"THE SIGN OF THE CROSS"

The day of the million-dollar movie spectacle-drama has returned. And, as far as Hollywood is concerned, prosperity has at last managed to get around that mythical corner.

Cecil B. DeMille's "The Sign of the Cross," a spectacle of pagan Rome in the days of Nero, last of the Caesars, was the picture which did the trick. Like DeMille's "The Ten Command-



The alluring Claudette Colbert in the garb of Nero's Queen in "The Sign of the Cross" coming to the New Lyceum Theatre on June 21 and 22.

ments" and "The King of Kings," "The Sign of the Cross," which comes on Wednesday and Thursday, June 21 and 22 to the New Lyceum Theatre, was produced on a gigantic scale, with thousands of players, elaborate settings and all the other features that run up bills, but stun audiences into awed delight in the magnificence they are beholding.

Nearly 7,500 persons made up the cast of "The Sign of the Cross." These include Frederic March, Elissa Landi, Claudette Colbert, Charles Laughton, and others in leading roles and thousands of "extras" who appear in Roman street scenes and in the arena in which Nero stages his bloody games.

Practically the entire Paramount ranch, comprising several score acres of land near Hollywood, was converted into a section of the City of Rome as it was in Nero's day. Streets, public squares and houses were duplicated from research based on several hundred years of excavations in the Imperial City. These settings were later destroyed by fire, when DeMille filmed Nero's burning of Rome.

An elaborate Roman bath, in which Miss Colbert, as the empress, is photographed during the course of her ablutions, was constructed from blueprints and charts of baths uncovered in recent excavations.

Most elaborate of all the settings was a duplication of the Circus Maximus, a huge amphitheatre which for several hundred years was the scene of the bloody gladiatorial combats and chariot races in which the Roman populace delighted. A huge structure, the original Circus Maximus seated 150,000 persons. DeMille built a section of the grandstand large enough to seat the 7,500 extras, as well as the entire 90,000 square-foot area in which the games were actually conducted.

Interior settings, duplicates of sections of Nero's famed Palace of Gold, and of houses of wealthy patricians, were built in the studios. These were reproduced with lavish detail.

Jewelers were hired to manufacture the more than 2,000 pieces of jewelry and metal ornaments worn by leading players and extras in the film. A metal foundry turned out hundreds of helmets, breastplates, and other pieces of armor worn by male players.

Costume shops worked overtime to produce the 7,500 costumes worn by leads and extras.

Lions tigers, bears and bulls were rented for use in the amphi-theatre sequences.

All in all, Hollywood enjoyed prosperity again as DeMille distributed nearly $1,000,000—here to an actor, there to a designer; here to a carpenter, there to a jeweler; here to a menagerie owner, there to a stone mason; and so on down the line.

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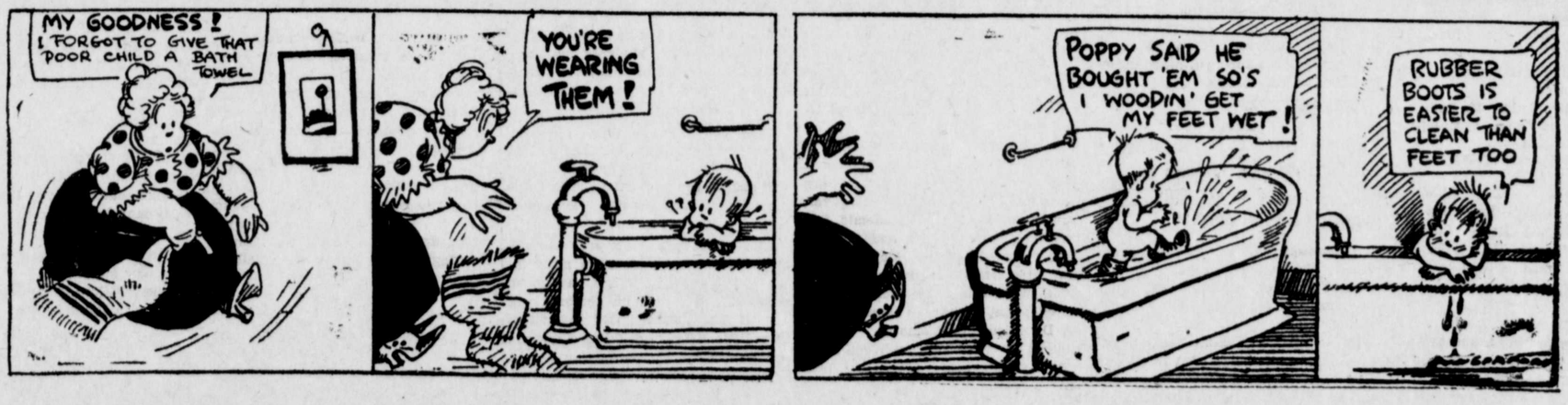
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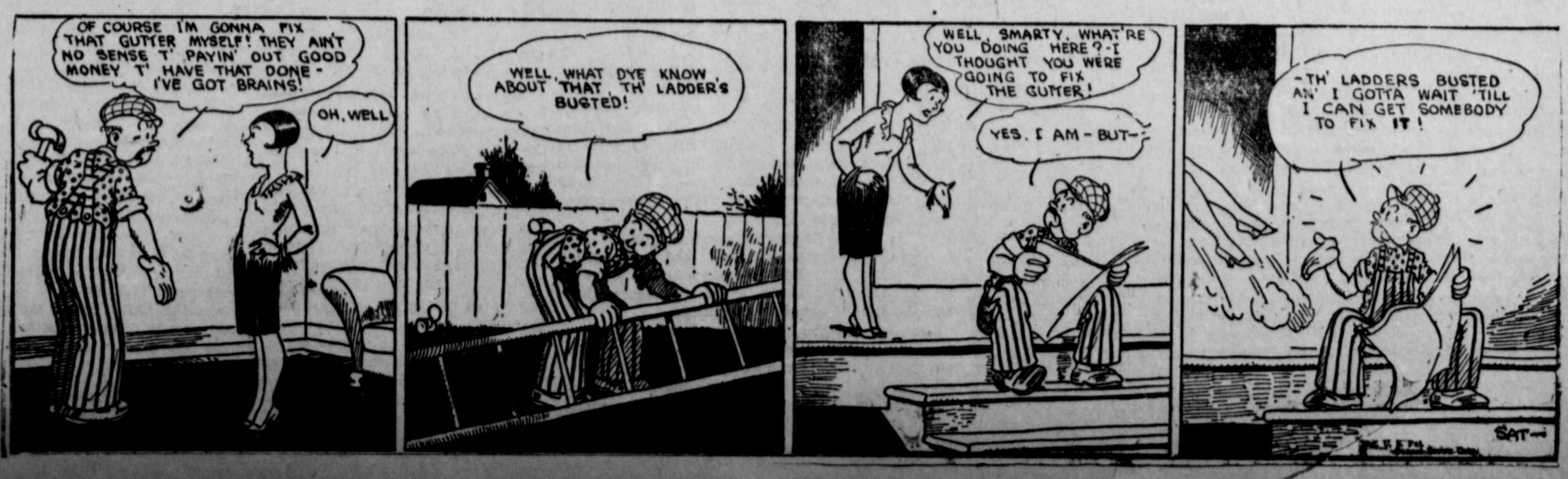


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