given to denying coyly they know anything at all about the opposite sex, or else they insist on changing the subject to something safer like "my work," or "my income tax."

But the lean Mr. Rathbone gave no indication that he was stymied or even embarrassed by the subject of the feminine sex as he rested in his dressing room between final scenes of the long-scheduled "Romeo and Juliet." Beneath a London-tailored lounging robe he was colorfully arrayed in the costume of *Tyball*. But even the high-laced shoes, the flashes of the black and silver costume, or the artificially curled "hair pieces" about his face could not detract from the quiet authority and self-confidence of his personality. The British are invariably armored with dignity and independence.

"After all, what is a more interesting subject than Men and Women to men and women? The actor who does not know women, or bother to understand feminine psychology has seriously shirked a super-important phase of his own interpretive profession!" said the star.

If you have seen Rathbone's outstanding work in "David Copperfield," "Anna Karenina," "The Last Days of Pompeii" you must realize there is little the man has shirked in the rudiments of his own career. He belongs to that category of actors numbering Leslie Howard and Paul Muni who put characterization and mental understanding far above mere camera personality. He has fought to portray characters who are honest and dramatically important throughout his stage and screen career, just as he once fought family opposition to become an actor in his native England. His father, a mining engineer, had wanted a business career for his favorite son. But war service (he was one of the first to enlist, and emerged four years later with a Military Cross to his credit) gave young Rathbone such a strong sense of individual values that he refused to compromise any longer with a "trade" career that no longer interested him. He believed the stage was his true field, and in spite of the most obstinate discouragements, he went on to make an illustrious name for himself with Constance Collier in "Peter Ibbetson," with Mrs. Patrick Campbell in "George Sand," and later, in America, with Eva Le Gallienne, and Katharine Cornell.

Just as he has always acted independently—he thinks independently. It is impossible not to realize that if a subject interested him he would discuss anything ranging from The Sex Life Of The Bees to the 1936 election problems—let Hollywood be wary of what it likes.

He said, smiling slightly: "When men apologize for the lack of fundamental knowledge of women—they do not really mean it! Perhaps that should come under the heading of 'what men do not know about themselves,' for most men firmly believe that what they think [PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 109]

**WHAT
Women Don't
Know About
Themselves**

Rathbone, suave aristocrat of the screen, tells you what he thinks equality has done to woman!



What Women Don't Know About Themselves

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55]

about women is gospel. However, I have always objected to fooling myself. So I shall be frank and admit that while I am not necessarily right about women, I am definitely opinionated about them!

"And I believe they are the strongest and the weakest, the wisest and the most foolish, the tenderest and the most dangerous creatures in the world!"

IF that is an anomaly—it must stand. Women should rule the world through men; that is their greatest power! They are fundamentally the more intelligent sex because they know things intuitively that men must stumble through experiences and books to learn. They are the more energetic sex because they are the very life-giving spark, itself. Nature has endowed them with more beauty, more deep wisdom, more understanding than men. All this is their great strength. But remember, I remarked women should rule the world *through men*, and the fact that they no longer wish to is their greatest weakness! Because, while Nature gave woman the intelligence and the spirit of the ruling power, she gave man the body for it! Queens may promote wars—but men must fight them!

"This age-old battle between the sexes should not be a battle at all, but a perfect co-ordination of the physical masculine force directed and guided by the feminine mental force. It was meant to be that way. And at times, through history, it has been that way with Man dressing the front of the world's stage and Woman pulling the strings of the Drama. But when Modern Woman chose to abandon her authority it was the greatest folly ever committed by either sex because equality has destroyed Woman's greatest hold on man, belief in her superiority, and it has bred restlessness, resentment and confusion between the sexes!"

I said: "Then you believe that Men are jealous of Women because they have successfully poached on masculine preserves,"—getting very feminist about it.

"No," he smiled broadly, holding a match to a cigarette he had been tapping gently on a table beside him, "I do not mean that at all, though it brings up an important item which women refuse to believe:

"Men are not nearly as jealous of women's careers as women insist they are!" Why should men be jealous when masculine dominance in world affairs has never been more powerful than it is today with dictators to the right of us and dictators to the left of us. Figured in terms of percentages the great books are being written by men, the great pictures are being painted by men, the truly fine poetry is masculine—and with war so desperately imminent, the very times are masculine! Of course, many women might not agree with this. But what men actually are resenting is that women insist on having their cake, or their career if you like, and eating it, too!

"The majority of women are wholly illogical about their equality! They claim they want to march step by step with men, yet they insist that men continue to treat them with gallantry, devotion and protection. They want all the advantages of self-sufficiency and all the pro-

tection that goes with frailty. The result has been that men have become confused and irritated.

"For instance, men sincerely want to be gallant and chivalrous. But to arise to one's feet when a woman approaches your table in a café, and then to be pushed back into one's chair; to run ahead to open a door only to find the lady has turned the knob for herself; to reach for a luncheon check and then to be told 'not to be silly'; to send lovely roses and then be chided for 'extravagance' is thoroughly disconcerting and confusing. I have never believed that men appreciate too much practicality in women.

"And yet, when a man, taking his cue from this 'palship' in their relations, offers a woman *friendship*—she is insulted! She wants love with a capital L, done up in pink and blue ribbons charged with excitement and based on the most obvious sex-appeal. Is it any wonder that men feel a little resentful and a little cheated — and that women continue to be vaguely unhappy?"

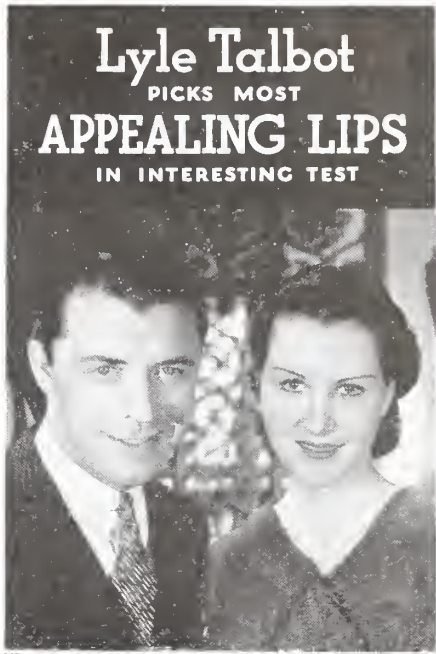
"I think this is the second most important truth which women find it difficult to admit: They are subconsciously unhappy and restless and dissatisfied with their present state in the scheme of things! Even the most successful, the most talented and the most powerful among them. Perhaps I should say these women, particularly. And if women will only be honest with themselves, how could it be otherwise? First, they have tampered with, and reversed the fundamental relationship between the sexes. And then they have attempted to replace too many important and basic things in their lives with substitutes they do not want, really.

"I cannot believe that any woman is truly happy who has no outlet for her strong maternal instinct. If you can believe what you read in the faces of successful women everywhere, careers are a poor substitute for maternal expression. Careers may be glamorous, they may be profitable, they can even be beautiful—but they cannot be mothered! Children, and *men can!*"

I suggested that he seemed to be completely ignoring women who have made a success of marriage and motherhood and a thriving career at the same time,—a woman like Norma Shearer for instance.

HE shook his head: "I do not believe it is possible to generalize about women and their problems as a sex through actress-examples," he continued briskly, "It is not a fair nor a representative point. In the first place the actress group is very small, very limited. In the second place acting and writing are two careers in which women not only retain their charm and femininity but find them enhanced. Acting is truly a woman's profession, the most becoming she can assume.

"Please do not misunderstand. I do not underestimate the fine courage behind the success Miss Shearer has made of her professional life as a star and her private life as Mrs. Irving Thalberg. She is in every way an exceptional woman. In fact, I have such great respect for what she has attained, and such admiration



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for her understanding of Life and Men and Women, I have little doubt but that she would retain the values she has today if she were a woman doctor or a woman lawyer. There are great secrets behind the success of women like Norma Shearer that too few women realize.

"One of them is, that no matter how clever a woman is in business or her profession, she should maintain the illusion of femininity and romance. Men are often proud of women who have lives and interests of their own. But they do not want the details of her cleverness hurled at them in terms of percentages, export rates, box-office figures nor anything else that hints of mathematics."

So far Rathbone had spoken only in terms of generalizations. I wondered if there were any little purely personal observations he found in women as a sex that pleased him—or even equally personal grudges he might harbor against them.

"Yes" he laughed, "One of each! They aren't terribly important to any one but myself. In fact, they're wholly trivial. But the fact remains, I do not like to watch women eat! Eating is the most uncivilized communion of our daily life, anyway. And it has always struck me as extremely unfortunate that the minute a man becomes interested in a woman he is expected to invite her to share a meal with him.

Potential lovers could not see themselves in a more unflattering light than with their jaws moving continually, sipping soup or "chomping" celery! I think meals are occasions we should share only with our oldest and deepest friends who can forgive us anything!

"I warned you these personalities were trivial. But just as keenly as I hate to watch a woman eat, I adore to watch her in the setting of her own home, performing the most domestic of tasks—yes, even setting her own dinner table or arranging the flowers for it. Women are never so beautiful or so individual as they are against the background of their own possessions. Not all women, of course, can have beautiful homes. But all women can acquire things which belong to them alone, which reflect their taste."

It was time for me to start making my departure. An assistant had appeared twice at the door with reminders that work would start shortly on "the back lot." The very tall and very British Mr. Rathbone held open the door (I wouldn't have reached for the knob for anything). We shook hands. He smiled: "Now that I have unburdened myself of my private opinions about women, I'm not even going to do the usual thing and apologize for them. The men will not mind—and the women probably will not believe them!"

On the Spot News

BABIES, JUST BABIES:

Norman Foster's and Sally Blane's hoped for little Elmer turned out to be a seven pound girl. They love her anyway.

The Alan Dineharts are taking bows for the new son and heir.

Little Linda Woods has come to stay at Donald Wood's home. She's welcome.

A neat little production in the form of a new son for producer David Selznick. In color, too. A luscious strawberry pink.

AILING:

Getting all hot and bothered and things put Donald Ogden Stewart into a sanitarium. Writing funny scripts plays heck with the nerves, eh Donald Ogden?

Ruth Chatterton denies she took flu because Sam Goldwyn sneezed at her through the phone. Sam gets blamed for everything. Ruthie would have gotten it anyway on account of night flying without her ear-lugs.

Mrs. Adolphe Menjou is back in the hospital. The former Veree Teasdale deserves better luck.

Pandemonium has practically ceased at the Chester Morris house. Mrs. Morris is recovering from her operation, the two children are fast losing that measles glow and even the lump on Chester's jaw is behaving. The tooth is out. So was Chester for two whole weeks.

LOOK WHO'S HERE DEPARTMENT:

Eddie Cantor arrived in sunny Cal. one day and grabbed up Ida the next for a boat ride to Honolulu. It's their twenty-second honeymoon. Nice people, Ida and Eddie.

James Montgomery Flagg has all the beauties sitting at his feet. He's doing their likenesses for PHOTOPLAY covers.

Ramon Novarro is home from his hissing in

London. He has forgiven all and looks grand.

Robert Taylor is back minus one shoe, twelve dozen handkerchiefs. Bobbie has been getting himself lady-mobbed in New York.

AH OH, NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY:

Hollywood wives are locking their good-looking husbands in clothes closets these nights. Sally Rand and her bubbles are in town.

DROP US A POSTAL CARD:

Spencer Tracy and his wife trek to Honolulu for vacation. Joan Bennett invades England. Ditto Irene Dunne. Frances Marion, writer, goes all the way round the world. Eddie Robinson off for London. And much to Ida Lupino's sorrow, so is Louis Hayward.

Somewhere in the wilds of the Northwest where the deer and the antelope play are the Fredric Marches. Getting away from it all.

SUMMER FASHIONS AND SUMMER NOT:

Nelson Eddy is sporting a dark gray Tux with black braid. Makes it easier to escape from pursuing females. The gray confuses 'em. With this he wears Jeanette MacDonald, on his arm.

THE CURTAIN FALLS:

To Jobyna Howland, blonde comedienne, farewell and God speed you in your final journey to far-off location.

Hollywood mourns the death of a great star of silent days, Henry B. Walthall, whose gentle dignity and innate kindness endeared him to all who knew him. He was the oldest actor in years of service in the films, and will be remembered best as the *Little Colonel* in "The Birth of a Nation," which brought him fame.