

EVE BALFOUR

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1882–1955

NOTES ON A
NEW ZEALAND
MOVIE STAR

by

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A "Pictures" Portrait Gallery postcard, 85 Long Acre, London.
The photograph first published in the *Daily Mirror*, 26 October 1916.

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Cover: Eve Balfour,
photograph by Angus Basil Brown c. 1915.

Chapter I: Eve's beginnings in Christchurch

Eva Eliza Hulston was born in Christchurch on 3 May 1882 to Eliza and Albert Charles Thomas Hulston— “Born on a lonely New Zealand farm” the *Auckland Star* would claim much later¹ and in 1920 Eve would tell a reporter for the *Salt Lake Telegram*, “I was born in New Zealand, in South Island, the furthest point in the Antipodes. It is a wild, remote country. As a child I was very much alone. I spent most of my time out of doors.”²

Her father was known as Charles, a draper of Colombo Street South, Sydenham. Not just a draper though: Charles Hulston was a sprinter; he won the 100 yards race in “a shade over 10sec.” at the Canterbury Province’s 27th Anniversary sports in December 1877,³ the 100 and the 440 at Amberley later in the month,⁴ the 100 at the Oddfellows’ Fete in April 1878 (1st prize 2 guineas, 2nd a cigar holder: in the 200 yards race the 2nd prize was a meerschaum pipe).

In 1878 Eliza Freeman, dressmaker and Charles Hulston were married. Henry Charles was born in 1879, Eva Eliza in 1882, Queenie Evalind in 1888 and Charles Frank in 1895.

There were further races, one result apparently in dispute, for this advertisement appeared in the *Press* of 26 December 1878,

CHALLENGE—Having heard that D. Scott is dissatisfied with his match with me, I hereby CHALLENGE to RUN him 100 yards, giving him three yards, for £25 to £100 aside.

(Signed) CHARLES HULSTON.⁵

Whether that challenge was taken up is not recorded but Hulston beat Scott into 2nd place in the quarter mile and the quarter mile hurdles in January.

Late in 1880 Hulston challenged Hutton, of Auckland, to race over 100, 120 and 150 yards, for 25 sovereigns, the race to take place in Christchurch in January 1881. Hulston's form seemed to slump, but he rallied in time (and no doubt when the stakes were most favourable) and won, the *Globe* reporter commenting disdainfully, "It would be as well on future occasions if Mr Hulston were to abstain from the very bad taste of beckoning on a defeated opponent when certain of victory. It's the worst of form, as an old runner like Mr Hulston should know very well."⁶

In June 1882 he challenged "to run any man in New Zealand for distances of 100, 150 and 200 yards, for £100 a side or upwards and the championship of New Zealand."⁷ F. Woods of Wellington took the bet.

HULSTON v. WOODS

FOR

£50

120 YARDS

150 YARDS

AND

200 YARDS

Will be Run at LANCASTER PARK

TOMORROW AFTERNOON

At 3 o'clock.⁸

Hulston won, but at a return match in 1884 in Dunedin, was beaten.

Eliza Hulston was perhaps in charge of the family business, advertising daily from September 1888,

MRS HULSTON, Milliner and Dressmaker,
Colombo street, Sydenham, has Opened a Branch
Shop in Manchester street, three doors from
Lichfield street, and is making Dresses complete,

from 20s, in the latest style; good material; a large variety of hats, bonnets, frilling, ribbons, corsets, underclothing, &c.⁹

In April 1890 she changed her advertisement,

WANTED KNOWN—Mrs Hulston has Removed to more Commodious Premises, opposite the Rotherfield Hotel, Cashel street. Dressmaking and Millinery a specialty. Wedding and mourning orders on the shortest notice.¹⁰

In 1891 she advertised for a servant girl and for apprentice dressmakers, millinery and sales. She ran a sale of goods,

WANTED Known—Stylish Millinery half price, Ulsters, Jackets, Mantles, Dolmans, Dress Stuffs, Corsets at unheard-of prices. This is our first sale. Genuine bargains. Mrs Hulston, 223, Cashel street.¹¹

Then in June 1893,

LEAVING Canterbury. Mrs Hulston, Milliner, Dressmaker, Draper, Cashel street, notifies Customers, General Public, giving up business. Millinery, Ulsters, Mantles, Jackets, &c., half-price. Everything must go.¹²

But in December the Hulston Buildings and her stock were extensively damaged by fire; a big fire sale of damaged material followed and in April 1895 Mrs C. Hulston begged to announce (“to her numerous friends”) that she would resume business with entirely new stock, next door.¹³

In February 1896 she was expanding,

A notable addition to the business premises in Colombo Street north has been made by the erection of the two-storied brick building at the corner of Cambridge Terrace

for Mrs Hulston, who carries on therein her ladies' outfitting business. The building contains two shops besides that occupied by Mrs Hulston. The latter is 63ft in length and 20ft wide, and is fitted up in very complete style. There is a workroom behind, and a suite of living rooms on the upper floor.¹⁴

Charles did what older runners do and took up cycling.

MRS HULSTON

IS NOW SHOWING HER NEW SEASON'S MILLINERY
Just Arrived by Direct Steamer.

Before Purchasing Your
WINTER MILLINERY, DRESSES, JACKETS FURS, &c.,
Call and Inspect MRS HULSTON'S Direct Cash Purchases.

Combined with the smallest expenses in the city
Competition Defied.

Ready-Made Costumes, Wrappers, &c.

Wedding and Mourning Orders on the Shortest Notice.

259, COLOMBO STREET NORTH.

The *Press* of 19 December 1899 first reported seventeen year old Eva's performing on stage,

CONVENT OF OUR LADY OF MERCY.

The annual distribution of prizes at the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy took place in the Schoolroom, Colombo street north, on Friday afternoon. His Lordship Bishop Grimes presided, and there was a large attendance of friends and relatives of the pupils. The concert programme included a chorus by the young ladies, piano

duets by Misses Nellie Turner, Alice Nelson, Stella Murray, Lucy Fleming, Hilda Sharman, Violet Cameron, and Lizzie Joyce, a recitation by Miss Muriel Simpson, and a solo by Miss A. McGill with a violin obligato by Miss Hilda Flynn. A drama entitled “Queen Mab” was also given. The principal parts were taken by Misses Stella Murray, Eva Hulston, Dulcie Deamer, and Doffie Deamer....

Stella Murray would become a talented contralto in New Zealand and later would be a leader in the New Zealand community in London. At age 16 Mary Elizabeth Kathleen Dulcie Deamer won a *Lone Hand* short story competition and then joined a touring theatrical company. In 1907 she married and toured the far east, returned to Sydney in 1908 and lived as a writer, actor and bohemian. She had six children and travelled overseas frequently, leaving the children with her mother. After her marriage ended in 1922 she lived at Kings Cross and worked as a freelance journalist. She was crowned “Queen of Bohemia” in 1925. Perhaps her most notorious exploit was performing the splits at the 1923 Artists Ball in a leopard skin costume. She wrote plays and novels and mystical poetry.¹⁵ Her sister Dorothy (Doffie) would live in Rome and Sydney as a nun.

Much later, in 1914, the *Sun* would write of Eve,

Miss Balfour, while still in her “teens,” displayed remarkable histrionic ability, and derived keen delight from taking part in various Shakespearean plays produced by the pupils. Her secret ambition for a stage career was unconsciously stimulated by the teachers, who were impressed by the evidences of her talent.¹⁶

Mrs Eliza Hulston advertised on 18 April 1903 she was “Giving up Business”. Her last advertisement was on 22 September

1903 and on the 26th Mrs Lees of Wellington announced she had bought the remaining stock.¹⁷



Eve's school classmate Dulcie Deamer in leopardskin,
 State Library of New South Wales collection.

In 1904 Eve (22) and James Lawson Balfour (34) were married. Balfour was born in Melbourne in 1870, a painter who from about 1887 studied in London with portraitist Hubert von Herkomer and at the Julian Academy, Paris. He exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1898 and worked as a portrait painter and illustrator of books and periodicals. He arrived in Christchurch in 1900, was listed as a Christchurch artist 1901–1906, exhibited with the Canterbury Society of Arts from 1900–1906 and in the NZ International Exhibition 1906–1907.¹⁸

Balfour was... quite well known to many, as his artist/musician father James Balfour senior had lived in Christchurch for more than twenty years and had been visited by his son on several occasions. When he set up his studio J.L. Balfour turned to portraiture as a “pot boiler” and like Thomas S. Cousins before him found a ready clientele amongst the old identities of Canterbury, whose families wished them to be immortalised on canvas before they passed on.¹⁹

In 1905 their address was 153 Barbadoes St. Both JL and “Mrs Lawson Balfour” were listed among the working members of the Canterbury Art Society; in the exhibition catalogue for that year are two works by “E. Balfour”—“Evenglow” and “On the beach”.²⁰ She remained a working member until 1908 but did not exhibit her work again.

In the 1906 catalogue is a black and white copy of J Lawson Balfour’s “The Favourites” for which the model appears to have been his wife Eve, in classical attire, feeding pigeons.

The art and cultural scene in Christchurch was alive and bustling. The Christchurch Artists’ Sketch Club held studio meetings every week and among its members were Sydney Lough Thompson, Edwin Bartley, Leonard H Booth, William Menzies Gibb, Charles N Worsley, Alfred Walsh, Andrew

Kennaway Henderson, Charles Bickerton, Robert A Gill, James Lawson Balfour and Raymond McIntyre.²¹

Then came the great New Zealand International Exhibition in 1906: Lawson Balfour was one of the 12 members of the Fine Arts committee. In October Fred Rayner began the weekly magazine, the *Exhibition Sketcher* which provided an outlet for humourists, cartoonists and caricaturists.

Mrs Eve Balfour would take lessons in elocution and acting from Mr William Densem. He had been an amateur singer and light opera performer in Dunedin, took pupils in “elocution, speech in song, dramatic art, and voice culture” there in 1903,²² moved to Christchurch where he was appointed stage manager of the Christchurch Amateur Operatic Society in 1904²³ and began teaching singing, elocution and voice culture.²⁴

Eve Balfour would play the part of Esther Eccles in TW Robertson’s 1867 comedy *Caste* in the Christchurch Concert Hall as one of the New Zealand International Exhibition events.²⁵

The *Press* reviewer was appreciative, “Both Mrs Balfour and Mrs Willburg fulfilled their tasks with the utmost credit”,²⁶ the *Lyttelton Times*’s less so, “Mrs Balfour, as Esther Eccles, was at times a trifle weak, but she showed signs of distinct ability”.²⁷

The plot? Captain George D’Alroy, whose mother was married to a French marquis, fell in love with a beautiful dancer named Esther Eccles. Despite his mother’s pride in rank and family, he was resolved to marry the girl, but his good sense warned him that the marriage might result in his mother’s unhappiness. His friend, Captain Hawtree, went to see Esther at her home. Hawtree agreed that Esther was a charming girl but the differences in social position and culture were too great to be bridged; he pointed out that Esther’s father was a confirmed drunkard and loafer....



NO. 13. "THE FAVOURITES." J. LAWSON BALFOUR.

From the 1906 Canterbury Arts Society Catalogue

NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.

CONCERT HALL.
MATINEE. MATINEE.

TO-DAY. 3.30. TO-DAY.

By
THE ORCHESTRA.

Overture. "Freerhas" (Schubert).
Entracte to "Mignon" (Thomas).
Symphony, Scotch No. 3 (Mendelssohn).
Conductor: MR ALFRED HILL, R.C.M.L.

2.30 ON THE LAWN. 2.30
WELLINGTON BATTALION CADET
BAND.

7.30
WOOLSTON AND CADET BANDS.

CONCERT HALL,

8 p.m.
THE CASTE COMEDY COMPANY.

In T. W. Robertson's Brilliant Comedy—
"CASTE."

In which the Company has achieved its most pronounced success, having played the Comedy over a dozen times to enthusiastic audiences.

CHARACTERS:

Hon George D'Aroy . . . Mr Winter Hall
Captain Hawtree . . . Mr Wood Jones
Eccles . . . Mr H. H. Rayward
Sam Gerridge . . . Mr C. H. Hobbs
Dixon . . . Mr J. L. Merton
Marquise de St Maur . . Miss Willberg
Esther Eccles . . . Mrs Balfour
Polly Eccles . . . Miss May Wells

ACT I.—The Little House in Stangate.

COURTSHIP.

A Lapre of Eight Months.

ACT II.—The Lodgings in Mayfair.

MATRIMONY.

A Lapre of Twelve Months.

ACT III.—The Little House in Stangate.

WIDOWHOOD.

Orchestra at 7.45. Curtain at 8 o'clock sharp.

Admission: Dress Circle 1s 6d. Body of Hall 1s. Seats for the Dress Circle may be reserved at the Dresden on payment of 6d extra.



"Billy" Densem, caricature by Andrew Kennaway Henderson,
from Fred Rayner's *Exhibition Sketcher*.

On 25 February 1908 McKenzie & Willis, auctioneers sold the Hulston household goods— “Superior furniture, Steinway piano... a number of beautiful pictures, several of them from the brush of J.L. Balfour, etc., etc.”²⁸

Three days later, on the 28th, the s.s. *Moeraki* left Lyttelton bound for Wellington and Sydney, with the Hulstons and Eve and Lawson Balfour aboard.²⁹ From Sydney they sailed for England on the *Ophir* on 4 March.



s.s. *Ophir*

In July the *Lyttelton Times* reported,

Mr and Mrs Charles Hulston and their two children, who arrived from Christchurch some weeks ago, have taken a house at Muswell Hill, in North London, for twelve months. It is Mr Hulston's intention to remain in this country for at least a couple of years.³⁰

Eve Balfour's parents were competitive, hard working, entrepreneurial people, financially successful. Her mother Eliza was a strong woman, not afraid, in those demurely reticent times, to see her name each day in bold capital headlines. She died after the Hulston's return to Christchurch on 17 February 1910, aged 52.³¹

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- 1 *Auckland Star* 4 February 1933.
 - 2 *Salt Lake Telegram* 12 January 1920.
 - 3 *Press* 18 December 1877.
 - 4 *Lyttelton Times* 27 December 1877.
 - 5 *Lyttelton Times* 28 January 1879.
 - 6 *Globe* 12 January 1881.
 - 7 *Press* 6 June 1882.
 - 8 *Star* 22 December 1882.
 - 9 *Star* 26 September 1888.
 - 10 *Press* 26 April 1890.
 - 11 *Star* 1 July 1891.
 - 12 *Lyttelton Times* 15 June 1893.
 - 13 *Press* 4 April 1895.
 - 14 *Star* 1 February 1896.
 - 15 Name record, Deamer, Dulcie. AustLit: Australian Literature Gateway
www.austlit.edu.au, 2002.
 - 16 *Sun* 26 March 1914.
 - 17 *Press* 26 September 1903.
 - 18 Una Platts 1980. *Nineteenth Century NZ Artists: a guide & handbook*.
Avon Fine Prints, Christchurch.
 - 19 Robert McDougall Art Gallery 2000. *A concise history of art in
Canterbury*.
 - 20 [http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/Publications/Art/
CanterburySocietyofArts/pdfs/Catalogue-1905.pdf](http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/Publications/Art/CanterburySocietyofArts/pdfs/Catalogue-1905.pdf) retrieved 13 March
2019.
 - 21 *ibid*.
 - 22 *Evening Star* 1 May 1903.
 - 23 *Otago Witness* 20 July 1904.
 - 24 *Lyttelton Times* 28 January 1904.
 - 25 *Lyttelton Times* 20 December 1906,
 - 26 *Press* 21 December 1906.
 - 27 *Lyttelton Times* 21 December 1906.

28 *Lyttelton Times* 25 February 1908.

29 *Lyttelton Times* 28 February 1908.

30 *Lyttelton Times* 11 July 1908.

31 *Lyttelton Times* 18 February 1910.

Chapter 2: Eve on the English stage.

The Balfours were going to England in order to further Lawson Balfour's artistic career, but Eve had ideas too, as the London correspondent of the *NZ Times* told its readers,

Mr and Mrs Lawson Balfour, of Christchurch, who are also in London, came by the Ophir last Easter. Mrs Balfour played "Esther" in "Caste" at the New Zealand International Exhibition, and her teacher, Mr W. Densem considered her talent worthy of a trial in London; she will, therefore, further her dramatic studies as much as possible while here. She will accompany her husband in his sketching tour of Great Britain during the summer, and will settle down in London in the following winter. They expect to spend about eighteen months in this country before returning to the Dominion.¹

British women were not yet regarded as fully sentient beings so could not vote. In April 1909 "Frou-Frou" reported in the *Wigan Observer and District Advertiser's* "Ladies' Column", on a meeting in London of the Women's Local Government Society,

That women's franchise would be dangerous in times of grave national crisis, when it is argued that their feelings

and sentiments would carry them in unpredictable directions, is an idea well shown to be groundless by the last act of New Zealand, as is aptly pointed out by Mr. Lawson Balfour. He says his country has shown a grand spirit in offering to provide two first-class battleships to help the Navy, but he claims that his countrywomen have had a share in making that offer, having had votes for over fifteen years.²

Eve was a member of the Actresses' Franchise League and took part in women's suffrage activities in London, including the first "Suffragette bazaar" in April called the "Green, White and Gold Fair" at Caxton Hall, as the *NZ Times* reported in June 1909,

Mrs Lawson Balfour, of Christchurch, in the artistic costume of "Alfred's mother," kindly lent by Miss Ellen Terry, was a picturesque figure at the fair, held at Caxton Hall by the Suffragettes. Mrs Balfour and her husband, also a native of New Zealand, and a well-known artist in the Dominion, who has also exhibited on several occasions at the Royal Academy, came to England about a year ago. Mrs Balfour took the part of the Suffragette leader in the amusing play, "How the Vote was Won," by Miss Cicely Hamilton, author of "Diana of Dobson's," and Miss C. St. John at the two performances at the fair on Saturday. She also made a striking figure as "My Lord" in the tableau of "Lady Godiva." I understand that Mrs Balfour has decided to go in for the stage as a profession in England, and that she has already had offers of engagements.³

At The Scala in London in November 1909,

THE SCALA. A matinee in aid of the funds of the Actresses' Franchise League and the Women Writers' Suffrage League drew a large audience to the Scala on

Friday. Three new one-act plays were presented. "The Pot and the Kettle" by Miss Cicely Hamilton and Miss Christopher St. John, "Master" by Miss Gertrude Mouillot, and the "Outcast," by Miss Beatrice Harraden and Miss Bessie Hutton. There was also a Pageant of Famous Women arranged by Miss Edith Craig. In this Miss Elaine Inescourt was Hypathia, Miss Eva Balfour Sappho, Miss Barbara Ayrton Grace Darling, and Miss Marion Terry Florence Nightingale. Mrs. Brown Potter appeared as Charlotte Corday, Miss Ellen Terry as Nance Oldfield, Miss Susanne Sheldon the Empress Catherine, Miss Pauline Chase as Joan of Arc, Miss Elizabeth Kirby as Boadicea, Miss Angela Hubbard as Queen Victoria, and Miss Janette Steer as Queen Elizabeth. There were many other items on the lengthy programme, including some songs by Miss Esther Palliser and stories by Miss Helen Mar.⁴

It was Ellen Terry's daughter Edith Craig who directed *A Pageant of Great Women*, which she called a "propaganda play" and which she wrote with Cicely Hamilton; it was performed across the United Kingdom before big audiences. In it "Woman" confronts "Prejudice," who believes men and women are not equal. "Justice" referees the debate as great women appear on stage as evidence of women's achievements in art, government, education, religion and war.

Eve Balfour played only a small part in the women's suffrage movement and she is not mentioned in *Art, Theatre and Women's Suffrage*.⁵ Ann Marie Nicolosi has suggested the US suffrage movement took advantage of the extraordinary beauty of Inez Mulholland to undermine "the association of female political participation with masculine women and gender transgression".⁶ Perhaps the London suffragists welcomed Eve for the same reason.



"A suffragette in historic costume at the Green, White & Gold Fair organized by the Women's Freedom League, 1909." Photograph by Christina Broom.

This is Eve Balfour, in Ellen Terry's "Alfred's mother" costume.



▲ The celebrated actor Ellen Terry in 1909. ▲ Terry's daughter Edith Craig, prolific theatre director, producer, costume designer and pioneer of women's suffrage.



▲ Christobel Marshall (Christopher St John), ▲ Cicely Hamilton, actress, writer, Craig's partner, Terry's biographer, journalist, suffragist and Feminist.



Eve Balfour with others at the Green, White & Gold Fair organised by the Women's Freedom League, April 1909. Photograph by Christina Broom. The women dressed in 15th century costume to represent a time when "women were free and equal with the tyrant man". Osburh or Osburga was the mother of King Alfred the Great: she is often depicted in similar costume.



Eva Balfour as Sappho in the women's suffrage "propaganda play",
"Pageant of Great Women," in London, November 1909;
photograph by Marie Leon published in the play script by the Suffrage
Shop in 1910.

Sydney's *Sunday Star* in September 1909,

Miss Eva Balfour (Mrs. Lawson Balfour) is a beautiful and talented New Zealander who has been engaged by Mr. Fred Terry for his autumn tour of "Henry of Navarre." Miss Balfour is to understudy one of the leading roles, and also to appear in a minor part. She has recently been reciting at a number of "At Homes" in London, and also appeared at a special matinee at the Bedford Theatre in a one-act play, "The Crystal Gazer," in which her personality and sympathetic acting were greatly admired. Miss Balfour is married to Mr. Lawson Balfour, the well-known artist, of Christchurch.⁷

The Christchurch *Star* would explain,

Mrs Lawson Balfour... received the whole of her training in dramatic art from Mr W. Densem, of this city. Mrs Balfour displayed such marked ability as a student that Mr Densem advised her, on her leaving for London, to take up the stage as a profession. The clever New Zealander recited before Miss Ellen Terry, and afterwards appeared with the famous actress at a matinee under the patronage of Queen Alexandra in aid of the London Children's Hospitals. Miss Terry was so impressed by Mrs Balfour's work that she secured her an engagement with Mr Fred Terry and Miss Julia Neilson. Mr Densem has received a letter from his pupil, giving a glowing account of her prospects with the company, which is one of the leading London comedy organisations.⁸

She gave up her engagement with Fred Terry to join Sir Herbert Tree's company at His Majesty's Theatre—it was reported Tree had engaged her "largely owing to her appearance".

She was one of the Eight Symphonies in Tree's "Beethoven" in November⁹ and in January 1910 a photograph showed her

in Egyptian costume for his production of the play “False gods”.¹⁰

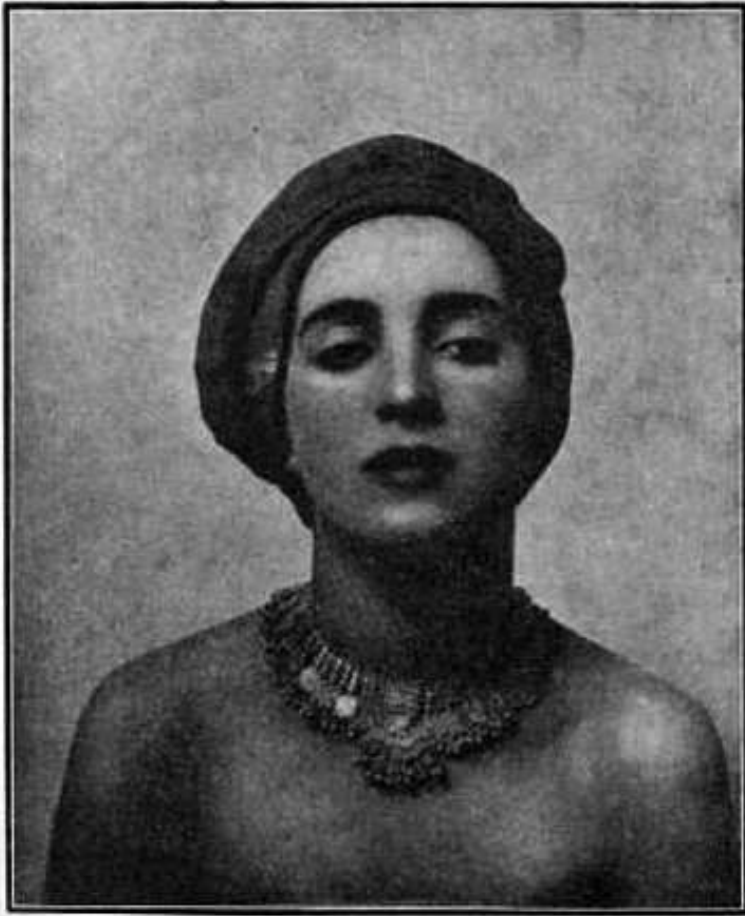


▲ Fred Terry in *Henry of Navarre*.



▲ Herbert Beerbohm Tree in *False Gods*.

The *Lone Hand* published her photograph,



"A NEW ZEALAND ACTRESS—MRS. LAWSON (EVA) BALFOUR.

A native of Christchurch, Mrs. Lawson Balfour is now playing with Sir H. Beebohm Tree's company in the Egyptian play, *False Gods* (by Brieux). The photograph shows her as an Egyptian girl. Mrs. Balfour gave up her engagement with Fred Terry to join Tree, who engaged her largely owing to her appearance."

Some years later, in 1911, after Eve had established herself as a successful actor, Sydney's *Sunday Times* would look back,

Miss Balfour was born near Christchurch, and in her childhood cherished dreams of going upon the stage. When she went to England three years ago she determined to make her dreams a reality. Without any experience of the theatre, and knowing no one connected with it Miss Balfour one day passed by His Majesty's, where the production of "False Gods" was announced. She called on Sir Herbert Tree without an introduction; managed to see him, and was immediately taken on to understudy one of the leading woman's parts. Since then Miss Balfour has played lead with Miss Kingston at the Little Theatre, and has been on tour with Shakespearian companies. Gifted with youth and charm of personality, as well as of face and figure, added to enthusiasm and talent (says a London paper), Miss Balfour should go far in the profession she has chosen.¹¹

Meanwhile Lawson Balfour had been sketching "all over England and Wales ... and he intends to exhibit some of his Welsh and Cornish sketches at the New Zealand art shows this year."¹² He exhibited a painting of the Cornish coast at the Institute of Oil Painters' galleries in Piccadilly in December.¹³

She was elected to the Actors' Association in January 1910¹⁴ and in February the Hobart *Daily Post* reported,

Miss Eva Balfour (Mrs. Lawson Balfour), of Christchurch, has gained a footing on the London stage, and recently she has appeared in two of the big productions at Sir Herbert Tree's Theatre, His Majesty's. She was one of the Nile maidens in Brieux's powerful play, "False Gods," and also understudy to Mrs. Pat. Campbell in that drama. In "Beethoven" Miss Balfour represented the Sixth Symphony in a symbolical pageant

in the last act. She has been enjoying a rest before beginning work again at His Majesty's in Sir H. Tree's next production. Mr. Lawson Balfour meanwhile has taken a studio in Chelsea, and is busy with his pictures.¹⁵

Eve was described as "a graceful and sympathetic Zoe" in the Rehearsal Company's *The Octaroon* in April.¹⁶ She performed the Potion scene from *Romeo and Juliet* during an interval later in May¹⁷—the *Era* critic considered "Miss Eva Balfour was inclined to be nervous in the potion scene from *Romeo and Juliet*, but she is an actress with a forceful delivery, and is undoubtedly a creditable Shakespearian student".¹⁸

In August 1910,

Mrs Lawson Balfour (Christchurch), whose stage name is Miss Eva Balfour, gives an excellent performance as Katharine in the Rehearsal Company's production of "The Taming of the Shrew" at the Court Theatre, London. "The Times" comments thus on the New Zealander's acting:—"Miss Eva Balfour, as Katharine, looked and spoke with a good deal of dignity and was never too noisy, though a little inclined to overdo the quite effective sneer with which she spoke most of her sentences in her unregenerate days. But she was a Katharine that any Petruccio would have been glad to tame."¹⁹

The *Referee* thought similarly: "Miss Eva Balfour indulged in excessive facial play to atone for deficiency of gesture, but in appearance and in venom of tongue she was a proper Katharine."²⁰

Sydney's *Sun* published her photograph,



EVE BALFOUR.

A New Zealander, who was for some time at His Majesty's Theatre, in London. She has played Katharine in "The Taming of the Shrew" in the London Court Theatre with much success, and is to be seen in the same house later on as Viola in "Twelfth Night."

The young artiste was still working for women's suffrage,

BECKENHAM PUBLIC HALL
 Saturday, September 24th, at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

.. *The* ..
Pageant of Great Women
 .. *by* ..
CICELY HAMILTON
 (Author of "BIRN OF BEAUTY")

will be produced by **MISS EDITH CRAIG**, daughter of Ellen Terry.

The following artistes have kindly consented to appear.

MISS EVA BALFOUR	MISS CICELY HAMILTON
MISS EDITH CRAIG	MISS OLIVE TERRY
MR. LEONARD CRASKE	MISS JANETTE STEER
Miss Winifred Davis <small>(Drapery)</small>	Miss Ruby Ginner <small>(Drapery)</small> <small>(By kind permission of Misses: Parnell)</small>

MRS. DESPARD AND MANY LOCAL FRIENDS WILL ALSO ASSIST.

TICKETS **Orchestra Stalls** (Reserved) 5/- **Stalls** (General) 2/6

may be obtained at The Women's Freedom League, 1, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4, and from Mrs. W. Harvey, Beckenham Hill, Sidcup, Kent.

The company played "The Taming of the Shrew", "As you like it", "Twelfth night", "Servants of Pan" and "The tramp" in Margate.²¹ Eve was now "a delightful Katharine".²²

Their Christchurch friend, the landscape painter W Menzies Gibb visited the Balfours in London late in 1910,

He called on Mr J. Lawson Balfour, who spent some years in Christchurch and did some good portrait work. Mrs Balfour, who was Miss Hulston, of Sydenham, and who is now on the stage, Mr Gibb saw acting as Katherine in "The Taming of the Shrew" at the Royal Court Theatre. There is every prospect that Sir Herbert

Tree will take Mrs Lawson into his company and give her leading parts. Mr Gibb is of opinion that Mrs Lawson would make a magnificent Cleopatra, a part that the lady has expressed a desire to play.²³

In December Eva Balfour attended the coming-of-age dinner of the Actors' Association at the Criterion Restaurant.²⁴

In 1911 Lawson Balfour was renting a house and studio (8 Trafalgar Studios) at 5 Edwardes Square, Kensington. In May 1911 he returned alone to Christchurch, the *Otautau Standard and Wallace County Chronicle* reporting he would...

... be absent for about six months, after which he returns to London. Mrs Balfour... remains in London. Mr Balfour is taking a few pictures with him, and has some portrait commissions to execute in New Zealand.²⁵

She remained in London: he never returned. He exhibited a number of paintings of English scenes at the Canterbury Society of Arts in 1912²⁶ and from New Zealand he went on to Australia, exhibiting with the Royal Art Society in Sydney from 1913; he was made a Fellow of the Society in 1922. His work was included in an Exhibition of Australian Art in London in 1923 and is represented in the Christchurch Art Gallery, the Manly Gallery, the Gallery of New South Wales and the Australian National Art Gallery.²⁷ In 1949 he was living with Patricia Agnes Balfour in Deewhy so perhaps he remarried though there is no record of divorce from Eve, nor of a remarriage.

In April 1911 Eve was boarding alone above tearooms at 290 Kings Road Chelsea. She gave her age as 24;²⁸ she was 29. The gap would widen as the years passed.

Meanwhile in May 1911 the Australian government officials in London for the Imperial Conference and the coronation were entertained by "Australian" artists resident in London—

including tableaux in which Eva Balfour was the Spirit of Australia, who...

... was disturbed in her long sleep by an incursion of Spanish filibusters; then half awakened by the arrival of the inquisitive but cautious Dutch; then awakened fully and finally by the British— “masterful but kindly wooers,” said the programme. Next she was seen watching with sympathy the despair, and the rescue, of an early explorer, and with eager satisfaction the discovery of gold by two stockmen....

On these “episodes” the artists concerned are to be deservedly congratulated. The grouping of the tableaux and the acting of the principals bore witness both to the talent and to the unwearying care of Mr G.W. Lambert, their designer and producer.²⁹

The Australian painter George Washington Lambert would paint Eve’s portrait the following year.

In June 1911 she was appearing in the Rehearsal Company’s *Expiation* and *One Summer’s Day* at the Court Theatre,³⁰ where “The fascinating Gipsy girl Chiara was played with a fine sense of character by Miss Eva Balfour”.³¹ The *Times* critic thought the production “amateurish” and “Miss Eve Balfour was rather the gipsy of the fancy-dress ball—with more emotional power though, than the rest of the company—than the gipsy of the caravan and the winding road”.³²

In September she was playing Hecate in Sir Beerbohm Tree’s production of *Macbeth*, assessed as

... a great triumph. Sir Beerbohm treats it as a dream play with a series of stage pictures of mystic splendour and beauty throughout. Miss Eve Balfour, of Christchurch, New Zealand, takes the part of Hecate.³³

Miss Eve Balfour speaks well her lines as Hecate....³⁴

Miss Balfour really created a new Hecate, and her impersonation of the Queen of the Witches is still remembered as one of the features of the revival.³⁵

The *Sketch* published two photographs by Topical,³⁶





"AND NOW ABOUT THE CAULDRON SING, LIKE ELVES
AND FAIRIES IN A RING, ENCHANTING ALL THAT
YOU PUT IN"; MISS EVA BALFOUR, WHO IS PLAYING
HECATE IN "MACBETH," AT HIS MAJESTY'S.

Miss Balfour, it may be remarked, does not make her first appearance at His Majesty's on the present occasion. She is a New Zealander.—[Photograph by *Exposit*.]

The *Sydney Herald* carried a photograph,



From the *Sydney Herald*

In January 1912 *Twelfth Night* was given at the Arts and Dramatic Club in Hanover Square— “in costume, and with skilfully-painted scenery.... Miss Eve Balfour was a gentle and winning Viola, with little of the pseudo-Cesario’s customary archness”.³⁷

In March at the same venue the Drama Society played Maeterlinck,

The inspissated gloom of the most oppressive and depressing atmosphere of *The Death of Tintagiles* was

conveyed across the footlights very successfully.... the more timorous and tearful second sister Bellangère (was) skilfully differentiated by Miss Eve Balfour.³⁸

In April she played Zillah in *The Snake Woman* at the Black Cat Club.³⁹ On 6 May the Drama Society played Euripides’ *Orestes* at the Boudoir Theatre; the *Times* thought she “did well”,⁴⁰ and the *Stage*,

Miss Eve Balfour was also wholly admirable as Electra, the daughter of the murdered King. Looking the part to perfection, she gave a most artistic rendering of her lines; and she has also the supreme merit of never for a moment, ceasing to act while she is before the audience.⁴¹

On 29 May she appeared with Estelle Stead and JR Irvine in Robert Browning's *In a balcony* at the Poets' Club dinner⁴² at the Monico Restaurant and in August she was Cleopatra in *After Actium*,

A. NEW ZEALAND ACTRESS.

Preparations were being made, on July 12 at the Little Theatre, London, for the production of a new play, "After Actium," by Mr. Wheeler. The play deals with the life of Antony and Cleopatra, the latter part being created by the New Zealand actress Miss Eve Balfour. The action, we are told, opens with Cleopatra surrounded by her attendants, a bevy of beautiful maidens. The play is in three acts, and has a large cast, which includes Ellen Terry's grand-daughter, Miss Rosemary Craig, who plays a small comedy part. The dresses are said to be magnificent. In the course of the play Miss Balfour amuses herself by twining a python round her neck. It is not that the author is changing history by having Cleopatra crushed to death by a boa instead of bitten by an asp, but Miss Balfour, according to a London paper, has rather a fancy for snakes, and "frequently plays with them at the Zoo in her spare moments. They submit to being handled in the most familiar way, even to having their mouths opened" and inspected.⁴³

In October she played Louise in *The Experimentalists*⁴⁴ and in November was given the lead in *Hedda Gabler*.⁴⁵ She also read Ezra Pound poems at the Cabaret Theatre Club (the Cave of the Calf) in November.⁴⁶

Eve's recently widowed father had visited her in London in July 1912 (she was staying with the actor and producer Ian Forbes-Robertson and his wife); by October she was using the surname Balfour-Hulston: "The Drama Society will next perform Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* produced by Mr. George R.

Foss, with Miss Eva Balfour-Hulston as Hedda Gabler.”⁴⁷ But on 22 November,

Owing to the sudden indisposition of Miss Eve Balfour Hulston, the name part in the Drama Society’s production of Ibsen’s *Hedda Gabler* at Clavier Hall on Tuesday next will be played by Miss Hilda Gilbert, who has taken the part in America.⁴⁸

Eve’s indisposition was said to be “in consequence of a slight attack of pneumonia, brought about by a neglected cold,”⁴⁹ rather than because she was six months pregnant. In Chelsea on 3 March 1913 she gave birth to a daughter whom she named Yvette Panthea Howlett Howlett, christened on 13 August 1913 at St Luke’s in Chelsea. Stanley and Eve Howlett were given as the parents, their address 68 Elm Park Mansions—a row of historic buildings in Chelsea.



Elm Park Mansions, Chelsea.

Was Yvette Stanley Howlett's child?

Eve may have had other relationships at this time. Family tradition has it that Yvette's father was somebody very famous. The contenders appear to be Ezra Pound and Augustus John—of which, more later.

Pregnancy, childbearing and rearing seem to have barely interrupted Eve's career: in January 1913 she had a small part in *Catherine the Great*,⁵⁰ in May played "Miss Britannia Metal" in *A Short Way with Authors*,⁵¹ in June performed, along with Katherine Mansfield and Princess Red Feather and other notables at the anniversary dinner of the Cabaret Club,⁵² in November played Nurse Tracey in *The Pursuit of Pamela*⁵³ ("Excellent work is done by Miss Eve Balfour"⁵⁴) and in December attended the Actors' Association dinner.

She had a bit part as a slave (along with one Angela Colenso—and Ellen Terry in the lead) in *Paphnutius (The Conversion of Thais)*, by Hroswitha, "the German Sappho," at the Savoy in January 1914.⁵⁵ She appeared in *Poudre d'Amour* for the Drama Society at the New Rehearsal Theatre in the Strand in the same month,⁵⁶ when "the principal parts were sustained by Miss Eve Balfour and Mr. Stanley Howlett, who are of the younger generation".⁵⁷ She and Howlett would marry in 1918 and clearly their relationship had begun at least as early as 1912.

In 1914 she appeared in *Diplomacy* at London's Wyndham Theatre with Stanley Howlett. They performed it at Windsor Castle for the King and Queen in February,⁵⁸ then went on tour, to the Birkenhead Theatre in Liverpool,⁵⁹ to Dublin,⁶⁰ Belfast and elsewhere.

Mr. Stanley Howlett was a wholly admirable impersonation. His superb elocution was a treat, and in the famous "three men" scene his acting gave the necessary thrill.... Eva Balfour as Dora showed herself a

finished actress with a fine range of abilities, and her command of her art was equally conspicuous both in her portrait of fresh young girlhood and in that of the suspected and outraged wife.⁶¹

Miss Eva Balfour acquitted herself with conspicuous ability.... Mr Stanley Howlett's portrayal of Count Orloff was admirable in its dignity and pathos.⁶²

1 *NZ Times* 21 July 1908.

2 *Wigan Observer and District Advertiser* 3 April 1909.

3 *New Zealand Times* 1 June 1909.

4 *People* 14 November 1909.

5 Cockroft I, Croft S 2010. *Art, theatre and women's suffrage*. Aurora Metro Press, London.

6 Anne Marie Nicolosi 2007. "The Most Beautiful Suffragette": Inez Mulholland and the political currency of beauty. *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 6 (3): 287–309.

7 *Sunday Times* 26 September 1909.

8 *Star* 24 September 1909.

9 *London Daily News* 18 November 1909.

10 *Lone hand* Vol. 6 No. 33 1 January 1910.

11 *Sunday Times* 1 October 1911.

12 *Otautau Standard and Wallace County Chronicle* 15 June 1909.

13 *Nelson Evening Mail* 20 December 1909.

14 *Era* 15 January 1910.

15 *Daily Post* (Hobart) 11 February 1910.

16 *Stage* 07 April 1910.

17 *Stage* 26 May 1910.

18 *Era* 28 May 1910.

19 *Evening Star* 25 August 1910.

20 *Referee* 10 July 1910.

21 *Era* 8 October 1910.

22 *Era* 15 October 1910.

23 *New Zealand Times* 21 February 1911.

24 *Stage* 8 December 1910.

25 *Otautau Standard and Wallace County Chronicle* 2 May 1911.

26 https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/media/uploads/2010_08/CSA_Catalogue_1912.pdf retrieved 22 May 2019.

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- 27 Una Platts 1980. Nineteenth Century NZ Artists: a guide & handbook.
Avon Fine Prints, Christchurch.
 - 28 Census of England and Wales 1911.
 - 29 *Times* 31 May 1911.
 - 30 *Stage* 15 June 1911.
 - 31 *Referee* 25 June 1911.
 - 32 *Times* 21 June 1911.
 - 33 *Daily News (Perth)* 7 September 1911.
 - 34 *Stage* 7 September 1911.
 - 35 *Sun* 26 March 1914.
 - 36 *Sketch* 6 September 1911.
 - 37 *Stage* 18 January 1912.
 - 38 *Stage* 7 March 1912.
 - 39 *Stage Year Book* 1913.
 - 40 *Times* 7 May 1912.
 - 41 *Stage* 9 May 1912.
 - 42 *Stage* 23 May 1912.
 - 43 *Sunday Times* (Sydney) 18 Aug 1912.
 - 44 *Stage* 24 October 1912.
 - 45 *Stage* 7 November 1912.
 - 46 *Pall Mall Gazette* 8 November 1912.
 - 47 *Stage* 31 October 1912.
 - 48 *Times* 22 November 1912.
 - 49 *Press* 15 January 1913.
 - 50 *Pall Mall Gazette* 22 January 1913.
 - 51 *Era* 31 May 1913.
 - 52 A programme for the 17 June 1913 event is in the Yale Center for British Art, Rare Books and Manuscripts, call number MSS 50 (Box 1, folder 7).
<https://archives.yale.edu/agents/people/89788> retrieved 19 March 2019.
 - 53 *Era* 5 November 1913.
 - 54 *Sketch* 12 November 1913.
 - 55 *Observer* 4 January 1914.
 - 56 *Pall Mall Gazette* 23 January 1914.
 - 57 *Western Morning News* 16 February 1914.
 - 58 *Northern Whig* (Antrim) 16 October 1914.
 - 59 *Liverpool Daily Post* 2 October 1914.
 - 60 *Dublin Daily Express* 11 August 1914.
 - 61 *Northern Whig* 20 October 1914.
 - 62 *Belfast News-Letter* 20 October 1914.

Chapter 3: Eve in the pictures 1. *Five Nights*

Eve Balfour's first movie was the July 1914 four reel silent black and white *The Mystery of the Diamond Belt* directed by Charles Raymond for IB Davidson, producer. A crook poses as a Lord to rob a merchant and holds a detective captive in his cellar. Eve was "Kitty the moth,"¹ but she did not rate mention in the advertising or reviews,

This film was manufactured by Mr. I. Bernard Davidson, 48, Rupert Street, London. This is a British-made detective melodrama, dealing with an exploit of that popular criminal investigator, Sexton Blake. It has no pretensions to being a very subtle or ambitious production, but it is interesting and effective, and is, on the whole, quite a successful work. Its plot contains many novel and ingenious touches which reflect credit upon the author and upon the producer, Mr. Charles Raymond. The acting in most cases is capable, and entirely adequate to the demands of the piece. Perhaps the best individual performance is the very finished study of an old diamond merchant, contributed by Mr. Harry Brahame. Others who do well are Mr. Lewis Carlton, as the energetic "Tinker," Mr. Philip Kay, as Sexton Blake, Mr. Austin Camp, as Jack Brahm, and Mr. Percy Moran, as "Flash Harry." "The Mystery of the Diamond Belt" contains plenty of exciting action, and, without being in any way a masterpiece, should prove thoroughly to the taste of most picture theatre audiences. (Kinematograph Trading Company, Limited. Released September 7th. Length 3,500 ft.)²

The story was serialised in the *Boys' Journal* from October 1914.³



Cover of the *Boys' Journal* 17 October 1914.

Five Nights

Annie Sophie Cory 1868–1952 used the pen name Victoria Cross for her prolific output of novels which “were read behind locked doors” because they might “poison the purity of British homes”. Unapologetic sexual desire and questioning of traditional gender roles for men and women were unusual themes in Victorian literature. Her last book, *Martha Brown MP* (1935), describes a future in which women rule England. She claimed to have used her pen name because her writing took valour and it would have made Queen Victoria cross.

Her *Five nights* was published in 1908—over-decorated Edwardian prose, sumptuous with simile and lush with adjectives—and in 1915 it would be Eve Balfour’s second but most famous movie. It tells the story of handsome artist Trevor Lonsdale who sees the world in bright colours; the plot—

Lonsdale, who is introduced at the outset, is a virile man of 28, in whom the joy of life is well pronounced. He is a successful artist, well fortified with private means, travelling in search of inspiration, and sipping joyously at all the world provides to gratify the needs of an impulsive and artistic temperament. The phases are grouped under the “Gold,” the “Violet,” the “Black,” the “Crimson,” and the “White” Nights. “Viola,” his cousin, unites her life to his. Trevor had often asked that marriage might sanctify their union, but Viola always denied his supplication. She was his comrade, alike in art and love, but would not brook the chafe of any tie that might bind him to her side beyond the hour when sympathy had sped. Her love, her life, her very soul were his, but no shielding ritual should kill the fire that nursed his art, nor wrest away from her the happiness she found in yielding him her sacrifice. The flight and return of Viola are two striking episodes in the entrancing story,

which has, by the way, been passed by the British Board of Film censors.⁴

Viola offered to pose for him: “‘I am supposed to have a very perfect figure,’ she said with a faint smile”—a claim Eve would paraphrase later when she told the sculptor Dora Ohlfsen she had “the most perfectly proportioned figure in the world.”

Victoria Cross’s Viola, unlike Shakespeare’s, did not dress as a boy, but “In her outlook upon life she was more like a man than a woman”. “Outlook upon life” should be taken to mean unapologetic sexual desire.

Rowland Talbot wrote the screenplay from Victoria Cross’s story and Bert Haldane directed the silent black and white film for Barker Motion Photography of Ealing, producer. It was Haldane’s eleventh film and one of eight he directed in 1915, this one in June. It was released on 17 August. Thomas MacDonald played Trevor and Eve Balfour Viola. Eve played her “with grace and refined bearing.”⁵

On 31 August the Chief Constable at Preston in Lancashire watched the film at the Palace Theatre and then sent a letter to the manager, notifying him the police objected to its repetition. After discussion the film was withdrawn. The *Preston Herald* of 4 September devoted a leader and much of a page to the matter, publishing comment from the Chief Censor, as well as Victoria Cross, the manager of the theatre and the producers of the film, with letters from “Churchman” and others. Eve Balfour commented:



MISS EVE BALFOUR

Bates

A charming actress who, although born a New Zealander, claims direct descent from William Penn and David Cox, the eminent painter. Miss Balfour, who made her theatrical début with Miss Gertrude Kingston at the Little Theatre, has become well known to London and provincial audiences by her striking rendering of Hecate in "Macbeth" and of Dora in "Diplomacy." She will shortly appear in a powerful dramatic sketch entitled "The Woman and the Hun," specially written for her by Dr. W. G. Herty. She acted the lead in the romantic picture film of "Five Nights," by Victoria Cross, which will be seen on the screen shortly.

The Tatler 7 July 1915.

PRINCIPAL ACTRESS INDIGNANT

Only a "Charming Story."

Miss Eve Balfour, who played the lead in "Five Nights," has given her views on the subject. In a "Daily Sketch" interview she expressed her indignation at the inference that she should have taken part in an improper play. She said: "If the film had been like the book I should not have been surprised, but it is very much milder. I call it a milk-diet film. All the while we were acting in it Mr Barker, of the Barker Motion Company, kept on insisting that everything should be done with one eye on the Censor, and everything was.

"Why, we even make it respectable by marrying Viola and Lonsdale, and introduce a beautiful child to bring in the domestic and maternal. It is simply a charming story. That is all.

"I will tell you what I wear in the studio scene, the only one that can possibly be the cause of the objection at Preston.

"I wear a Greek costume, not of transparent material, but of heavy silk, and besides my face only one shoulder and arm out bare.

I would wear that costume in any restaurant in London, and then I should have more on than many of the women there in ordinary evening dress.

"Of course 'Five Nights' is a film for adults, and not for children. But they, I don't think, ought to be allowed in picture palaces as they now are at all. There ought to be special cinema houses for those under 14 years of age."

Miss Balfour is a pretty young New Zealander, who came to London six years ago, and was fortunate enough to obtain an engagement at His Majesty's Theatre, playing understudy to Mrs Patrick Campbell in "False Idols."

The leader writer was a little timid,

"FIVE NIGHTS" CENSORED.

"Let me at least clearly assert this, that whether novels, or poetry, or history be read, they should be chosen not for their freedom from evil, but for their possession of good. The chance and scattered evil that may here and there haunt or hide itself in a powerful book never does any harm to a noble girl."

—Ruskin in "Sesame and Lilies."

If that great philosopher were still with us, he would presumably have said the same about cinema films. Art should not be judged capriciously; it should stimulate our best thoughts, not worst. Unless it does so, it has failed. The film "Five Nights," for which we hold no brief, contains some thousands of feet of fine scenery in Alaska, San Francisco, London, and other places, which form the setting for a strong emotional play with a splendid moral. It is now attracting big houses at various London theatres as well as in Glasgow, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Derby. Next week it is to be produced at Manchester. It has been passed and approved by the Board of Censors, which inspects and reviews films every day, and it bears the imprimatur of Mr. Redford, who was until recently the Government censor of play. So far as we are aware, no objection has been offered in other places. It is assumed that the police elsewhere are as alert in these matters to discover improprieties as in Preston. Anyone who reads the letter from Miss Victoria Cross, the most widely read authoress in the literary world, will agree that it breathes a spirit of moral freshness that helps one to dismiss aspersions upon her work. There is not the remotest doubt that the police have acted bona-fidely. Assuming, however, that they were correct in condemning a few detached portions of the film, would not a compromise providing for the

elimination of those portions and the retention of the remainder have been better? It would have met all that the prude or the squeamish critic could expect or demand of the management. We say nothing of the short notice given to the management, as we believe that the Chief Constable acted with all promptness and courtesy. The time he left the theatre and despatched his letter to Mr. Boyle proves this. What is of more consequence to the people of Preston is the problem it raises to their rights and liberties. The presentation of a film at a public theatre is a publication, both theoretically and practically as is a textual or pictorial work in book or newspaper. A film picture, when produced, may be said to be published just as much as a printed book or newspaper. It also must carry with that publication the same responsibilities as a newspaper in regard to the laws of libel and questions of public decency. And this fact is what should be clearly understood by theatre managers, film producers, and others connected with cinema theatres. The Watch Committee at the moment seem too prone to namby-pambyism; Puritanism is writ large upon their escutcheon.⁶

This was followed by a prohibitive notice from justices at St Helens, Lancashire (after a private viewing), an action supported later by the Divisional Court in London, where the appellants argued “it was not for local justices to constitute themselves censors of films”. Mr. Justice Avory remarked that “Mr. Redford (the Chief Censor) had reported that there was nothing of a prohibitive indecent nature in the film. Whatever that might mean, it was certainly not an authority which could be set in opposition to the honest and bona-fide opinion of the justices who had exercised their discretion.”⁷

Other bans and appeals followed. The Rev. EA Glenday for instance, a vicar at Bury wrote in such disgust to the *Bury Times*

that the film's distributors sued the paper at the Manchester Assizes, arguing that the letter went far beyond the bounds of fair criticism, that it was not true and that the publication of the letter had seriously affected the letting of the film.⁸

It was all nonsense of course: those involved could not have asked for better publicity. The film was wildly successful, Eve Balfour's career was firmly established and the court judgements provided case-law for the future operation of the 1909 Cinematograph Act.

"VICTORIA CROSS'S FAMOUS "FIVE NIGHTS" ON THE FILMS.
A Beautiful New Zealand Actress Who is Starring in this Much-
discussed 'Movie'
From the *Tatler* 15 September 1915.

MISS EVE BALFOUR

Some charming studies of this beautiful New Zealand actress, who was recently secured by a famous film company to play the lead in the great romantic picture of "Five Nights," by Victoria Cross. This picture play, which is now going a tour of the London and provincial halls, has undoubtedly caused a greater sensation than any film hitherto presented to the public. Miss Balfour made her theatrical debut with Miss Gertrude Kingston at the Little Theatre, and subsequently she presented a striking rendering of Hecate in "Macbeth" and Dora in "Diplomacy." As soon as her cinematographic engagements will allow her Miss Balfour will appear in a powerful dramatic sketch entitled "The Woman and the Hun." Although a New Zealander, Miss Eve Balfour claims direct descent from William Penn and from David Cox, the eminent painter.

*Photographs on the next three pages appear to be taken at the
same sitting
so are probably all by Angus Basil Brown*





"Banned at Preston: produced in London:
Miss Eve Balfour now a cinema star"



Overleaf: Eve Balfour: K Nicholls (Eve's nephew) collection.
Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.





"EVE" OF THE FILMS. A portrait study by Basil of Eve Balfour.
From *Pictures and the Picturegoer* 1917.

Melbourne's *Punch* wrote that Eve was,



... one of the leading figures in the cinema world. Recently she played the chief role in the much discussed film version of Victoria Cross's "Five Nights" and brilliantly defended herself in a controversy touching on the morality of the production. Miss Balfour, who is still only in her twenties, is said to be noted for her beauty and Venus-like proportions.⁹

Eve was 32.

▲ MISS EVE BALFOUR
In "Five Nights"—from the
Mirror of Australia 17 October
1915.

Eve in profile at about this
time, by an unknown
photographer ►



REPRESENTING THREE NATIONS



So far as is known, Miss Eve Balfour is the only living moving picture star who is not receiving a salary of at least two hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year

LADIES FROM ENGLAND,
SPAIN AND AMERICA

THE Russian advance in the art of dancing has been met with a counter attack by Spain. La Argentina, whose picture appears on the right, is a dancer who has met with considerable recognition. The court of her own country has conferred many honors upon her. She has received decorations from the Athenaeum and the Beaux Arts. And her portrait has been painted by such artists as Sorolla and Zuloaga. La Argentina is also a favorite in South America, for her dancing ability—as well as for the popular appeal of her geographic name.



"The greatest Spanish dancer in the world today." This is the title bestowed on La Argentina, who has been giving a series of Spanish matinees for lovers of the artistic

Photo of Miss Balfour by Underwood and Underwood; Miss Eagels by Harney; La Argentina by Harney

THERE is a certain inaccuracy in including England in the three countries represented by these actresses. Though Miss Eve Balfour is at present upholding Great Britain on the films, she is a native of New Zealand. From that country she came, six years ago. Her début was made on the legitimate stage, with Miss Gertrude Kingston, at the Little Theatre. She was hardly more than a girl when she understudied Mrs. Pat Campbell in *False Gods*. Later she played the energetic rôle of Hecate in *Macbeth*, at His Majesty's Theatre, and, after that, the part of Dora in Sardou's *Diplomacy*.

Despite this promising start Miss Balfour gave up the stage, and turned to moving pictures,—as so many American actresses have recently done. In taking this step Miss Balfour did not issue a statement setting forth the eight reasons why the silent



Miss Jeanne Eagels is one of a large number of stars who will appear shortly in a revival of "The Idler"

drama is superior to the stage. Neither did she admit, under pressure, that she was to be paid fifty thousand dollars a month. She thus stamped herself as an artist of remarkable self-control.

Her first big part in the moving pictures came in *Five Nights*, adapted from the novel by Victoria Cross. In this drama Miss Balfour played the part of Viola with such success that the chief constable in a Lancashire town took exception to the film. It was consequently banned in that locality. At this point in the narrative we quote Miss Balfour herself: "There is nothing in *Five Nights* to shock the ultra-sensitive,"—an artist in differentiation, you see.

In conclusion, and here we quote Miss Balfour's press agent, she has just been photographed in a new film in which "she will thrill the film world by her beauty and dramatic power."



Not Eve, but Beth Blythe, in Eve chic; 1915.

1 <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0050157/> retrieved 20 March 2019.

2 *Bioscope* 23 July 1914.

3 Walter Webb 1954–5. Sexton Blake on the Films. *Collectors' Digest* 8 (96) & 9 (7). <http://mark-hodder.com/blakiana/films.html> retrieved 2 April 2019.

4 *Hull Daily Mail* 26 November 1915.

5 *Walsall & South Staffordshire Chronicle* 18 December 1915.

6 *Preston Herald* 4 September 1915.

7 *Preston Herald* 6 November 1915.

8 *Manchester Evening News* 19 May 1916.

9 *Punch* (Melbourne) 30 December 1916.

Chapter 4: Eve in the pictures 2. Other English pictures

After the triumphs and scandals of “Five Nights” 1915 was a busy year for Eve Balfour.

She played Margherita in the 1915 British silent spy film *Jack Tar*, again directed by Bert Haldane and again co-starring Thomas MacDonald from *Five Nights*, released in April. An admiral’s daughter goes undercover in Turkey to help a British agent thwart a German plot during WWI.

She starred as Herminia Barton in the 1915 *The Woman Who Did*, a British silent drama film directed by Walter West; Thomas MacDonald and George Foley took the male roles. It was adapted from the 1895 novel *The Woman Who Did* by Grant Allen.¹ It follows the life of Herminia Barton, a Cambridge-educated suffragist; she protests against marriage by openly living with her lover in Italy. Eve travelled to Italy for the outdoor scenes.

The *Dundee Evening Telegraph* thought the cast “a strong one. Miss Eve Balfour, who plays Hermione Barton, ‘The Woman Who Did,’ has a most exacting part, but in it she has achieved a great triumph.”²

The *Dundee Courier* thought she had achieved “a distinct success;”³ another newspaper that she was “simply great.”⁴

The Brisbane *Courier* critic wrote,

Artist as he was, it is doubtful that Grant Allen could have asked for a more sympathetic treatment of his book. Miss Eve Balfour, who interprets the role of “Herminia Barton,” is a tragedienne who strikes a new note in portraying just such a character as this, and the management predicts that Brisbane audiences will agree

they have never beheld a more convincing study of human emotions.⁵

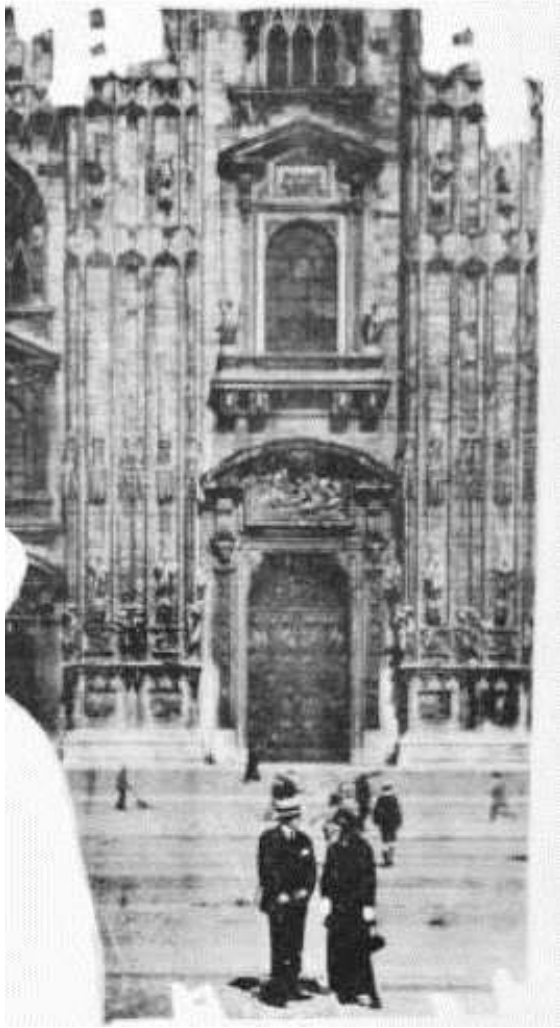


Eve as Herminia Barton in *The Woman who did*.



LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM: A charming Scene taken in Italy
for the filming of Grant Allen's Novel, *The Women Who Did*. Thos. H. Macdonald as Alan Merrick, and
Eve Balfour as Herminia Barton. (See page 23.)

Eve and Tom Macdonald at Lake Como



Right: "The Woman Who Did" was photographed partly in Rome. Eve Balfour and J. R. Tozer are seen in the foreground.

That is, I think, a rather butchered photograph of Milano, not Roma

The Christchurch *Sun* wrote, proudly, “The acting of Miss Balfour is excellent, and she has fulfilled the promise she gave years ago of becoming a great tragedienne.”⁶



Sun (Sydney) 26 February 1916.

An edited copy was rediscovered in Russia.

Years later, in 1919, Perth’s *Daily News* ran a piece headlined SHOULD KISSES BE RATIONED? American censors had decided that frequent, prolonged and promiscuous kissing “sometimes seen on the cinematograph constitutes a bad example for young girls”. The Los Angeles Board determined that a kiss should last no longer than two feet of film—about three seconds. The “bashful” writer made enquiries of experts, among them Eve Balfour,

“A kiss should be as long as you feel it, and if you are studying the art of billing and cooing for the cinema,

your kisses should be as long as you think the patience of the audience will tolerate them. In connection with my performance of the title role in the screen version of “The Woman Who Did” the censor said that a certain kiss was too protracted so I told him that I presumed that he wanted to kiss with a ‘halo’ and I substituted this kiss for the other.” (The kiss with a halo, by the way, is a purely mechanical and passionless one, closely allied to the sisterly kiss....)⁷

She played Anita in the 1915 *Royal Love*, the Trans-Atlantic Film Company’s second production. It was released in November, a “drama, dealing with the romance and tragedy of Court life, with the love of Kings and Queens as its main theme.”⁸



Eve in *Royal love* 1915, from the *Bioscope* 30 September 1915.

THE WOMAN WHO DID—AND WILL
INTERVIEW WITH MISS EVE BALFOUR
NEW SERIES OF EMOTIONAL FILMS

There are a few really great emotional screen-actresses, but certainly one of the very best is Miss Eve Balfour, whose distinguished performance in "The Woman Who Did" has drawn forth such high praise from professional and lay critics alike. She has a vivid and magnetic personality, highly strung, yet evenly balanced, and her innumerable admirers do not need to be told that she lives every moment of her singularly intense life.



In face, figure, and temperament she is the embodiment of what is commonly called the "New

Woman” movement, using that phrase in its highest sense. If ever a single feminine contained within her soul the living expression of the modern intellectual woman’s aspirations for freedom, and a desire to take her share in the governance of the world, it is Miss Eve Balfour. It is because she is so vitally alive to modern movements that she can give life and fire to the great characters she portrays on the screen.

“We are mainly interested in your film achievements, Miss Balfour. How is it,” we asked her, “that you have obtained so great success in them?”

“Practice and a long apprenticeship,” she replied. “You see, I am a New Zealander. Six years ago I came to England. I made my début under Miss Gertrude Kingston. For four years I played on the legitimate stage, under Sir Herbert Tree, one of my parts being Hecate in ‘Macbeth.’ Another of my successes was Dora in ‘Diplomacy.’”

We asked Miss Balfour to what she ascribed her rapid rise to a premier position.

“Work and good fortune,” she said, with a deprecatory smile, “but a little more of the former than the latter. Fortune, however, is always a good horse to ride. The parts I have had offered were akin to my temperament. They were parts that I could really live and act with joy.”

“How did you enjoy fashioning ‘The Woman Who Did’ into a perfect screen presentment?”

“It was one of the most enjoyable episodes of my life. The whole story teemed with possibilities. Our company worked with one aim. ‘The Woman Who Did’ is a great achievement, great as an art production, great as portraying the struggle of a woman’s mind, and her determination, even when she knows that the world, as it is circumstanced, is not yet alive to her thought, to die

free. We have, indeed, held up a great and enduring monument to the work that Grant Allen did so much to vivify with life. If I may say so, I think the Gerrard Film Co. are fortunate in having procured so good and finished a film.”

“What of the future, Miss Balfour?”

“I have now my own company,” she answered. “Plays are being produced under the title of ‘Eve Balfour Films.’ We are working at Elstree, using the Neptune Studios. Our producer is Mr L.C. MacBean, who is well known through his connection with the Union Film Co. and Barker’s.”

“What have you in preparation?” inquired THE CINEMA.

“A photoplay that will be a great success. It will have the mono-word title ‘Love.’ I know it will draw, take and hold an audience. The photoplay is founded on the well-known novel of Rathmore Wilson’s, called ‘When Woman Loves.’”⁹

“And your other undertakings?”

“We have quite a number in hand. Like ‘Love,’ they will all be four-or-five-reelers. They will mostly be film representations of famous novels. All the while, I feel we shall be very successful.”

“And why?” asked THE CINEMA.

“Because we shall try to deserve success,” smilingly said Miss Balfour, as all too soon she went away.¹⁰

In December 1915 Eve Balfour did indeed become Britain’s first woman film producer. The *Bioscope* of 30 December carried this report,

MISS EVE BALFOUR’S PRODUCTIONS.

“LOVE” AND “THE LIFE OF LADY HAMILTON”

Miss Eve Balfour, to whose first production by her own company we made a brief reference last week, paid

THE BIOSCOPE a graceful compliment in according us the privilege of reviewing her new film, "Love," directly it was completed, and before it had been shown in the usual quarters. It is a privilege of which we were only too glad to take full advantage, and one which might, we suggest, be more generally adopted, with distinct advantage to all concerned.

The story of "Love" is founded on Mr. Rathmell Wilson's novel, "When Woman Loves," and it is no disparagement to the author to state that the free adaptation adds materially to the dramatic nature of the play. The plot has been developed on distinctly original lines, the whole story being compressed within the limits of four reels. It presents a striking and thoughtful study of the sacrifice which a woman is capable of making for the love she bears for a man; she is prepared to give up everything—to offer all she has—for him. He, but dimly comprehending the extent and the depths of her love—and caring but little as long as he possesses her—is ready and willing to accept her sacrifice. It is only when the sudden flame of passion for another has burnt itself out, and he finds he has grasped the shadow and lost the substance of true love, that he realises the tenderness, the splendid loyalty, of the woman who had given all for him, who is waiting still for his return, and whom he had regarded so lightly. Such is the character of Vera Coleman, and as such is she depicted by Miss Balfour, who, in the course of a highly successful career, has never done anything quite so well as this. The success of the entire production depends upon her, and the result should be gratifying in the extreme. It is, in fact, a remarkable performance, one characterised by infinite care and restraint, and, let us add, infinite grace and charm. In less capable hands Vera would have been an unsympathetic, almost colourless character, and her

actions meaningless. As it is, she radiates with life and energy, and one regards her with deep and sincere appreciation. Miss Balfour has gathered around her such well-known players as Mr. Frank Tennant, Mr. Arthur Cullin, Mr. Batson and Miss de Winton, all of whom are excellent in their respective characters, while Mr. L. C. McBean ably directed the picture.

Now that the film is completed, Miss Balfour will commence work on her second production, "The Life of Lady Hamilton," the preliminary announcement of which appeared in our last issue. It is a subject, she said, that has a peculiar fascination for her, and one which over two years ago she had set her mind on producing as soon as a favourable opportunity presented itself. It is, of course, a very ambitious subject to handle, but we have every confidence in Miss Balfour's ability to carry it to an entirely successful conclusion. In the film she will

play Lady Hamilton, and we are anticipating with keenest interest an opportunity of witnessing the first screen presentation of the life of one of the most beautiful and tragic figures in English history.¹¹



THE KINEMATOGRAPH AND LANTERN WEEKLY. 37

★ *A Magnificent Domestic Drama* ★

FEATURING
MISS EVE BALFOUR

ENTITLED



LOVE

From the Novel, "When Women Love," by Rathmell Wilson.

4100 Ft. FOUR PARTS.

1370

The Bioscope, December 23, 1915.

MISS EVE BALFOUR

PRESENTS

“LOVE”

Founded on Rathmell Wilson's well-known
— Novel, “When Woman Loves.” —

The Life of Lady Hamilton

MISS BALFOUR further announces that she is now in the course of producing “The Life of Lady Hamilton,” in which she will portray the part of Emma, Lady Hamilton. The scenario has been prepared by MR. ROWLAND TALBOT, who was responsible for the scenario of “LOVE.”

FOR FURTHER PARTICULARS APPLY

The Eve Balfour Film Company,
c/o The Neptune Studios,
Elstree———Herts.

Eve took out a full page advertisement
in the *Bioscope* on 23 December 1915.



MISS EVE BALFOUR

The photograph by "Basil" (Angus Basil Brown)
that accompanied the *Bioscope* piece.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The
PIONEER FILM
 AGENCY Ltd.
of
 LONDON, ENGLAND

ARE OPEN TO NEGOTIATE FOR BRITISH RIGHTS. A LIVE FIRM WITH UP-TO-DATE METHODS. WE HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED SEVEN YEARS AND HAVE A REPUTATION TO UPHOLD, THEREFORE — WE ONLY WANT THE BEST

We are at present handling for this country the following subjects: Pavlowa in "The Dumb Girl of Portici," "Satan," "Message from Mars," (Charles Hawley), "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," "Children of Capt. Grant," Eve Balfour films, etc.

Directors and sole proprietors

Frank Wheatcroft and C. Y. Tucker

THE PIONEER FILM AGENCY Ltd.

23-25-27 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, W. C. 2, England

Love was based on a novel, *When woman loves* by Rathmell Wilson. The film was completed for Eve at the Neptune Studios, Elstree in mid-december, directed by LC McBean.

No more was heard of *The Life of Lady Hamilton* after a letter appeared in *Bioscope* from the illustrator Harry Furniss hinting at plagiarism.¹²

Eve next played Margaret Dennis in *Burnt Wings* (produced by Broadwest Film Company) released in May 1916. The *Bioscope* gave it generous space,

“BURNT WINGS”

MISS EVE BALFOUR IN A PROBLEM PLAY¹³

A cinematograph version of Mrs. Stanley Wrench's popular novel, adapted to the screen by Mr. R. Byron-Webber, was presented by the Monopol Film Co., at the Shaftesbury Pavilion, on January 26th, where it was favourably received by a representative audience.

From the foreword to the very artistic synopsis issued with the film we gather that the story of the film is a vindication of the theory that a man's lapses from sexual morality should not be judged from the same standpoint as those of a woman, and if the film supplies no very definite or logical answer to the problem, the result is an interesting story which has been made the most of by the producer and an excellent company.

Margaret Dennis, the central figure, is engaged to Paul Westlake, a young man who has previously amused himself with a flirtation with Lila Stebbing, a village beauty, who makes Paul's defection an excuse to leave for London, where her personal attractions are likely to prove a more valuable asset.

Margaret, during a temporary absence from home, meets Frank Vane, to whom she is greatly attracted. During her visit they are compelled by circumstances to

spend the night at a country inn, on which occasion he declares his love for her. Though Margaret refuses to listen to Vane's protestations she realises that she returns his love and thereafter treats Paul with such coldness that he goes off to London and resumes his flirtation with Lila, who tempts him to forget his allegiance to his fiancée.

His mother affects a reconciliation and Margaret and Paul are married. Just before the birth of their child Lila turns up and demands monetary assistance from Paul on behalf of her child, of which he is the father. The shock of this disclosure is such that Margaret's child is stillborn and she refuses to forgive her husband for the evil he has brought about. An intolerable situation for both is terminated by Margaret's accidental meeting with Lila's child, which has been abandoned by its mother and is in danger of being consigned to the workhouse. Margaret remembers that she also has been tempted, and she determines to regain her husband's love by devoting her future to the care of him and his child.

What would be the inevitable outcome of such a situation is a matter for speculation, and one cannot help feeling that Margaret would have done more wisely had she listened to the pleadings of Frank Vane and given her hand where her heart was engaged.

Mr. Byron-Webber has accomplished a difficult task with great skill, and from a story of psychological interest has evolved a highly effective drama. The production, by Mr. Walter West is artistic in the highest degree, the natural settings are admirably chosen and of great beauty, and the studio scenes extremely tasteful. The lighting effects are notable, as is the quality of the photography.

The scene suggesting Lila's life of revelry strikes a somewhat jarring note, and is hardly necessary as a

contrast to the domestic happiness enjoyed by her infant, which makes a very beautiful picture. The part of Margaret makes no great demand on Miss Eve Balfour's histrionic powers, but the inconsistencies of the character are plausibly veiled, and Miss Balfour interests by her beauty and personal magnetism. All the other characters are in capable hands and the result is a remarkably smooth and polished performance.

A special word of praise is due to the very attractive synopsis which, with an artistic cover-design, contains a charming photograph of Miss Balfour and carefully selected scenes from the film, which give a good idea of the excellence of the photography.¹⁴

The Hobart *Daily Post* loved it,

Eve Balfour, a dainty and emotional actress, delighted her many audiences at Palace Pictures during this week, in "Burnt Wings," a beautiful and interesting novel transformed into a silent drama of much interest. The story, which is full of pathos as well as love keeps one's mind riveted to the screen during the unwinding of four beautiful acts.¹⁵

The Christchurch *Sun* cashed in on the film's popularity by serialising the book in 1916,

... its success as a film drama is largely due to the brilliant acting of Miss Eva Balfour, a Christchurch girl, whose ability and industry have brought her into the forefront of the motion picture actresses of the day.¹⁶

BURNT WINGS

— STARRING —

EVE BALFOUR

Of "Five Nights" and "Woman
:: :: Who Did" fame. :: ::

BURNT WINGS.

Shown for the first time in Scotland,
:: :: Thursday last, at the :: ::
GRAND THEATRE, GLASGOW.

BURNT WINGS.

What the management of that house thinks of
this great picture is conveyed in the following
unsolicited testimony received by wire:—

"Buchanan, Palladium, Edinburgh.

*Burnt Wings instantaneous success. Refusing money
all night Eve Balfour's greatest effort.*

Grand, Glasgow."

BURNT WINGS

Owners of Scottish Rights:—

R. C. BUCHANAN FILM SERVICE,
The Palladium, Edinburgh.

From the *Bioscope* 4 May 1916.

No. 561, FEBRUARY 2, 1916] THE TATLER

FLUTTERING FILMY WINGS
Which are So Apt to Get Burnt.



MISS EVE BALFOUR *Charles H. Jones*

The beautiful actress who is appearing in the cinema drama, "Burnt Wings," which is adapted from the celebrated novel by Mrs. Hawley Wrench, and will shortly be seen on the screen at the leading picture theatres. It is admirably one of the most powerful picture plays yet produced, and "The Tatler" Christmas coloured picture, "A Broken Butterfly," has supplied the designer of the programme with an idea

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The *Tatler*, 2 February 1916, on *Burnt Wings*.
"A very beautiful and original photograph of Miss Eve Balfour".

A little advertising income was no doubt useful....



Miss Eve Balfour, the Dramatic Cinema Star who appears in "The Woman Who Did," "Burnt Wings," etc., etc., and who is now producing the sensational Eve Balfour Films, writes, "I think your 'Harlene Hair-Drill' delightful and am more than pleased I adopted it. Like all ladies, I am very fastidious about my hair and regard its health and beauty preservation as a first duty. Nothing can excel 'Harlene' for this purpose. Your treatment is so natural in manner and thorough in results. I am exceedingly pleased to pay my tribute and from personal experience strongly advise others to do as I have done."¹⁷

Next in 1916 came the film *Cynthia in the Wilderness* (a drunkard's wife lives with her lover and poisons him when he goes mad), an adaptation of the novel by Hubert Wales, in which Eve played Cynthia Elwes. ("Miss Eve Balfour looks very beautiful," the *Bioscope* reviewer wrote faintly).¹⁸ The *Yarmouth Independent*: "Miss Eve Balfour appears as the star actress, and is a universal favourite to cinegoers".¹⁹ Others praised it more fulsomely,

... the title role is one of the most exacting ever played. But Miss Eva Balfour surmounted its difficulties in her characteristic fashion, and has made it one of her most successful film parts. She is assisted by an excellent cast; indeed, this drama, in four acts, shows how the cinema now rivals the legitimate stage in its production. The strength of the episodes peculiarly lends itself to this method of illustration.²⁰

In *Eve's Daughter* (produced by Eve Balfour Films) Eve Balfour played Veronica Leigh. It was based on Rathmell Wilson's *When love dies*; in the film a man dies saving his remarried wife from an ex-mistress's bullet.

In *The Derby Winner* Eve played Lady Muriel. Sydney's *Bulletin* was cynical,

"The Derby Winner," has been embalmed in flicker in Fogland and will probably be seen on the screen in Australia. The lead is taken by Eve Balfour, who hails from Christchurch (M.L.²¹). Her real name is Eva Hulston, and a few years back her dad had a small draper's shop in the Flat City. Eva, a languid, willowy beauty, married an artist named Balfour, who spent a few years in Christchurch doing portraits and figure studies. Eight years ago Balfour took his wife to The Smoke, and there she decided on the stage. She got a start with Tree, worked hard, and that, plus good looks,

AMUSEMENTS

Everybody's

FROM NOON ONWARDS.

A Wonderful Dramatic Attraction!

THE LONDON FILM CO.'S

Melodramatic Masterpiece.

The Starring Boom of the Picture World
Drury Lane's Great Dramatic Success
as a Magnificent Photoplay.

5000ft.

3/000ft.

BLAND HOLTS RECORD-BREAKING
DRAMA.Full of Romantic Incidents, Adventures,
and Sensational Scenes.

SCENES ON ASCOT.

THE RACE FOR THE DERBY.
CLIPSTONE WINS THE BLUE
RIBAND.

The house of Desborough saved.

THE DERBY WINNER,

THE DERBY WINNER,

Featuring

MISS EVE BALFOUR,

MISS EVE BALFOUR.

One of the Dominion's fair daughters,
Who refuses to believe that Desborough
can do wrong.A play that impresses you with its
artistic worth.Tea is served FREE to all patrons in
the Dress Circle at the Day Sessions be-
tween 12 and 6 p.m.Note Prices: Day Sessions, Stalls 3d,
Dress Circle 6d; Night Sessions, Usual
Prices.

rushed her along. In a short time she was playing leads in Shakespeare, and made a hit as Katherine in "The Taming of the Shrew." Recently she was handed the leading part in a picture representation of "Three Weeks," and made a great success of it.²²

If you want to be cynical you should at least get the facts right: it was not the film of Elinor Glyn's *Three weeks* (Madlaine Traverse, 1914)—nor, for that matter, *Twelfth Night*—but *Five nights* (Eve Balfour, 1915).

The New Zealand papers were ecstatic—the *Taranaki Daily News*,

To-morrow heralds the screening at the Empire Picture Palace of the London Film Company's picturisation of the famous military and sporting drama,

Drury Lane's big success, "The Derby Winner." which was such a boom when Bland Holt's Dramatic Company played it through the Dominion twenty years ago. The play has a military strain running right through its various scenes; the plot hinges on the fortunes of Lord and Lady Desborough. The production has a special interest to the Dominion, as Miss Eve Balfour, who is well known in this country, has the principal part in "The Derby Winner." Miss Eve Balfour went Home to try her fortune on the legitimate stage, and after various ups and downs in the provincial towns she achieved success and became a star in leading London theatres. The London Film Company, recognising her worth, engaged her for this production, and critics pronounce her as equal to the best actress that has ever essayed the difficult part of Lady Muriel. The play is brimful of incidents which rivet the close attention of the audience, and the culminating sensation is a realistic representation of historic Ascot, which shows Lord Desborough's horse Clifstone winning the English Derby, and restores the fortunes of the Desborough family.²³

At the end of the year Eve was back on stage, appearing in *The Spring song* in Brighton in November. She "received a great reception from New Zealand soldiers in the audience. She also visited them at the New Zealand Convalescent Hospital."²⁴

In December the *New Zealand Times* ran "Festive Fables by Film Favourites," (subtitled "Christmas Twinkles from the Stars") including this piece of contrived celebrity trivia from Eve,

How I Stole a Glass of Milk.

It may not be generally known to the public that in the producing of a film play many months may have to elapse between the taking of one set of scenes and another, in order to secure the correct environment in scenes representing action in various seasons of the year.

During the heavy fall of snow we had in the early part of last spring, I received a sudden summons from my producer to take part in some open-air snow scenes of a picture, the major part of which had already been completed. Therefore, behold me one cold and frosty morning, attired as a picturesque beggar girl, half-fainting in the snow in a secluded lane not a hundred miles from Esher. This brief scene was successfully filmed, and the producer and camera-man then jumped in the car and proceeded three or four hundred yards further on to arrange the focus for the next scene. The other artists accompanied them, but I preferred to stand for a few moments and gaze at the lovely view, for the part we had motored to looked most exquisite in its winter clothes. I was aroused from my contemplation by a hearty country voice near me, which said: "Eh, but the poor young thing looks half-famished. Come with me, dearie, and if I can't find a sup of something hot to warm you, may I come to want the same myself."

Turning, I beheld a rosy-cheeked country-woman, who stood regarding me with the most kindly and pitying smile imaginable. And no wonder, for I must have looked in the last stage of destitution. My feet showed through my ragged boots, my faded skirt hung in tatters, and my shockingly-battered hat would have disgraced the least fastidious of scarecrows. My whitened face and tousled hair completed the tout ensemble of picturesque misery. The old lady's invitation was so hearty that I was unable to refuse it, and so, without a word, I followed her to the door of her cottage, fifty yards away. She brought out to me a glass of warm, delicious milk, and I had only just swallowed this when my friends dashed up in the magnificent motor-car. "The place we have been looking at is no good at all," said the producer, springing out.

“We’ll do the scene lower down the road. Quick, jump in. Miss Balfour.”

Before I could explain to the old lady or even utter a word of thanks, the producer had whisked me into the car, and we sped away, leaving my kind new friend staring in helpless amazement. To this day I do not know whether she took me for an escaped lunatic or for an eccentric millionairess of sporting proclivities, who was trying to win a wager. But as I glanced merrily back and smiled my thanks, her expression of pained surprise gave me to think she would much have preferred that her warm hospitality had been offered to a real beggar-girl instead of a spurious one.

Wishing you the season’s greetings.

Yours very sincerely,

EVE BALFOUR.²⁵

Came March 1917 and a Monster Matinée was held at Chelsea Palace Theatre, its theme an artistic history of Chelsea, ending with a grand finale in praise of Augustus John—Eve Balfour sang in the all-woman chorus.²⁶

In the 1917 British film *All the World’s a Stage* Eve played Lavender Lawn. It was, suitably, about the rise of a country girl to fame as an actor. The *Bioscope* explained,

EVE BALFOUR AS A FISHER-GIRL.

Hagan and Double present “All the World’s a Stage.”

Beautiful Production, but Not a Cheerful Story.

A very beautifully taken all-British production was shown at the Shaftesbury Pavilion on Thursday by Hagan and Double. The cast includes the names of popular English actors, and most of the scenes are set round the picturesque country of Corfe Castle in Dorset. Miss Eve Balfour plays Lavender, the fisher-girl heroine who is offered the chance of going up to London to make her fortune. She takes it, for the alternative is domestic

service at £10 a year in the local parson's household. Lavender is engaged to David Hart, played by Leslie Gordon, a handsome young fisherman, who is really the son of the wealthy Squire. Soon after Lavender has run away, David's father dies, and to his great surprise the young man inherits the property. The theatrical manager who gives Lavender "her chance" is very well played by James Lindsay. He brings out the hard commercial side of a theatrical business man. Godfrey Dauntton is in a dilemma, for his leading lady, Delia Rackham, capably played by Esme Beringer, is no longer beautiful enough to attract the public to his theatre and he feels the need of a new "draw." He dismisses the company, and goes for a holiday to Lavender's home, and it is here that he conceives idea of offering her his next big part, risking her beauty against her inexperience.

The experiment succeeds. Lavender soon, under the kindly tutorship of Fripp, the comedian, masters the elements of theatrical technique. But her success is not applauded by the supplanted Delia, who pays the girl a visit and warns her of the future.

The crisis occurs when, after a successful debut, Godfrey offers Lavender a three years' contract and tries to seal it with a kiss. The girl had been frightened by Delia's warning, but she now determines to defend her virtue, and when Godfrey follows her to her flat she shoots him. The revolver used had been Delia's, who had threatened Godfrey in the theatre, and he had thrust it into his pocket. This was where Lavender had caught sight of it when looking round for means of escape.

The girl rushes off into the night, and Delia, who has followed, enters to see if the man she hates is dead. He is not, and she kills him.

Lavender wanders about the streets in evening dress until she seeks refuge in a barge, but she sees by the

posters that the police are hunting for her, and as a last resource she buys some simple clothes and returns home. But here a detective awaits her, and Lavender is arrested.

All ends happily, for Fripp obtains a confession from Delia, who is on her death-bed, and Lavender is free to marry David, the heir.

Such is the story, and it is not a cheerful one. The most pleasing aspects of this production are the charming outdoor scenery of sheep and rivers and Dorset villages. Another attraction are the delightfully illustrated sub-titles, which have been done by an artist who prefers to be known as S. E. M.

At the trade show several well-known artists were in the audience, eager, no doubt, to see this first English attempt to ally the art of cinematography with that of the pen.

The acting of James Lindsey is perhaps the most noticeable performance. Eve Balfour is plastically beautiful, but one always feels she is going to wake up from the half-dazed fishergirl, and the emotional development one awaits does not arrive.

The theme of middle age supplanted by youth is somewhat tragic, but taken all round "All the World's a Stage" is well worth booking.²⁷

The film was a great success and Eve visited Scotland,

Miss Eve Balfour, the celebrated cinema actress, is in Glasgow this weekend. She is to recite at the Salon Picture House during the three days' run of "All the World's a Stage," in which she appears in the leading role on the screen.²⁸

THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING IS IN THE EATING.

THE PROOF OF THE SUCCESS OF
"ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE"
 IS IN THE REPORTS.

— *Read* —

"*Star*," *April 28th*.—Cinema-goers will be delighted with the splendid film.

"*Bioscope*," *May 3rd*.—A very beautifully taken all-British production.

"*Kinematograph Weekly*," *May 3rd*.—"ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE" is an excellently produced picture.

"*Cinema*," *May 3rd*.—"ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE" gripped the audience from the start. Its varied mass of interest and emotion held them to the end.

"*Era*," *May 2nd*.—Miss Eve Balfour as the country girl is charmingly natural and graceful . . . the rural scenes are extremely beautiful . . . photography is of the highest order we have yet seen in an English production.
 Film marking 8.

WORLD'S RIGHTS CONTROLLED BY

HAGEN & DOUBLE,

29a, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C. 2.

(And at 144, St. Vincent Street, Glasgow.)

Invitations have been posted.

Telephone : REGENT 5734

In October 1917 a "Grand Matinée" concert was held in aid of the Anzac Club and Buffet, at the Victoria Palace. A feature was a "Pageant of the Southern Cross" with New Zealand and Australian actors appearing.²⁹ Eve played "Queensland".³⁰



A GRAND MATINÉE

in aid of the Funds of the
ANZAC CLUB AND BUFFET.

will take place at
THE VICTORIA PALACE,

(By kind courtesy of Mr. Alfred Butt.)

On FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19th, 1917, at 2.30 p.m.

Doors Open at 2 o'clock.

Under the Patronage of

The Earl and Countess Beauchamp,
 Lord, Gen. Sir William and Lady Woodroffe,
 The Earl and Countess Bessy,
 Captain and Mrs. Mulford Collier,
 The Marquis and Marchioness of Cressy,
 The Earl and Countess of Darnley,
 The Lord and Lady Darnley,
 Her Highness, Countess of Darnley,
 The Lord and Lady, Darnley,
 Field Marshal Viscount and Viscountess French,
 Lord, Col. T. Griffiths, D.S.O.,
 The Viscount and Viscountess Harcourt,
 The Earl and Countess of Harcourt,
 Lord, Gen. Sir Edmund and Lady Harcourt,
 The Lord and Lady Leighton,
 The Marquis and Marchioness of Lifford,
 The Right Hon. David Lloyd George, M.P.,
 Lord, Gen. Sir Francis and Lady Lloyd.

The Right Hon. Order and Lady Darnley,
 General J. W. Murray,
 Sir Peter and Lady Wyke,
 Lord, Col. Sir John and Lady Bell,
 Sir Thomas and Lady Marjorie,
 Major-General Sir Mervyn and Lady Mervyn,
 The Earl and Countess of Darnley,
 The Earl and Countess of Darnley,
 The Right Hon. Sir George and Lady Bell,
 General Richardson, G.O.C., N.Z. Forces,
 Lord, Col. Sir Thomas and Lady Bell,
 Lord, Col. Sir George and Lady Bell,
 The Viscount and Viscountess Spalding,
 The Hon. Sir Reginald and Lady Talbot,
 The Lord, Darnley,
 The Hon. C. G. and Mrs. Darnley,
 The Lady Margaret Watson,
 The Hon. F. W. and Mrs. Young.

Among those who have generously promised to contribute to the Programme (by permission of their respective managements) are—

**NINA BOUCICAULT, LILIAN BRAITHWAITE, MARGARET COOPER,
 ADELINE GENEE, VIOLET LORRAINE, IRENE VANBRUGH, ALFRED
 LESTER, ALBERT WHELAN, ARTHUR WONTNER, etc., etc.**

A unique feature of the Matinée will be the presentation of a

“Pageant of the Southern Cross”

by HENRIETTA LESLIE,

in which will appear, among others—

**EVE BALFOUR, MAY BEATTY, LILY BRAYTON, ROSINA BUCKMAN,
 ALICE CRAWFORD, ADA CROSSLEY, JULIUS KNIGHT, MARTIN
 LEWIS, LORNA and TOOTS POUNDS, ROSEMARY REES,
 MADGE TITHERADGE, IVY SHILLING, BETTY WARD, ETC.**

Box Office open at the Victoria Palace from Monday, Sept. 24th. Phone Victoria 5282 and 5284.

Prices:—Stalls and Dress Circle, **£2 2s., £1 1s., 10s. and 7s.** Balcony (unreserved), **5s.** (Tax extra).
Boxes by arrangement.

For further information apply to the Hon. Organising Secretary—Miss INEZ BENSUSAN.

8, Lansdowne Road, W. 11. Phone Park 3422.

THE ANZAC MATINEE.

The matinee in aid of the funds of the Anzac Club and Buffet, which was held at Victoria Palace on Friday, was an unqualified success from every point of view.... A leading feature of the capital programme was the production of “The Pageant of the Southern Cross”... quite in harmony with the unconquerable spirit of Great

Britain and her Colonies.... the pageant showed how Britain, in the time of her need, called upon her sons and daughters who live beneath the Southern Cross to help her against the common enemy, and how the said sons and daughters flocked to her side—with a joyful “Coo-ee!”—not only in the full glory of human youth and strength, but with material gifts and riches.... The pageant also included an impressive march past of Anzac troops for the Front, and an amusing and interesting Haka dance by Maoris from the New Zealand Convalescent Hospital.³¹

At the end of the year Eve had a sitting with the celebrated photographer EO Hoppé and the *Tatler* published one portrait. Eve would continue using Hoppé’s photographs from this shoot for her publicity over the next ten years.

1918		Marriage registered at the Parish Church of St. Paul, Covent Garden		In the presence of the Minister of the Gospel		By the Registrar	
No.	Day	Month	Year	Age	Sex	Residence	Signature
57	26	Aug	1918	26	F	17, St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden	Eve Balfour
				31	M	17, St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden	Arthur Stanley Howlett
Witnessed by the Minister of the Gospel		According to the rites and ceremonies of the Established Church		in solemn manner		by me	
The Registrar		The Minister of the Gospel		The Registrar		The Minister of the Gospel	
Arthur Stanley Howlett		Arthur Stanley Howlett		Arthur Stanley Howlett		Arthur Stanley Howlett	

On 26 August 1918 Eve and Arthur Stanley Howlett were married—he was 31, she gave her age as 26 (she was 36) and her “Condition” as “widow” (she wasn’t). They married at St Paul’s Parish church in Covent Garden—known as the “Actors’ Church”.

That year she was painted by the London based Japanese artist Take Sato and she appeared in an “India Day” concert in aid of funds for YMCA huts for Indian soldiers.³² Gaiety Productions advertised for “very original comedy-dramas” for their “principal player—Eve Balfour.”³³ It was reported she would play Becky Sharp in a film version of *Vanity Fair*,³⁴ but nothing seems to have come of it.



Another of EO Hoppé's photographs was used in the publicity for her next film, *Russia—Land of Tomorrow* in which she played Anna Cargill, a British Lord's Russian wife, who returns to her homeland for the Revolution, but is ill-used by a German baron and is killed by her own bomb. It was shown to the press in 1919 but was considered mediocre ("rambling and disconnected" said the *Bioscope*³⁵) by reviewers.

Apparently *Russia—Land of Tomorrow* was never shown in public;³⁶ perhaps because the *Times* thought it "a scurrilous attack on Tsarism" (though its message was anti-Bolshevik) or perhaps because it was "to put it simply, a terrible film. With characteristic overambition, Sandground had attempted to combine a complex narrative with a survey of turbulent years of Russian history."³⁷

No. 961, DECEMBER 26, 1907.

THE TATLER

A BEAUTIFUL CINEMA ACTRESS.



Copyright in C.E.A.

E. G. Balguy, Somerset House

MISS EVE BALFOUR

The beautiful young film actress whose pictures are so familiar to patrons of the cinema theatres. Last year Miss Eve Balfour appeared in a beautiful film drama entitled "Sweet Wings," which created a favorable impression at all the leading cinema theatres. This play we believe supplied Balfour with his idea for one of the most artistic pictures that has ever appeared in a Christmas Number of "The Tatler," "A Broken Butterfly."



E. O. Hoppe

MISS EVE BALFOUR

Miss Eve Balfour, the famous cinema actress, is shortly going to Russia to create the star part in a film all about Bolshevism and its evils, and everyone must both admire the charming lady's courage and at the same time wish her all luck

The *Tatler* 5 March 1919.

Eve attended a grand 1918 Christmas party for actors at one of the big studios. She joined in the entertainment, along with Charlie Chaplin, Theda Bara, Mary Pickford and others, and sang “Bright Star of Eve” “pleasingly”.³⁸ An apt choice.

In early 1919 she played second to Marguerite Blanche as Laurie Fenton in a Progress Company adaptation of a novel (serialised by the *Daily Mirror*) by Ruby Ayres, *The Black Sheep*, distributed in 1920.

George Laxton, inheriting a fine old house in the country, and a very little money, is in great financial difficulties. He is in love with Laurie Fenton, a society butterfly, who lets him understand when she realises the extent of his resources that she does not wish to continue the engagement. George rescues Norah Ackroyd from a couple of footpads, and she takes him home to receive her father’s thanks. He is not very cordial, but George and Norah contrive to meet again, and a friendship springs up between them which rapidly develops into love. Ackroyd, for his own reasons, is strongly opposed to their union, and Laurie, piqued to find that George has transferred his affections, is ready to conspire with Ackroyd to prevent their marriage. Their constancy triumphs at last, and Ackroyd, who proves to be deeply concerned in George’s financial concerns, is induced to give his consent.³⁹

In May 1919 producer Sidney Morgan acquired a big studio at Shoreham for the Progress Company, “specially adapted for taking pictures by natural light,”

The company which Mr Morgan is taking down to Shoreham includes many well-known names, and leading parts will be played by Eve Balfour, Marguerite Blanche, Joan Morgan, George Keene, Arthur Walcott, and George Bellamy. The productions will include “The

Scarlet Wooing,” from a scenario by Sidney Morgan, “The Woman with the Iron Bracelets,” in both of which Miss Eve Balfour and Miss Marguerite Blanche will appear....⁴⁰

The Scarlet Wooing, distributed in 1920—about an author who writes a scandalous novel to raise money for an operation his daughter needs—was one of the earliest films to be based, not on a published book, but on an original screenplay.

... this film, written and produced by Sydney Morgan, gives a completely successful answer to the question as to whether it is possible for a new story to be written for the screen.⁴¹

Until then it had been assumed that viewers of silent movies would need to have understood the plot by reading the original. Eve played Mrs. Raeburn,

Eve Balfour, who is known in America as the “Queen of British Vampires” is now trying her hand at a very different type of part. In Sydney Morgan’s production “The Scarlet Wooing,” she will be seen as a quiet, domesticated girl, holding the sympathy of the audience.⁴²

The Woman of the Iron Bracelets was based on a novel by Frank Barrett (it had been serialised in the *Christchurch Press* in 1894); Eve featured as Norah Bennett (Mary Smith in the novel) and the film appeared in 1920.

Norah Bennett goes to Epsom races with a strange man, who dies in the motor-car. Norah is arrested and charged with the murder. On the journey to London the train is wrecked, and Norah escapes. In the meantime, Harry St. John has left home on his mother’s remarriage with Mr. Lawson. Norah finds shelter with Harry, and is afterwards taken into the household of Dr. Harvey. In

order to repay Harry she prepares to sacrifice herself to defeat the schemes of Lawson, and eventually succeeds in bringing joy and happiness to all.

In the early scenes of this play we are introduced to Norah Bennett, “The Woman of the Iron Bracelets,” as she climbs over the wall of a country house and accepts the invitation of a passing stranger to accompany him to Epsom races. It has been suggested that the girl is really making her escape from a home for the mentally deficient. If this be so it is only to be regretted that the attendants did not look after the patient in a more efficient manner. Had they done so this very unsatisfactory story would not have resulted.⁴³

“The Woman with the Iron Bracelets” is founded on a really good story with the interest kept up to the end. The heroine is apparently a murderess—one is never quite sure whether one is said to trust her. Was the kindly doctor wise when, after the train wreck, he adopted the handcuffed woman whom he found among the passengers? The interest is sustained right to the end. Eve Balfour, as this intriguing heroine, acts with intelligence and restraint. She has personality.⁴⁴

In a review of the novel, Tatiana Kontou wrote, “Ultimately Mary stands up for a woman’s power to choose her own future: ‘... I shall be guided entirely by my own discretion, and be sole mistress of my actions.’” But, as in *Five Nights* and *The Woman who did*, the strong woman who professes independence actually “effects traditionally feminine roles”.⁴⁵ She uses her strength and independence to support the status quo.

Progress British Photoplay

A sumptuous production from the
novel by

RUBY M. AYRES,

"Black Sheep"

Progress British Photoplay.

:: Presented by Frank E. Spring ::

Adapted and Produced by Sydney Morgan.

Leading Players :

Marguerite Blanche, Eve Balfour, George
Bellamy, Arthur Lennard, & George Keene.

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PHOTOPLAY**

**“The
SCARLET
WOOING”**

An Original Production
From An Original Story by
SIDNEY MORGAN

Leading Players :

Eve Balfour, Marguerite Blanche, Joan Morgan,
George Keene, Arthur Walcott, George Bellamy,
and Harry Newman.

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EVE BALFOUR.

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"The Woman of the Iron Bracelets"

From the Novel by

FRANK BARRETT.

Produced by

SIDNEY MORGAN.

Leading Players

EVE BALFOUR,

ALICE de WINTON,

GEORGE KEENE,

MARGUERITE BLANCHE,

GEORGE BELLAMY

and ARTHUR WALCOTT.

LONDON TRADE SHOW

To be announced Shortly.

In 1919 Eve was cast in a film called *The Yellow Hand*.

The *Bioscope*'s gossip columnist wrote,

Harry Lorraine tells me that he will shortly take a company of English players, including Eve Balfour and

A. B. Imeson, across the Atlantic to produce scenes for his forthcoming drama of Anglo-Chinese diplomatic life. Both New York and Halifax will be visited, and other scenes will be acted on board the “Olympic” while making the voyage.⁴⁶

The *Leeds Mercury* showed a photograph of her with the legend, “A New Zealand Film Star. Here you see Miss Eve Balfour, the New Zealand film ‘star’ who played lead in ‘The Yellow Hand,’ a dramatic film, in which exciting scenes were filmed on a liner in mid-Atlantic.”⁴⁷ The *Bioscope* referred to the film, “‘The Yellow Hand,’ a five-reeler, produced by G.L. Productions, featuring George Leyton and Eve Balfour. This is a fine dramatic subject, full of thrills and excitement.”⁴⁸ Eve herself, in an interview with the New York *Tribune* in December 1919, was quoted saying, “In making one of my pictures, ‘The Yellow Hand,’ I sailed across the Atlantic, and we came into port, although we were not allowed to land.”⁴⁹

That account is confirmed by her co-star (in this and other Progress Co. films) AB Imeson, who, the *Stage* reported in September,

... has just returned from America, which country he has visited twice during the past seven weeks, during which time he has been playing lead in the making of the film “The Yellow Hand,” the production taking place during the crossing on board the White Star liners “Olympic” and “Lapland”.⁵⁰

The *Olympic* voyage may have been for “The Further Exploits of Sexton Blake: The Mystery of the s.s. Olympic” released on 16 August 1919.

The s.s. *Lapland* sailed from Liverpool on 1 August 1919. Eve Howlett (“Film Actress, 28yrs”) was a passenger; Eve was then 37.

An episode of the two-reel series *The Girl from Frisco* called *The Yellow Hand* had been made in 1916, but Eve's film of that name seems to have disappeared without trace—perhaps renamed, perhaps ditched.

Wid's Daily reported in September

Cable advices from Norway state that the heirs of Ibsen have finally consented to the filming of the playwright's works. Fifty English players together with Eve Balfour as star have been engaged to go to Norway where the pictures will be filmed.⁵¹

Nothing came of it. A publicity stunt? a too grandiose scheme? On 19 September 1919 Arthur Stanley Howlett and Eve Howlett were passengers on the s.s. *Adriatic* from Liverpool to New York and they landed again in New York from the *Baltic* on 19 December.

They were off to try America, the Land of Opportunity.

1 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Woman_Who_Did_\(1915_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Woman_Who_Did_(1915_film))
retrieved 21 March 2019.

2 *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 7 March 1916.

3 *Dundee Courier* 7 March 1916.

4 *Folkestone, Hythe, Sandgate & Cheriton Herald* 11 March 1916.

5 *Brisbane Courier* 8 March 1916.

6 *Sun* (Christchurch) 31 March 1916.

7 *Daily News* 5 June 1919.

8 *Bioscope* 11 November 1915.

9 Rathmell Wilson wrote *Eve's Daughter* and *The Woman Who Did*, both made into films starring Eve Balfour. He also wrote *Hinemoa* and *Tutanekai* in 1907.

10 *Cinema* 25 November 1915.

11 *Bioscope* 30 December 1915.

12 *Bioscope* 13 January 1916.

13 A term commonly used to describe a play which examines a specific social or political problem with the aim of igniting public debate.

14 *Bioscope* 3 February 1916.

15 *Daily Post* (Hobart) 2 December 1916.

-
- 16 *Sun* 19 May 1916.
 - 17 *Daily Mail* 6 April 1916.
 - 18 *Bioscope* 22 June 1916.
 - 19 *Yarmouth Independent* 13 January 1917.
 - 20 *Western Mail* 17 October 1916.
 - 21 M.L. = Maoriland, the *Bulletin's* customary name for New Zealand.
 - 22 Quoted in the *Sun* (Christchurch) 4 March 1916.
 - 23 *Taranaki Daily News* 2 June 1916.
 - 24 *New Zealand Times* 1 March 1917.
 - 25 *New Zealand Times* 9 December 1916.
 - 26 Michael Holroyd 2010. *Augustus John: the new biography*. Head of Zeus, London.
 - 27 *Bioscope* 3 May 1917.
 - 28 *Sunday Post* 10 June 1917.
 - 29 *Gloucester Citizen* 22 September 1917.
 - 30 https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/awm-media/collection/PUBS002/006/001/003/003/bundled/PUBS002_006_001_003_003.pdf
 - 31 *Stage* 25 October 1917.
 - 32 *Era* 16 October 1918.
 - 33 *Bioscope* 24 October 1918.
 - 34 *Daily Mirror* 6 January 1918.
 - 35 *Bioscope* 13 February 1919.
 - 36 Tony Shaw 2002. Early Warnings of the Red Peril: A Pre-History of Cold War British Cinema, 1917–1939. *Film History* 14 (3/4): 354–368.
 - 37 Caroline Merz 2016. Why Not a Scots Hollywood? Fiction film production in Scotland, 1911-1928. PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh. <https://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1842/22054/Merz2016.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y> retrieved 3 April 2109.
 - 38 *Era* 1 January 1919.
 - 39 *Bioscope* 18 March 1920.
 - 40 *Bioscope* 8 May 1919.
 - 41 *Bioscope* 8 April 1920.
 - 42 *Bioscope* 25 March 1920.
 - 43 *Bioscope* 9 September 1920.
 - 44 *Daily Herald* 13 September 1920.
 - 45 Tatiana Kontou 2015. *Women and the Victorian Occult*. Routledge.
 - 46 *Bioscope* 10 July 1919.
 - 47 *Leeds Mercury* 30 December 1919.
 - 48 *Bioscope* 12 February 1920.
 - 49 *New York Tribune* 12 December 1919.
 - 50 *Stage* 18 September 1919.
 - 51 *Wid's Daily* 13 September 1919.

Chapter 5: artists' images of Eve

Eve Balfour was a celebrated beauty, sought by photographers, painters and sculptors, wooed by poets.

Lawson Balfour had painted his wife, of course. One of his paintings, "Portrait of Eve" shows her in black Spanish lace, in Rembrandt light, another, "Portrait of the artist's wife, Eve" in classical white. She was probably the subject in several other images he painted between 1903 and 1911—perhaps "The favourites", "Woman holding a dove", "The joy of spring" and "Portrait" (see below).

Adrian Allinson was a member of the Camden Town Group (1911) and the London Group (formed in 1913) and is best known for his landscapes and posters, but he was a capable painter of still lives and portraits, and was an occasional caricaturist. He drew a caricature of Eve some time between 1910 and 1920. It is in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



"Portrait of Eve" by James Lawson Balfour.



"Portrait of the artist's wife, Eve" by James Lawson Balfour.



Paintings by James Lawson Balfour:
possibly images of Eve.

Left: "Woman holding a dove."

Right above: "Portrait."

Below: "The favourites."



No. 15. "THE FAVOURITES." J. LAWSON BALFOUR.



James Lawson Balfour: "The joy of spring"



EYE Balfour , caricature by Adrian Allinson, Victoria & Albert Museum



Eve Balfour, possibly by E.O. Hoppé
British National Portrait Gallery hand-coloured rotogravure postcard, 1917
NPG x160478



Eve Balfour by Take Sato

"A portrait combining some of the merits of Eastern and Western art. There is no attempt at realistic modelling, and the drawing is inclusive rather than explicit; but one feels that the likeness is good, while the decorative effect is charming." (*Coburn* October 1918, p59)

Next page: Eve Balfour by Dora Ohlfsen, 1920



The Australian painter George Washington Lambert showed a portrait of Eve in an exhibition by the Modern Society of Portrait Painters at the Royal Institute in 1912. The *Times* reviewer wrote, densely,

In his portrait called “Eve Balfour” he is influenced by the sentiment of Mr John, but he has not made it his own. There is that incongruity between the pose and the surroundings and the rather lurid colour which is so often the penalty of eclecticism. One looks for some unity of conception behind all this aggressive skill, and one does not find it. Mr Lambert... is an accomplished and ambitious painter who too often mistakes pretexts for subjects.¹

Another critic wrote,

If Mr. G. W. Lambert does not really add to his laurels by any of his three portraits here, one of them, “Eve Balfour,” in an attitude reminiscent of Mr. John, is yet notable.²

The *Western Daily Press* critic liked it,

Mr. G. W. Lambert seems, curiously enough, to have been haunted by some hill-top figure of Augustus John when he painted “Eve Balfour.” Mr Lambert has not Mr. John’s strangeness, but he has never lacked a sense of the value of unconventional situations in portraiture, and this slim, eager figure, with hands pressed to the throat, is no inappropriate presence on the skyey summit. The colour of her red and purple draperies against the clear deeps of sunny sky is brave, and, as need not be said, the painting is extremely accomplished.³

The *Observer* was uncharacteristically effusive. Lambert’s painting was one of two given the places of honour in the exhibition’s large room.

Mr Lambert's splendid full length of "Eve Balfour" looks uncommonly as though the artist had in the progress of his work suddenly discovered that he was, perhaps unconsciously, following too closely in the footsteps of Mr Augustus John in his "Seraphita" mood, and had pulled himself up to make the picture more expressive of his own personality. Thus one might account for the strange inconsistency between the Johannite movement and setting and the forceful modelling of the face with its shadows of almost Bolognese heaviness. When Mr John paints on this scale he is consistent in his acceptance of the early Florentine convention. Mr Lambert has here adopted a convention for the general design and for the background, and has painted the head and arms and hands with the exaggerated modelling caused by the conditions of studio light. But he has painted them in inimitable fashion. There is nothing as perfect in this room as these sensitive hands and beautifully rounded arms.⁴

The *Field* agreed,

Most modern portrait painters care little for painting hands; not so G.W. Lambert, whose portrait of Eve Balfour shows exquisitely painted arms and hands. This portrait would in any case compel attention by the concentrated, nearly feverish, vitality in the lady's face.⁵

It was exhibited again in Bradford early in 1913. The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* thought "G. Lambert's theatrically posed picture, 'Eve Balfour' is decidedly clever".⁶ Lambert renamed it "A Modern Melpomene"⁷ and it was exhibited at the annual exhibition at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh in 1914. The Library of Congress Thomas Jefferson Building in Washington, D.C. has a mural by Edward Simmons depicting Melpomene.

Lambert's portrait of Eve went on to Dublin, to the Royal Hibernian Academy exhibition in March 1916, when the critic for the *Irish Independent* wrote,

What is in many respects a striking work is exhibited by G. W. Lambert in "A Modern Melpomene." There might, it is true, be many "modern" conceptions of this ancient and interesting personage. In the present instance the painter will probably be regarded as having been well inspired.⁸

This was then, a full length painting of Eve, a slim, eager figure with hands pressed to the throat, on top of a hill, wearing red and purple against blue sky, the background expressive, the face and arms detailed.

Amy Lambert, the artist's wife, wrote later,

1912 saw... a portrait of Eve Balfour, the actress. This last portrait was exhibited later in Dublin as "A Modern Melpomene," a title which seemed to bring swift tragedy for the picture was destroyed by fire during one of the Irish riots. The loss was irreparable, but thanks to the insistence of the Imperial Arts League, a certain monetary compensation was obtained from the Municipality of Dublin.⁹

The *Irish Independent* of Tuesday 9 May 1916 carried the whole sad story.

I have been unable to locate any image of the portrait. Perhaps it is as well if we are to believe the *Manchester Guardian* critic,

Mr. Lambert in his "Eve Balfour" shows us how bad Mr. John's "Girl on a Cliff" or "Seraphita" might have been if he had not believed in them. We have still to wait till Mr. Lambert finds that the Kingdom of Art is within himself.¹⁰

In 1916 the *Era* reported,

Miss Eve Balfour, who is appearing in the new farce, “The Spring Song,” at Brighton this week, is the subject of a remarkable bust by Mr. John Littlejohns, which is on view at the autumn exhibition of the Royal Society of British Artists. Mr. Littlejohns is normally a pastellist, and this first effort of his in bronze has attracted a great deal of attention.¹¹

Its whereabouts is unknown.

Sato Takezo 1891–1972 was born in Japan, a painter of landscapes, flowers and birds; he was also known as Také Sato. In 1914 he moved to Britain and studied at Chelsea School of Art. He used traditional Japanese pigments on silk. Raymond McIntyre painted him in 1923. The paintings he exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1918 included “No. 283 Take Sato/ Eve Balfour/ Water-colour on silk”. It was reproduced in *Colour* magazine with the legend,

A portrait combining some of the merits of Eastern and Western art. There is no attempt at realistic modelling, and the drawing is inclusive rather than explicit; but one feels that the likeness is good, while the decorative effect is charming.”¹²

Raymond McIntyre had been a pupil and colleague of Lawson Balfour in his Christchurch days. In 1909 McIntyre also moved to London, where he worked with William Nicholson and Walter Sickert of the Camden Town Group. He exhibited his painting of Eve in 1918 at the Autumn Exhibition of the

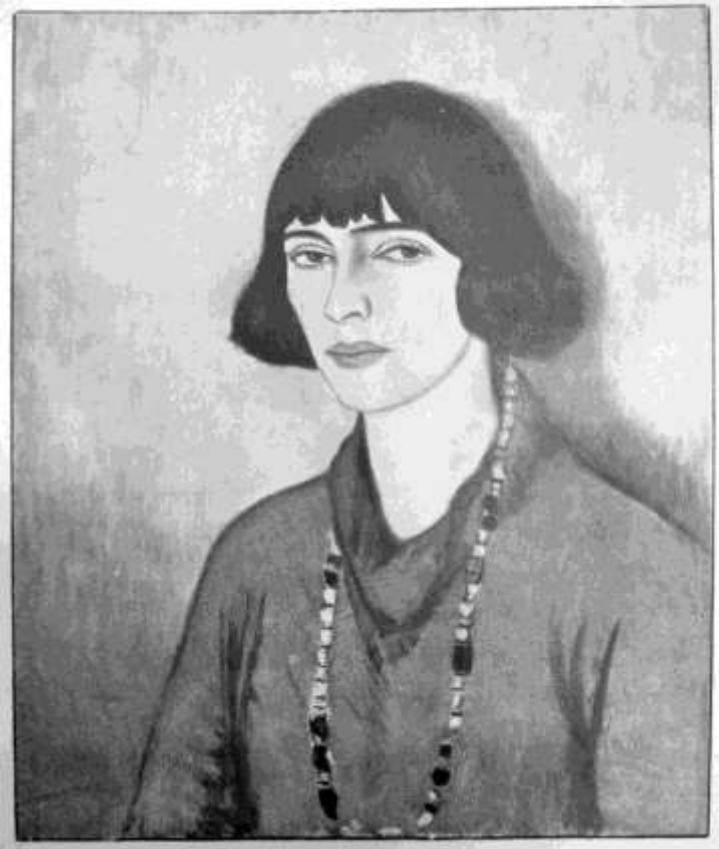
International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers, at the Grosvenor Gallery. Wellington's *Evening Post* proudly reiterated the comments of the London critics,

At the Grosvenor Gallery, where the International Society is holding an exhibition, Mr McIntyre has a portrait of Miss Eve Balfour, formerly of Christchurch, who is now a well-known film actress. Mr. Rutter says that the artist has painted her "with the clean precision and simplicity of one of the younger Frenchmen who has approached Cezanne through Marchand and Guerin."¹³

Eve's portrait in oils was for sale in late 1918 for 25 guineas. By November 1919 it was unsold and down to £25.¹⁴ When McIntyre died in 1933 the *Press* wrote,

... his recognition in England caused his work to be reproduced in art journals there, notably in "Colour" and the "Studio," which gave prominence to a portrait of Eve Balfour, a Christchurch girl who won fame as an actress.¹⁵

The painting was in fact published in black and white in the October 1918 issue of the art magazine *Colour*. Its whereabouts is unknown.



Eve, by Raymond McIntyre.

Published in *Colour* magazine (in black and white), October 1918.

The Princess Alexandra of Schleswig-Holstein, a daughter-in-law of Kaiser Wilhelm II, painted her,¹⁶ perhaps about 1926, when Alexandra moved for a time to New York City, where she worked as a portrait painter.¹⁷ A visitor found her rooms full of unsold paintings.

Dora Ohlfsen-Bagge was a painter, sculptor and medal maker who worked in Australia and Europe. The *Leeds Mercury* of 30 December 1919,

Miss Balfour has just sat as a model for a Venus by Miss Dora Ohlfsen, the Scandinavian sculptor, who has recently completed wonderfully lifelike pieces of sculpture of Mr. Lloyd George, D'Annunzio, and Dame Melba.¹⁸

Adelaide's *Register* said of the sculpture,

Miss Eve Balfour, a "Venus" of New Zealand, has been portrayed in a statuette, and those who have seen it speak of its beauty, strangely inspiring and elusive.¹⁹

It was "the most talked of piece of statuary in England," declared the *Evening World*.²⁰

Ohlfsen herself wrote,

... I executed a slightly draped statuette of Eve Balfour, a New Zealand girl, who stars with an American cinema company. She came to my studio in Chelsea, claiming to possess "the most perfectly proportioned figure in the world." She is 5ft 6½in tall, and is certainly wonderfully fine, though taller than the ancient classic conceptions of feminine beauty. I found her proportions slightly above those of the famous Cirenaica Venus recently discovered by soldiers digging trenches during the Tripoli war which I was able to examine in the Museum in Rome. As a companion statuette to this I modelled Barney Gaster as a perfect type of Anzac. He was 22 years old, blue eyes, chestnut hair, 5ft 11in in height, Australian born. Much interest was excited in London by the fact that "The New Zealand Aphrodite" and "The Australian Apollo" were the products of British civilisation at the Antipodes.²¹



"Dora Ohlfsen's statuette of the New Zealand beauty, Miss Eve Balfour."
The Triad, 10 August 1921.

The *Triad* of 10 August 1921 carried a photograph of the statuette “In the plaster. Dora Ohlfsen’s statuette of the New Zealand beauty, Miss Eve Balfour. Over the bodily beauty of Miss Balfour the sculptress is enthusiastic.”

A 49.5cm tall bronze cast of Ohlfsen’s statuette, labelled only “figure of a female nude, circa 1910,” was sold by Bonhams in 2006 for £1200.²²

William Bruce Ellis Ranken (1881–1941) was a Scottish artist and Edwardian aesthete who painted the rich and the famous. The *NZ Times* reported an exhibition of the Modern Society of Portrait Painters in London in 1920,

A drawing of Miss Eve Balfour, the New Zealand actress, by W. B. E. Ranken, is in Room 3. In this portrait, she appears in a very brown and red, gipsyish and smiling humour, without any of the pale, slender, mysterious characteristics of the person who played Hecate.²³

Ranken experts Wendy and Gordon Hawksley traced the portrait from Ranken’s family to the Leeds City Art Gallery Print Room. They have attempted to trace all of Ranken’s work...

through the Ranken family records which contain a list of paintings which were sent to public galleries after his death. Finding this took many years.... We maintain a relationship with the surviving relatives to this day and feel a deep sense of responsibility to ensure Ranken’s work is both known and preserved for the future. So, whilst this started as a research project, it has become part of our lives and family. In the many years we have been researching Ranken’s work we have noted just how

much information gets lost in the passage of time. Rather surprisingly, public galleries also lose information over time. Ranken's portrait of Eve is known by Leeds as "Head of a Lady" and it is only through the Ranken family records that we know the portrait they were gifted is actually of Eve. (Wendy Hawksley 2019, *pers. comm.*)

The index catalogue card at Leeds has a pencilled note from 2000 saying it could not be found and its current whereabouts is unknown.



Augustus John painted her in about 1912. John had an "insatiable appetite for sexual adventure" and it is claimed he fathered as many as 100 children.

A pencil sketch (dated 1912 on the back) and two notes by John have survived among the family papers.

There are also two undated notes to Eve, the first on blank paper,

Dear Eve—

*I was horribly put out. I have had you and your babe on my conscience (figuratively) but I was dérouté to day—
forgive me Eve, I'll hope to see you early next week—
yours incorruptibly*

John

The second is written on notepaper headed “Alderney Manor, Kingwood Road, Parkstone, Dorset” (where John lived from September 1911 till 1927) and seems a little exasperated,

Yes honey will see you when next up in town in a day or two

Augustus John

Was Yvette Augustus John's child?

I have not found any painting of Eve by John from this period: perhaps it is one of his many simply named “portrait of a woman,” “standing female figure” or “seated nude”—though New York's *Evening World* mentioned in 1919, “a portrait of her by August John... is one of the pleasant things Britishers like to talk about in connection with her career,” so clearly she was known at that time to be the subject of a portrait of his. Perhaps he did name it for her.

In 1952, forty years later, John recalled,

Hearing of my presence in New York, the actress Eve Balfour, whom I had known in London, paid me a call. I got her to pose again for me at my studio in Bryant Square. This generous and optimistic soul was interested in the occult, and used to allude constantly to her “vibrations”. She hinted at the possession of remarkable psychic powers. Personally I would have been quite satisfied with her outstanding physical advantages: if

Eve chose to *look* mysterious, that was all right; the phenomenon was visible and could be registered—but the *occult*...? One evening we were together at the play: the lights being extinguished, my companion drew my attention to her hands: her fingers were luminous, they positively streamed with light...²⁴

Eve was working on Broadway in 1925–1926. John exhibited a painting of her, probably the one painted in New York, in a one man show at the New Chenil Galleries in 1926.²⁵ Critic PC Konody wrote in the *Observer*,

What we look for in a work of art today is something more than the correct image an object makes on the retina. We know how various objects impress us, without being reminded of it by the painter; and, therefore, what we look for in the painting is the revelation of how the artist, quo artist, has seen it, or how, in the vast freedom of his selection, he has chosen to render it. Thus, if Augustus John paints a portrait, the probability is, if such a matter can be illustrated by simple arithmetic, that one third of it is resemblance and the other two thirds the expression of the mind of the artist. The perfectly accurate objective likeness may to-day well be left to the camera. From an artist like Mr John we expect not the obvious, but a revelation of his own vision to bring about the delightful shock of new experience which is of the essence of aesthetic enjoyment.

Take, for example, the portrait of “Eve Balfour”. The only question asked in bygone days would have been, “is it a good likeness?” whereas, with our knowledge of this artist’s work, we may safely surmise that the presentment of a recognisable portrait engages but the smaller part of his intention. The greater part of that intention is to give his own comment upon what he sees in the sitter. To reject the desire for resemblance would

be a spineless extremism, but the paramount interest lies in gathering as much as possible from the personality of a great artist; in seeing the object of his work from his angle of vision; in following out, as far as possible, his trend of thought; and in having our aesthetic emotions aroused and vibrating in sympathy with all that his treatment implies. In contemplating that somewhat sad face, the large expressive eyes of "Eve Balfour," somewhat pained and weary with the experiences that have come and gone with the passing of years, one feels that the artist has a clearer conception of the vital expression of the soul of his sitter than even those who, concerned mostly with inessential externals, can vacuously boast that they have "known" her for years.

....

So intent is Augustus John upon the particular aspect of his subject which stirs him to activity, that he has little patience for "filling in" the rest of the canvas.... The loosest indication has to suffice for the parts on which he could not concentrate his interest. He is credited with the definition that a picture is "finished" when the artist gets bored with it. And there is much to be said for this attitude, in spite of the public craving for elaboration. A hasty sketch may be a finished work of art, so long as it is consistent.... Now it is quite legitimate to concentrate on the essential part of a portrait, which would naturally be the face, and to give a merely adequate indication of the rest, provided that the perfunctoriness of the less essential parts does not become so assertive as to divert the eye from the centre of interest. And this, unfortunately, is the case with... the "Eve Balfour" portrait....²⁶

Apart from that mild rebuke, he thought John's "Eve" an artistic achievement of the highest order.

At about the same time as this portrait was painted, Eve was planning to make a film of Antoine Bibesco's *Le Jaloux*. Bibesco's wife was Elizabeth who was the daughter of British Prime Minister HH Asquith, and was also painted by Augustus John in very similar style and wearing the same white lace mantilla—which was said to have been given to Asquith by the Queen of Portugal (then living in London).



Augustus John's portrait of Eve Balfour, exhibited in 1926 when she was 44; published in the *Studio* 1926 vol.92 p45, in the *Illustrated London News* 5 June 1926 and again in the *Studio* November 1945.



Elizabeth Bibesco, by Augustus John in 1926, wearing the same mantilla and the same rather world weary expression.

Eve was photographed by many: the National Portrait Gallery in London has a monochrome by Angus Basil Brown and a handcoloured portrait thought to be by Emil Otto Hoppé.²⁷ Certainly Hoppé did photograph her for magazine publication.

EO Hoppé was a German-born British photographer who opened a portrait studio in London in 1907.

Within a few years E. O. Hoppe was the undisputed leader of pictorial portraiture in Europe. To say that someone was a “household name” has become a cliché, yet in Hoppe’s case the phrase is apt. Rarely in the history of the medium has a photographer been so famous in his own lifetime among the general public. He was as famous as his sitters. It is difficult to think of a prominent name in the fields of politics, art, literature, and the theater who did not pose for his camera.²⁸

Angus Basil Brown was a famous London photographer who became president of the British Professional Photographic Association.

One portrait of Eve is mistakenly included on a website devoted to her namesake the organic farmer Lady Eve Balfour and wrongly attributed to Angus Basil Brown, c.1920.²⁹ It is certainly Eve Balfour the actor, photographed by Topical as Hecate in *Macbeth* in 1911.

The Topical Press Photographic Agency was founded in 1903 in London. By 1929 it was selling the work of a team of photographers operating first from Fleet Street and then at Red Lion Court. Prominent photographers who worked for Topical included Arthur William Debenham, Hugh Cecil Saunders, and John Warwick Brooke.³⁰



Eve Balfour as Hecate in *Macbeth*, Topical, 1911.



Eve Balfour by Angus Basil Brown
British National Portrait Gallery vintage bromide print, 1920s
7 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. x 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (201 mm x 154 mm) image size
Given by Terence Pepper, 2014; Photographs Collection; NPG x194225

“Her beauty and form have been so much the subjects of art that even poets have paid homage to Miss Balfour,” said the *Washington Herald*.³¹ Indeed, she began reciting “Poems by and Songs after Ezra Pound” at the Cabaret Theatre Club’s “Cave of the (Golden) Calf” off Regent Street in November 1912; the *Pall Mall Gazette* reported,

Miss Eve Balfour-Hulston brought forward a couple of fine Oriental poems, entitled “The Tomb of Akr Caar” and “The Marriage of Cana in Galilee,” specially written for her by Ezra Pound. Her adoption of a suggestive, conventionalised method of delivery placed these contributions among the best successes of the evening.³²

Pound was working in London as foreign editor of several American literary magazines, but his *Love poems of ancient Egypt*, which contains “The Tomb of Akr Caar”, is said to be taken from translations of papyri and inscriptions, rather than written specially for Eve. Pound’s *Akr Caar* does include the ardent words,

I have been intimate with thee, known thy ways.
Have I not touched thy palms and finger-tips,
Flowed in, and through thee and about thy heels?
How ‘came I in’? Was I not thee and Thee?

The second poem is Pound’s “Dance figure” subtitled *For the Marriage in Cana of Galilee*,

Dark-eyed,
O woman of my dreams,
Ivory sandaled,
There is none like thee among the dancers,
None with swift feet.

The earliest manuscript of “Dance Figure” is dated 3 December 1912 and it was not published till April 1913, so even if it was

not written specially for Eve it appears to have been given to her to recite a month before Pound's final manuscript.

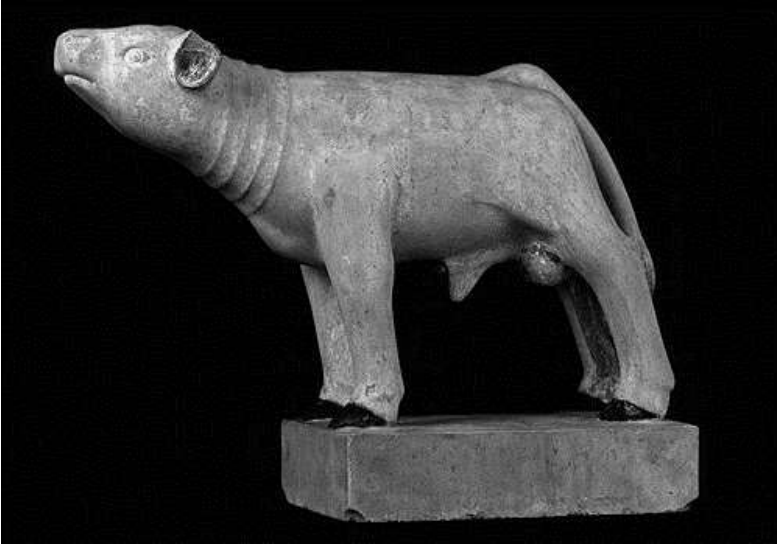
“Dark eyed....” Eve's eyes were striking. Stephen Graham wrote a poem about them (“deep dark pools”) and the *Salt Lake Telegram* on 12 January 1920 said “eyes dark with mystery, or flashing with intelligence.... the Balfour eyes... are unlike any eyes we have seen.”

Pound was named as a supporter of the Cave of the Calf.³³ It was a new kind of night club for London, now regarded by some as London's first gay bar, run by Frida Strindberg (who had had affairs with, *inter alia*, Augustus John), decorated by Wyndham Lewis and others in what Pound would call the “vorticist” style (a kind of British cubism), aiming to be...

... a place given up to gaiety, a gaiety stimulating thought rather than crushing it. We want a gaiety that does not have to count with midnight. We want surroundings which, after the reality of daily life, reveal the reality of the unreal. We want light, and we want song.³⁴

The gilded sculptures of the calf, by Eric Gill, were forthrightly phallic, predating Marino Marini's famous 1948 *The Angel of the City*.





Pound was promiscuous: when he was seeking to marry Hilda Doolittle he was also seeing Viola Baxter and Mary Moore (he dedicated a book of poems to the last).

“In London, Pound enjoyed numerous flirtations with the so-called fast set of young women he met at South Lodge: Brigit Patmore... Ione de Forest, stage name of a young French dancer, Jeanne Heyse, aka Joan Hayes and a member of the New Freewoman circle and likely the subject of his 1912 poem ‘Dance Figure.’”.... Through the South Lodge circle, Pound met (Ford Madox) Ford’s new protege, DH Lawrence....³⁵

Was it Eve who was the subject of “Dance Figure”? did she move in the *New Freewoman* or South Lodge circles? Eve gave birth to Yvette in March 1913. She became pregnant therefore in June 1912. Was Yvette Ezra Pound’s child? Not likely, for

he was walking in France and did not return to London till the end of July.³⁶

Among the family papers are typewritten verses (marked—possibly dated “2–5/15”) and a 1929 letter from Stephen Graham. Graham was a British journalist, travel writer, essayist and novelist. He went to Russia and sent accounts of the war from a Russian point of view to the *Times*; they were republished as *Russia and the World* (1915) and *Through Russian Central Asia* (1916).³⁷ There is no record of a meeting, but it seems at least plausible that he, the acknowledged expert on Russia met Eve when she was working on “Russia: Land of Tomorrow” completed in 1919.

Graham was a widely recognised public figure, lecturing in London in 1915 and his opinions about Russia were canvassed by members of the British political establishment.³⁸ He became immersed in mystical ideas about England as a new spiritual country. In 1926 his marriage became strained during his affair with a younger woman in New York when his

tours of the nightclubs of New York usually took place in the company of one of a number of young women, typically working in publishing or some part of the entertainment industry...³⁹

He had a relationship with a young woman called simply “Pat” but when he returned to America in 1927,

he found Pat “very flat as though she has lost her soul”, and he alternated between convincing himself that she “still loves me dearly”, and fretting that there was “nothing” between them. He also lamented that she seemed to have “no care for me”.... Although Graham dedicated *New York Nights* to Pat when it appeared later

in 1927, by the time he returned to Britain in the summer it seems clear that their relationship was over.⁴⁰

“Pat” may have been a composite of different women he knew in New York—including, perhaps, Eve Balfour Howlett. Graham visited the Prieuré hospital (Le Chateau du Prieuré des Basses Loges, Gurdjieff’s “Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man”) at Fontainebleau-Avon in 1928 to see an old friend and spent time in London and America in 1929–30 so there were a number of possible connections.

His letter to Eve is dated 19 November 1929, written on his Frith St letterhead and has an almost weary air of familiar intimacy,

Well, how’s Eve? I don’t like telephoning you because you seem to have a “Don’t Disturb!” notice outside your door. I hope that you are well again, but your silence makes me fear that perhaps you are very ill. Just send me a postcard to tell me you have got well again, and I’ll be happy. I am just back from such a pleasant week-end spent with Dorothy Montgomery and her husband. They both asked most warmly after you. They have taken a house near Harefield on the river Colne, a most delightful place. We read stories and poems, and played games, and went out looking for mushrooms. It was diverting. Now I am back, with no other care in the world but my novel. But it is dreary in London. I don’t expect I’ll stay much longer in this fog and damp. The cats send playful mews and scratches. I polish the tables with your old stockings.

Stephen.

His verses, if they are his (they appear to have been typed on a different machine from his letter) are lovesick—but her eyes, though tender, were passionless, for love was not there...

TO EVE BALFOUR

God filled your eyes with Star-dust.
 He flooded your veins with wine.
 Were I a god, your lips should cling
 To no other lips than mine!
 God moulded your mouth from rose-leaves—
 A cradle where kissed asleep!
 Were I a god, I would wake them all,
 Though I made the angels weep!
 God fashioned your form of lines divine—
 He gave you your wonderful grace!
 Were I a god I would make your breast
 My heaven—my resting place!
 And if I came on a rainbow-bridge,
 Would you bare your bosom and say,
 “God or man, whichever you are—
 I am yours twixt a night and a day?”
 Would your wonderful eyes where star-dust gleams
 Grow chill as the tremulous dawn?
 Or burn with the beacon fires of love
 That came when the world was born?

EVE'S EYES

Eve's eyes are deep, dark pools of beauty rare—
 Clear and translucent to her soul within.
 Fearless and grand, despising baser sin,
 Though tender passionless, for Love's not there!
 If I could wake that glory in her eyes,
 And make them perfect with lovelight for me,
 Right gladly would I give Eternity
 And every other hope that mortals prize.

Eve performed on the same night as Katherine Mansfield at the anniversary dinner of the Cabaret Club in 1913.⁴¹ The *Pall Mall Gazette* misspelt Mansfield's name,

In the cave of the calf, beneath the soft light of Chinese lanterns, and amidst the red and yellow decorations of the Cubists, they celebrated last night and during the hours of this morning, the anniversary of the opening of the Cabaret Club.

Somewhere about nine o'clock a dainty foot thrust itself through the division of the blue plush curtain, a couple of taps were heard on the head of a drum, and Miss Masefield, acting as chorus, announced, with an enchanting air of tragi-comedy, an operetta written by Mozart when he was "a darling little thing about so high," indicating a boy of possibly ten or twelve.

It was the operetta of "Bastian and Bastienne," which was heard some years ago at Covent Garden. The Chorus led forward the Shepherdess, who, like her lover Bastian, walked with feet quite bare. The little opera, with its delicate and graceful music, was charmingly sung by Mme. Gertrude Rollfs, Mr. Anton Dressler, and Mr. Charles Neville.⁴²

Later, in 1915, Mansfield, sitting in the Parisian café Biard, referred to Eve in a letter to John Middleton Murry,

There goes Eve Balfour. Yes, it is. No, it isn't. Yes, it is. No, it isn't. Alas, another case of mistaken identity....⁴³

Mansfield was dividing her time between Murry's flat in London and that of bohemian writer Francis Carco in Paris, near the Quai des Fleurs. The letter is dated 8 May 1915 in the *Collected works* and a footnote says, "Lady Eve Balfour, niece of the Conservative politician and former Prime Minister, AJ Balfour."⁴⁴

Another case of mistaken identity: that Eve Balfour—who would become an acclaimed organic farmer—was only sixteen and after the summer of 1915 would enrol to study agriculture at the University of Reading; she is most unlikely to have been known to Katherine Mansfield.

Our Eve Balfour was actually 33. How did Mansfield know her? Eve Balfour's first movie was the four reel silent black and white *The Mystery of the Diamond Belt* directed by Charles Raymond for IB Davidson, producer, which had its trade screening at the Shaftsbury Theatre on 17 July 1914: possibly Mansfield and Murry saw it in London. They were living at 111 Arthur (now renamed Dovehouse) Street in Chelsea; Eve and Stanley Howlett were less than a kilometre away at 68 Elm Park Mansions.

But the two expatriate New Zealanders must certainly have met at the Cabaret Club's anniversary dinner in 1913.

Might Mansfield have *expected* to see Eve in Paris in 1915? Mansfield would die in 1923 at the Prieuré hospital at Fontainebleau. Stephen Graham visited the Prieuré in 1928. Eve would correspond in 1929 with the guru Pyotr Ouspensky, who had earlier been associated with the Prieuré; but I have found no closer Paris connection between the two women.

A Dr WG Herty wrote a “powerful dramatic sketch” entitled *The woman and the Hun* specially for Eve, according to the *Tatler* in 1915,⁴⁵ but I can find record of neither the author nor his play now. Perhaps coincidentally, the Women's Anti-German League was formed in January 1916.

A David Gordon, author of the mellifluous “Rhymed Reviews of Recent News” for the US newspaper *West Virginian*, wrote some doggerel about Eve in 1920,

Eva Balfour, British cutie
Has come here to show her beauty
In some Yankee-manufactured photoplays.
After pleasing dukes and viscounts
And such other titled discounts,
She has come to play to Pennsylvania jays.⁴⁶

1 *Times* 10 February 1912.

2 *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* 10 February 1912.

3 *Western Daily Press* 10 February 1912.

4 *Observer* 11 February 1912.

5 *Field* 10 February 1912.

6 *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 3 March 1913.

7 Melpomene was the Greek Muse of Tragedy. She is depicted in the Capitol building in Washington DC.

8 *Irish Independent* 17 March 1916.

9 Amy Lambert 1938. *The Career of GW Lambert ARA: Thirty Years of an Artist's Life*. Society of Artists, Sydney.

10 *Manchester Guardian* 17 February 1912.

11 *Era* 1 November 1916. Also noted in *Bioscope* 2 November 1916. The bust was No. 258 at the RBA exhibition in 1916.

12 *Colour* October 1918, p59.

13 *Evening Post* 1 January 1919, quoting Frank Rutter in *The Sunday Times* (London) 6 October 1918.

14 Rodney Wilson 1984. *Raymond McIntyre: a New Zealand Painter*. Auckland: Heinmann Publishers, Auckland City Art Gallery. p109.

15 *Press* 29 September 1933.

16 *Tatler* 10 October 1928.

17

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princess_Alexandra_Victoria_of_Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Gl%C3%BCcksburg#cite_note-nyt1-6 retrieved 13 March 2019.

18 *Leeds Mercury* 30 December 1919.

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- 19 *Register* (Adelaide) 19 January 1922.
 - 20 *Evening World* 10 December 1919.
 - 21 *Sydney Morning Herald* 6 August 1920.
 - 22 <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/14068/lot/137/> retrieved 16 April 2019.
 - 23 *New Zealand Times* 21 April 1920.
 - 24 Augustus John 1952. *Chiaroscuro: fragments of autobiography*. Jonathan Cape, London.
 - 25 *Illustrated London News* 5 June 1926.
 - 26 *Observer* 30 May 1926.
 - 27 <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp129677/eve-balfour> retrieved 12 March 2019.
 - 28 Bill Jay 1981. Emil Otto Hoppé 1878-1973, a personal snapshot. <https://web.archive.org/web/20070815222323/http://www.billjaylorphotography.com/EmilOttoHoppe.pdf> retrieved 13 March 2019.
 - 29 <https://alchetron.com/Lady-Eve-Balfour> retrieved 21 March 2019.
 - 30 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topical_Press_Agency retrieved 21 March 2019.
 - 31 *Washington Herald* 22 December 1919.
 - 32 *Pall Mall Gazette* 11 November 1912.
 - 33 *Pall Mall Gazette* 29 May 1912.
 - 34 *Pall Mall Gazette* 29 May 1912
 - 35 Nadel I 2004. *Ezra Pound: a literary life*. Palgrave Macmillan.
 - 36 Moody AD 2007. *Ezra Pound: poet*. OUP.
 - 37 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Graham_\(author\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Graham_(author)) retrieved 29 May 2019.
 - 38 Michael Hughes 2014. *Beyond holy Russia: the life and times of Stephen Graham*. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.
 - 39 *ibid*.
 - 40 *ibid*
 - 41 <https://archives.yale.edu/agents/people/89788> retrieved 19 March 2019.
 - 42 *Pall Mall Gazette* 18 June 1913.
 - 43 *The complete works of Katherine Mansfield*. Amazon Digital Services.
 - 44 Gerri Kimber 2016. *The Edinburgh edition of the collected works of Katherine Mansfield*. Volume
 - 45 *Tatler* 7 July 1915.
 - 46 *West Virginian* 17 January 1920.

Chapter 6: the vamp goes to America

She was seasick crossing the Atlantic, arriving on 19 December 1919...

... on the Baltic, much the worse for a difficult voyage. She registered at the Majestic and immediately went to bed to recover from the strain of the voyage.¹

Miraculously, news footage of her arrival in New York (dated 24 December) has survived in the MIRC-DVR collections of the University of South Carolina and can be seen online at <https://mirc.sc.edu/islandora/object/usc%3A52446>.

Eve and her manager had done sterling work on her publicity.

Miss Eve Balfour, London's distinguished beauty... has quit England for America. She will appear in leading American productions within a short time. British poets have paid homage to Miss Balfour's art and beauty, sculptors like to model her figure, and a portrait of her by August John, the painter whose portrait of Lloyd George was one of the pictures of the Royal Academy, is one of the pleasant things Britishers like to talk about in connection with her career. The most talked of piece of statuary in England is the completion of a sculpture of Miss Balfour by Dora Ohlfson, the Australian sculptor.²

Live Venus Is Coming

They Rave About Her

Beauty, 'N'Everything

Miss Eve Balfour, the Venus of England, who has been a model for painters and sculptors, is coming to America. Her beauty and form have been so much the subjects of art that even poets have paid homage to Miss Balfour.³



The Evening World 10 December 1919.
“Miss Eve Balfour, British Venus, Who Will Quit London For America.”



The Tatler 1 October 1919.

"Miss Eve Balfour is the acknowledged queen of the cinema 'vampires,' and has now, so we hear, been finally captured by the American producers. She is shortly appearing in a big film, the scene of which is laid aboard an Atlantic liner."

She was interviewed by the *New York Tribune* on arrival and her charm offensive is pure genius, even if the truth is not always allowed to obstruct her flow,

**Charmed by Our Women
And Their Recognition,
Eve Balfour Will Stay**

Women are the generals in the U.S.A. so it seems to Eve Balfour, the well known British actress and film star, who arrived in New York last week and who intends to remain here. Nothing has impressed her more than the capacity of American women and the way their men treat them.

“Your men are wonderful,” she said when seen at the Hotel Majestic where she is staying. “They have such a broad, generous outlook on life. And your women are so well dressed and efficient that I don’t wonder they get everything they want. Such freedom! Such independence! Such vitality! But that is New York all the way through. I cannot imagine how an anæmic person could exist in a city of such vitality. Personally, I am magnetised by it and already I love it.

“It was your sky line that first won my heart. In making one of my pictures, ‘The Yellow Hand,’ I sailed across the Atlantic, and we came into port, although we were not allowed to land. You can imagine how tantalising it was. I decided there and then that I would come here to live and make pictures. And here I am!”

The artistic side of motion pictures interests Miss Balfour chiefly. She was an artist by profession and had a studio in Chelsea before she went on the stage. She was born and grew up in New Zealand.

“I suppose it is rather unusual for an artist to become a motion picture actress, but to my mind it is an enormous advantage to bring to your screen work the knowledge of composition and drawing acquired in the

study of art. Pictures are becoming more artistic every day, and the person who has originality and an artistic sense can do much to raise the standard all round. Personally, as I pose for the camera, I always try to visualise the scene and to throw myself into the part. My work on the legitimate stage gave me the habit more or less. I have done a great many emotional roles, and have played with Sir Herbert Tree in 'Macbeth,' 'Twelfth Night,' 'The Taming of the Shrew' and other plays by Shakespeare.

"But I think, even after heavier work on the stage, motion pictures are a wonderful field. They are satisfying and they are a greater power than we realise. There is nothing in its history quite parallel with the way the British public has gone crazy about pictures. It is even more remarkable than here, because, ordinarily, the British do not move so rapidly as do Americans.

"On the legitimate stage in Britain there is an unfortunate tendency toward the risqué play just at present. It is part of the aftermath of war, this laxity of standard. At the same time, I don't think it is necessary. People are always ready to take anything you give them, and if the offering is fine enough they will want more of the same kind."

Miss Balfour finds the machinery of living marvellously oiled on this side of the Atlantic. Americans are almost too comfortable and secure, she believes: a condition which is always subject to upheaval. If she had known how wonderfully women were treated in this country, how free and independent they were, how talented, she would probably have come straight here from New Zealand years ago, she asserted.⁴

The publicity pieces continued,

The theatrical profession has been one of the worst sufferers from influenza. Managers are finding it difficult to keep their theatres running. Among the prominent stage folk who are victims of the epidemic are... Eve Balfour, an English beauty, here to do motion picture work.⁵

With the arrival in this country of Eve Balfour, English actress, rumors have arisen that she will become a Metro star.⁶

Eve Balfour, formerly a member of Sir Herbert Tree's company, recently signed a contract through her manager, Fred Whitney, to act for the screen and spoken drama for a period of five years.⁷

Eve Balfour, the English Theda Bara, is in town to show a little British vamping and it is whispered in the studios that the American gelatine ladies are getting mighty jealous and that there may be a hair-pulling any day. Getting \$5,000 a week for a year and for about 10 weeks actual work is just a bit too soft not to battle over if any interlopers try to break into the charmed circle.⁸

Christchurch's *Star*, bursting with parochial pride, told its readers,

The following reference to a former Christchurch resident is taken from a late American magazine:—"According to advices from London Eve Balfour, England's acknowledged kinema star, whose emotional acting on both the legitimate stage and screen has stirred British audiences for the last several years, is on the steamship Baltic bound for New York. If all the reports of Miss Balfour's beauty, charm of manner and wonderful screen portrayals are correct, her arrival will give producers something to talk about. Miss Balfour adapted herself to screen work after leaving the late Sir

Herbert Tree's company. She had previously been much discussed as England's coming Shakespearean actress. Her playing of the role of Dora in a revival of Sardou's "Diplomacy" was the talk of theatrical circles. Her popularity, which increased with each of her pictures, followed her into the kinema world. Soon with practically no advertising by her producers, she became a sensation on the screen....⁹

A week later,

Eve Balfour, noted New Zealand-British beauty, celebrated kinema star and Shakespearean actress, arrived in New York last week (says the New York "Dramatic Mirror" of January 1). It is said representatives of nearly every big moving picture production firm in the country are anxious to obtain Miss Balfour's name to a contract, as it means that she will be presented in American-made pictures for the British trade alone.¹⁰

Her photograph, prone in a demure bathing suit, was published in the *National Police Gazette*,¹¹ which occupied a similar evolutionary niche in the 1920s to that of *Playboy* in the 1970s.



Even the *El Paso Herald* told its cowboys, "Eve Balfour, an English film beauty, is (at the Hotel Majestic)."¹²

She was photographed by New York photographer Paul Thompson...



Eve Balfour, "Newest Hollywood Vamp"
photograph by Paul Thompson, 1920.

Paul Thompson's photographs were supplied to newspapers, magazines and art publications from his New York agency in the 1910s and 1920s.

Eve's resort, at age 38, to the Madonna image suggests perhaps she wanted to challenge the "vamp" notion, or realising her features were growing coarser with maturity, that a virginal picture might be helpful. It is a powerful photograph. The next pose was not so nunnish...



"Eve Balfour, Venus of England" photograph by Paul Thompson, 1920.

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- 1 *Wid's Daily* 20 December 1919.
 - 2 *Evening World* 10 December 1919.
 - 3 *Washington Herald* 22 December 1919.
 - 4 *New York Tribune* 28 December 1919.
 - 5 *Sun* (New York) 28 January 1920.
 - 6 *Arizona Republican* 26 January 1920.
 - 7 *Evening Star* (Washington) 29 February 1920.
 - 8 *Washington Post* 13 March 1920.
 - 9 *Star* (Christchurch) 21 February 1920.
 - 10 *Star* (Christchurch) 28 February 1920.
 - 11 *National Police Gazette* 8 May 1920.
 - 12 *El Paso Herald* 18 August 1920.

Chapter 7: the evil genius, the woman in black & after



EVE BALFOUR

*To play in a new Fox serial that will be
directed by Edward Sedgwick.*

From *Motion Picture World* 23 October 1920

It was William Fox of Fox pictures who had signed Eve for the rumoured five years. The *Times* told readers in February 1921,

Eve Balfour, the British stage and screen star, is appearing in her first American-made motion picture. She has a big part in the new Fox serial “*Fantomas*” which is based on the score or more detective novels by Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre. Miss Balfour came to this country to widen her experience and Mr Fox, knowing of her work in English pictures engaged her for the important part of “The Woman in Black” in the serial.¹

The *Fantomas* books had been phenomenally successful in France and in English translation. William Fox seized the opportunity to follow his successful *Bride 13* series with a new run in twenty episodes to be directed by Edward Sedgwick.

“One of the good features of the new Fox serial ‘*Fantomas*,’” says Eve Balfour, the English actress who plays a leading role, “is the fact that I do not have to wear too many expensive clothes. My role calls for my dressing as the ‘mysterious woman in black’ throughout most of the serial, and it is quite a saving in these times.”²

Tough times. Was she receiving \$5,000 a week as suggested?

Fantomas was made in Fox’s newly built Manhattan studios at 850 Tenth Ave so Eve would have been staying in New York. The films are now lost but the recent discovery of a press book of *Fantomas* containing photo-stills, plot synopses and press copy, provides some insight. The press book did not list Eve’s credits, but focussed on “her troubled relationship with her parents who had forbid her to go into acting”.³ That is the first we have heard of it: was this another studio invention? was she competing with the Canadian actor Margaret Anglin, “educated at one of the Canadian convents” and “entering the field of drama against the wishes of her family”?⁴



Eve Balfour
IN FOX SERIAL "FANTOMAS"



BRITISH ACTRESS IN FOX SERIAL

Eve Balfour, the British stage and screen actress, who is the “Woman in Black” in the new William Fox serial “Fantomas,” now being shown at the _____ Theatre every _____, took a chance of going hungry to become an actress. Her parents, who lived in Chorley Wood, outside of London, moved to New Zealand, where Miss Balfour was born.

When her parents returned to England on a trip around the world, Eve announced her intention of going on the stage. Both father and mother were against her

choice of career. Father told Eve that if she went on the stage he would cut off her income. But Eve had determination. She went boldly to the theatrical managers. She obtained a job. She progressed. She didn't starve. She didn't need her father's allowance. And much later both father and mother forgave her.

Her name was well known to London and provincial theatre-goers when she was asked to appear in a motion picture. At the time she was appearing in a play called "Dora."

"Why," she replied, "I don't know anything about acting for the pictures. But I suppose I can learn."

She did learn—and she was kept so busy before the camera that she finally had no time to appear on the stage.

She believed she could widen her screen experience by acting in pictures in this country. Soon after her arrival Mr. Fox offered her a contract to appear in the *Fantomas* serial as the "Woman in Black."

Miss Balfour naturally hopes to return to England—with a wealth of knowledge obtained here.

"We want our pictures shown over here," she remarked, "because we believe an exchange of pictures will make us better friends."

That was Eve's piece in the press book. Fox news was fake news even then. Always some truth in it but with exaggerations, misconceptions and alternative facts.



FANTOMAS
WILLIAM FOX PRODUCTION



Eve in a publicity shot for *Fantomas*.



Photo-stills of Eve as “The Woman in Black” in *Fantomas*.



Eve Balfour as "The Woman in Black", in *Fantomas*, 1921.



Eve Balfour as "The Woman in Black", in *Fantomas*, 1921.

Probably Eve got no more acting roles after *Fantomas*, for we read,

Miss Balfour Coming to America to Produce

Eve Balfour, noted as Great Britain's most beautiful actress, who is also England's only woman motion picture producer, intends to transfer her activities to America. Miss Balfour is now in New York, looking up talent, buying scenarios and completing arrangements to buy or lease a suitable plant. She has been offered three different studios in this vicinity but before deciding Miss Balfour will visit Chicago for the purpose of inspecting the Essanay studios which are said to be on the market.

One of the first features to be produced by the Eve Balfour Film Company here will be "Jaloux," founded on the novel of the same name by Prince Antoine Bibesco, the Rumanian Minister at Washington.

Miss Balfour has been a stage and screen favourite abroad for the last eight years. She started as a member of Sir Herbert Tree's company at his Majesty's theater, after which she starred in "Diplomacy" for a season. Since then she has played many important Shakespearean roles at the principal London theaters, and she has also appeared in over fifty feature pictures.⁵

Fifty?! fifteen really. Many Shakespearian roles? well, a few. This was in 1921, by which time the Chicago Essanay studios which had produced Charlie Chaplin films in 1915) no longer existed. *Le Jaloux* is actually a play (not a novel) by Bibesco, who was not the Romanian Minister (Romania had no diplomatic relationship with the USA) but was a friend of Marcel Proust and other writers, artists and the nobility. Proust wrote (obscurely, as he would) of the play,

The tide of expectation which has for some time been ebbing and flowing round *Jaloux* is, after all, a trivial and unimportant matter. What really counts is that the piece

itself is a psychological comedy in the tradition of the 18th century “Comedy of Manners”. It is marked throughout by a subtlety of observation, a controlled discipline of presentation, and a limpidity of style—things which, in themselves, are wholly delightful. That is no small achievement, but it by no means exhausts the play’s excellencies. For suddenly—as the result of some Cartesian miracle—the intricately constructed machine becomes a thinking mind, infinitely, painfully, loving and human, full of echoes from the past, from the present, and from all eternity.⁶

Le Jaloux had been produced on stage in Paris, most recently in 1916, but never in English. Bibesco was very good looking and a celebrated womaniser, noting (to himself, one might hope), as he looked around the room at one party, that every woman there had been his mistress. He was married in 1919 to Elizabeth Asquith, the Prime Minister’s daughter, who was painted by Augustus John in the same white lace mantilla Eve wore in John’s 1926 portrait—it is said to have been given to her father by the Queen of Portugal. By all accounts marriage didn’t curb Bibesco’s appetite nor alter his behaviour.

There is no record of a film of *Le Jaloux*, nor of any other film produced in America by the Eve Balfour Film Company. That Eve was able to make such a claim in the media suggests, at least, that her contract with Fox had lapsed by 1921.

The New York photographer Arnold Genthe photographed her in 1921—publicity shots in see-through gear and stagey poses—perhaps for her theatre portfolio. (Genthe also photographed Augustus John).

From 1919 the Canadian actor Margaret Anglin toured the United States in the lead role of the play *Woman of bronze*. For a time in 1922—in Madison⁷ and in Rock Island⁸ Illinois—Eve played the role of seductive artist’s model in that play. The

Madison Capital Times of 2 October 1922 wrote effusively of Ms Anglin's acting, but "Less convincing was the work of Eve Balfour in the role of Sylvia Morton. Only at the climax where she confesses her motherhood did she achieve an emotional realism worthy of her part."

In November 1922 several US papers carried a piece headed "What Science Says About 'Good Luck' Charms: Is the Feminine Craze for Mascots a Reversion to Totem Worship?" it had a photograph of a younger Eve (by EO Hoppé) with the caption, "Miss Eve Balfour, English Society Beauty, Believes in Mascots."⁹





Eve Balfour by New York photographer Arnold Genthe, 1921

Eve Balfour's name disappears from the American newspapers after 1922, until her reappearance in 1925 on Broadway.

There is a family record that Eve had another baby while she was in the United States, but that the child was either stillborn or died in infancy. This would have been a profound object loss for Eve and may at least partly explain her "absence" after 1922 (when she was 40), after which she took no major roles, attracted no critical comment, lost her star standing in the media and appears to have been troubled by illness.

The Province-town Players revived the 17th century William Congreve comedy *Love for Love* at Greenwich Village Theatre and it ran 31 March to May 1925, directed by Robert Edmond Jones, Eugene O'Neill and Eve's husband Stanley Howlett. Eve, as "Eva Balfour" was given the minor role of "Mrs. Foresight". There were 47 performances, after which the play moved to Daly's 63rd Street Theatre for a further 16 performances in September.

Winnepeg's *Free Press* was elated,

That a two-hundred-and-thirty-year-old play, by a dramatist unknown to any but bookworms, scholars and double-distilled theatre enthusiasts, should have scored a big financial success in New York is a fact being recounted on Broadway in tones of awe and wonder. "Love For Love" is the miracle play and William Congreve the author.¹⁰



Noel Tearle and Eve Balfour in "Love for Love"



In "Love for Love"

Eve was sketched by Eugene Camille Fitsch, who spent a lot of time among performers and created many images of some of the great actors of the time.



"Love for love" 1925 by Eugene Camille Fitsch.

Next came *The Half Naked Truth* which opened on 6 July 1926 at the Mayfair in New York. Eve played Clarice Van Doren. The hero (Charlie)'s wife Mamie suspects he is having an affair with the vamp Clarice, but it turns out Charlie has been acting only as a model for Clarice who is a sculptor. The *New York Times* reviewer, J Brooks Atkinson, was delighted—but not with the play.

Toward the end of the second act of “The Half-Naked Truth,” at the Mayfair, last evening, while the hero and heroine were exchanging bitter, bitter words, a gray cat walked amiably across the stage, peeped curiously over the footlights, and then sat down comfortably, yawned a little, blinked sleepily, and apparently settled for the night. Behind him the stormy passions of crossed lovers blew violently and threatened to upset the quiet of the evening for some time to come. Something about the cat's apathy and contentment seemed to rebuke this drama of domesticities—nay, rebuked all the dissension in this entire turbulent universe, and damned author, actors and audience as irritants, as disturbers of the piece, out of tune with simple reality. As the act came to a close and the choleric hero went out, broken-hearted, into the night, the curtain began to come down. And as the fateful tapestry descended, the cat's confidence in a tranquil future suddenly became, like the drama, pure illusion. For a moment or two he was obviously terrified: his eyes flashed alarm. But just before the curtain reached the stage he stepped gracefully to the rear and waited, still somewhat perplexed, to take his call with the more feverish actors....

What drama could vie with the reality of a cat? Or what actor could put a cat to shame? Well, only one equally feline: and there was none of that kidney in the Mayfair last evening....

Unfortunately the play... was amateurish in every respect.¹¹

It continued, however, for over four weeks¹² but it was the end of Eve's Broadway and American acting career.

The Princess Alexandra Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein, then painting portraits in New York, painted Eve, probably in 1926. I can find no trace of the portrait.

The British press carried the odd rumour about her. In February 1926 *Variety* told its readers,

Chadwick Productions have selected Reeves Eason to make "Sunshine of Paradise Alley," a Denman Thompson story. George Walsh and Eve Balfour are to be featured. The picture will be made in London.¹³

In April the *Bystander* published an old photograph of a youthful Eve with the legend,

Miss Eve Balfour. The English film actress who is coming to London to play the leading part in "Sunshine of Paradise Alley." From this fact it would appear that there is a British film industry after all.¹⁴

Well, perhaps not: *Sunshine of Paradise Alley* was not made in England: it was a 1926 American film with a large cast (which did include the New Zealander Tui Bow¹⁵ but not Eve Balfour) and was released in Britain in 1928. It was directed for Chadwick Pictures by Jack Nelson—not by Reeves ("Breezy") Eason, whose dangerous direction of the 1936 film *Charge of the Light Brigade* would outrage Hollywood and the public by maiming or killing many horses.

In January 1928, on the other hand, the British *Bioscope* told its readers, "Eve Balfour, formerly well known on the screen in England, is in Hollywood. It is understood she is now writing scenarios."¹⁶

There are a number of items relating to this period among her papers in her family's possession.

A scenario by Eve Balfour, *The Island of Souls*, was registered with the Authors' League of America. It may have been an adaptation of Maryon Urquhart's *The Island of Souls* (1910) which has been described as "A fully developed Edwardian novel about high magic in contemporary England, and the struggle between forces of good and evil for the soul of a young girl." That sounds like Eve.

Synopses registered include *Lawless Law* by Satenby (?) Williams & Eve Balfour—referring perhaps to the widely publicised propensity for prosecutors and judges to break the law when dealing with suspects.¹⁷

Williams and Balfour also registered a synopsis of *The Philanderers* in 1927—perhaps from Major AEW Mason's 1897 novel of that name. (Captain Stephen Drake steps ashore in Plymouth and is immediately confronted by a reporter wanting his comments on an attack made on him by the editor of the 'Evening Meteor'. Of course, the African expedition had been a disaster, but Drake was ready to take responsibility. He telegraphed a survivor so as to set up a meeting, and bought a copy of 'A Man of Influence'. Did he recognise himself in those pages? The battle with 'The Meteor' continues and only intensifies when Drake is elected to Parliament, but intrigue and some smart manoeuvring by others may just win the day).

Mrs Eve Balfour Howlett became a Life Member of the International Benjamin Franklin Society in 1929—presumably after a substantial donation.

She stayed at the Alexandria Hotel in Los Angeles in 1931. The Alexandria opened in 1906 in downtown LA, and at that time was the city's most elegant hotel. Celebrities and dignitaries including Theodore Roosevelt, Edward VIII, Winston

Churchill, Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and Rudolph Valentino stayed there.¹⁸

The last record of Eve in the United States is a rather sad letter dated 26 January 1932 on the letterhead of Robert Z. Leonard, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, Culver City to Miss Eva Balfour in Room 514 at the Manx Hotel in San Francisco,

My dear Miss Balfour

Please accept my sincere apology for not replying before this to your letters. Mr. Leonard delayed communicating with you on the chance that something might turn up for you in his present picture. But, as it has been rewritten, there is absolutely nothing in it for you. However, he has played your record and thinks your voice has very good quality for 'Talkies'.

I hope the delay has not caused you any inconvenience, and sincerely wish you the best of luck.

P.S. As you requested, I am returning your record and photographs under separate cover

It is signed by Elise Miles, secretary to Robert Zigler Leonard who was an American film director, actor, producer, and screenwriter. In 1932 he would have been working on *Dancing Lady*, released in 1933, a musical starring Joan Crawford and Clark Gable and featuring Franchot Tone, Fred Astaire, Robert Benchley, and Ted Healy and His Stooges (who later became the Three Stooges).¹⁹ It would have been quite a coup for Eve.

Also among Eve's papers is a business/visiting card reading "Miss Eve Balfour. Sphinx Films." There have been a number of companies of that name, but perhaps most likely is that of

Indian film actor and director Sheikh Iftekhar Rasool (he starred in *Scheherazade* and was tagged “the Rudolph Valentino of the East”) who set up Sphinx Films in the early 1930s in order to produce a film inspired by Thomas Moore’s poem on a Mughal princess called *Lalla Rookh*, which was started in England. It has been lost.

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- 1 *Times* 10 February 1921.
 - 2 *Bridgeport Times* 16 December 1920.
 - 3 David White 2013. *Fantomas 1921 – A Tale of a Lost American Movie Serial*. *Belphégor* 11–1.
<https://journals.openedition.org/belphegor/194?lang=en> retrieved 1 April 2019.
 - 4 *Philadelphia Inquirer* 19 October 1919.
 - 5 *New York Tribune* 18 September 1921.
 - 6 Letters of Marcel Proust to Antoine Bibesco.
https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.187065/2015.187065.Lettres-Of-Marcel-Proust_djvu.txt retrieved 31 March 2019.
 - 7 *Madison Capital Times* 2 October 1922.
 - 8 *Rock Island Argus and Daily Union* 17 October 1922.
 - 9 eg, *Syracuse Herald* 12 November 1922.
 - 10 *Winnipeg Free Press* 30 May 1925.
 - 11 J Brooks Atkinson, *New York Times* 8 June 1926.
 - 12 Gerald Bordman 1995. *American theatre: a chronicle of comedy and drama 1914–1930*. OUP.
 - 13 *Variety* February 1926.
 - 14 *Bystander* 14 April 1926.
 - 15 Tui Bow aka Tui Porrairie 1906–1993, born in Hawera as Mary Lorraine Tui, was known for “Sunshine of Paradise Alley” (1926) and later “The Irishman” (1978) and “Frenchman’s Farm” (1987). She married Robert Bow. She died in Brisbane.
 - 16 *Bioscope* 26 January 1928.
 - 17 Harvard Law Review Association 1920. Lawless Enforcement of Law. *Harvard Law Review* 33 (7 (May): 956–960.
 - 18 <https://coffeighwithkelleigh.com/alexandria-hotel-los-angeles-old-lady-interesting-past/> retrieved 29 May 2019.
 - 19 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dancing_Lady retrieved 29 May 2019.

Chapter 8: the reincarnation of an Egyptian princess

In 1917 Eve told a celebrity columnist writing about “Hobbies of ‘Movie’ Stars”, “I am an enthusiastic student of Egyptology and the religions and mysticism of the East”.¹ She had, after all, played an Egyptian maiden in *False gods* in 1911, played Cleopatra in *After Actium*, recited poems from Ezra Pound’s *Love poems of ancient Egypt* in 1912 and played a slave in *Paphnutius* in 1914.

Mysticism has long been a refuge for celebrities and Eve was one of them. The Beatles and Madonna were not the first.

The American silent movie actor Theda Bara, the first Hollywood sex symbol, had been encouraged by Fox Studios to be mystical. She was promoted as exotic and mysterious, billed as the Egyptian-born daughter of a French actress and an Italian sculptor, who had spent her early years in the Sahara Desert, then moved to France to become a stage actress. They called her the Serpent of the Nile and encouraged her to discuss mysticism and the occult in interviews. Actually she had been to neither Egypt nor France.

Eve seems either to have mimicked Theda Bara’s public *persona* or to have been under similar instructions from Fox—the *Washington Herald* even called her “the English Theda Bara”.² Augustus John had remarked that she used to allude constantly to her “vibrations”, hinting at remarkable psychic powers.

Nebraska’s *Lincoln Evening State Journal* of 3 January 1920 discussed Eve’s supposed mystic powers in a whole page of charmingly fatuous and muddled drivel.

Page from Nebraska's *Lincoln Evening State Journal* 3 January 1920.

Vamping the Briton at His 5 o’Clock Tea

How Eve Balfour, Said to Be Reincarnation of an Egyptian Princess, Has Aroused British Psychics with Her Interpretations—England Revelling in Psychic Phenomena as Result of War

England has discovered a new interpreter of psychic messages from the hidden world.

She is Miss Eve Balfour, noted beauty, who possesses the mystic power of divination.

The wave of psychic experiment which is sweeping England is making itself felt on this side of the Atlantic. The foremost scientists of the times are intent upon investigation of the psychic realm and the writers most capable of interpreting the trend of popular thought in this post-war period have abandoned fiction and concentrated on the production of treatises dealing with the mysterious world that exists beyond the reaches of mortal experience.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was one of the first British writers to present his beliefs in regard to the astral plane where dwell the hidden forces, the disembodied souls. Sir Oliver Lodge’s experiments are famous throughout England and the world: while Basil King, our first American writer to follow close upon the heels of his distinguished contemporaries with a series of articles based on deductions formed from experiments with the psychic world, is read with equal appreciation in the British Isles.

“All England is awake to the study, the possible influences of the psychic. I believe it will be the big force in the future,” Miss Balfour is quoted as saying.

The London beauty is said to be a remarkable study for scientists who are seeking to penetrate the mysteries of life after death, due, no doubt, to the premature flight of millions of souls on the battlefield during the war. She

possesses the power of psychic sight and is able to “read from a ring”; that is, a ring placed into her hand and her palm closed upon it, will reveal to her its history and messages from its departed owners.

When it was discovered that she possessed this amazing talent, she was besieged by all of London to read from salvaged rings the tragic episodes of the battlefields of France, for ever hidden from mortal consciousness.

The story of how Eve Balfour comes to possess the gift which attracts London’s psychic circle is as romantic as one of the cinema dramas in which the noted beauty has lately appeared.

It begins in the shadow of the pyramids of old Egypt and its latest chapter may be revealed in the shade of the Woolworth building in modern New York, if rumours of the lovely psychist’s impending visit to America are correct.

Several thousand years ago, according to the story, the moon that shone down upon the Sphinx and silvered the Nile, where Cleopatra used to jitney in a Royal barge, witnessed the passing of an Egyptian princess, divinely fair and a noteworthy rival to Cleo, Queen of vampires.

Whether she perished from some subtle Oriental poison cleverly administered by the swarthy queen as a punishment for flirting with Marc Anthony, romance does not record.

But today her reincarnated spirit, according to English scientists, dwells in the lovely body of Eve Balfour. Her second incarnation was accomplished in New Zealand, but the love of mystery and mysticism, the eternal enigma of the Sphinx, surrounds her.

But whatever country claims her birthplace, she bears the stamp of Oriental charm. Her hair is black and short-cut, after the manner of the figure in Egyptian word

pictures, according to report; as one appreciative chronicler describes her: "her black hair riots thunderously about her pale olive face and there are mysterious lights in her great dark eyes." Her beauty is of a peculiar insinuating type, coupled with compelling charm.

Quite as tall and lithe as Egypt's famous queen, with that indefinable magnetism that marks the superwoman of the ages, Miss Balfour claims the right to be hailed as one of the most remarkable women of present-day England. Like most beautiful women of this era, she became so accustomed to being photographed (just as did Lady Diana Manners, now Mrs Alfred Duff-Cooper, who sold her photographs to swell the war relief funds), that she posed before the camera and immediately sprang to fame as England's foremost screen artist.

Incidentally, being a movie star is quite a popular pastime with the smart women of the British Isles. Only a few weeks ago it became known that "Poppy" Wyndham, a recent discovery in the cinema world, was none other than the Honorable Elsie Mackay, a London society girl and daughter of Lord Inchcape, one of Britain's most famous peers.

Returning to Miss Balfour and her romantic history, it is said that aside from her interest to scientists she is an irresistible screen vampire: when to the possession of beauty and fascination, psychic power is added, the combination might well be stupendous.

She visited this country early last summer, incognito. A film, dealing with international intrigue, was being screened and necessitated a trip across the Atlantic. England's queen of vampires was the heroine of the piece. Though few knew that she was here, as almost complete seclusion marked her royal sojourn, it is whispered in authoritative circles that American

producers were not long in seeking her out and making her such flattering offers that the British cinema star may soon return to grace the American screen.

Should she decide to cast her lot with her cousins across the Atlantic, she will undoubtedly bring with her a new vogue for the Occult.

Miss Balfour has already yielded herself to psychic experiment on numberless occasions. The mystic power which she brings from her Egyptian incarnation enables her to penetrate the hidden world with the gift of divination. London has gone quite mad over the mysterious beauty, and the pleas of psychists for demonstrations of her peculiar gift almost equal the demands of the British public for her "vamp" roles.

Only Americans who have witnessed a movie performance in the British Isles can appreciate the genius which is required to win approbation from an English audience. In the first place there are so many details to be attended to, before a London "fan" can give himself up to the enjoyment of a reel. In its pleasure, as in its commercial relations, the British public is always formal.

In London one doesn't leave the dinner dishes in the sink and run around the corner to a dark little theatre that is a cross between a portable garage and a section of the subway. One attends a "cinema" performance with formal dignity and one wears one's best frock, for the foremost movie theatre of London is Hammerstein's Opera House. As an opera house it was not a signal success, built, as it may be recalled, to rival Covent Garden. But it is a mammoth structure, impressively fitted out and dwarfing any of our American playhouses where the spoken drama is still presented.

There, in luxuriously upholstered seats, placed sufficiently far apart to protect his corns against the

ruthless feet of a drifting “movie” audience, the Londoner waits leisurely for the flash on the screen which announces: “‘Five Nights,’ starring Miss Eve Balfour.” Then he settles himself to a formal and dignified enjoyment of the daring Victoria Cross story which was the English vampire’s first play and created a furore in London, presenting as it did, the thrilling combination of stampedes, magistrates, courts, and police interference.

The London lass is without the solace of the “gum” on which her American cousin registers her emotion during the heroine’s most hairbreadth escapes from the evil machinations of the villain. But she has other recourse.

Spent and weary with the mental pace which has followed the lovely vampire over cliffs and under railroad trains: through the secret sessions of diplomacy and before a mistaken firing squad against the castle wall at daybreak, she signals an usherette with two upraised fingers, which is the British equivalent for “Tea, please.”

Very shortly she is provided with a dainty tray outfitted with a pot of orange pekoe, thin slices of bread and butter, and a frosted tea cake. There are cigarettes, also, for those who wish them, and it is quite *de rigueur* for both men and women to smoke throughout the course of the film.

American artists have penetrated the British screen with large success. Pauline Frederick, Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin are all favourites with the English cinema audiences; but like Abbou Ben Adam, Eve Balfour’s name leads all the rest, among the British screen fans.

Processing psychic power is strenuous business in these days of advanced experiment. Incessant demands are made upon Miss Balfour’s mind and strength, by

psychists who claim to see a mysterious light upon her head and the mystic shade of an Egyptian by her side. Now that the aura has been accepted as a scientific fact, it makes life much more complicated.

Only recently the police of London succeeded in routing a band of pseudo-psychists who dealt in black magic. They used individuals with psychic power to hypnotise helpless victims, often without the gifted one realising that he was furthering a nefarious scheme. This circle made every effort to secure the mystic talent of Eve Balfour, but without success.

However, its almost established position in the solid structure of British favor is demonstration of the tremendous hold that occult phenomena has gained upon a stolid and not-easily-influenced public. While Berlin is pleasure-mad, London is spirit-mad. Its reaction to the four terrible years of war has not been material, but strangely spiritual. It is the groping of a nation who has lost the flower of its youth to establish communication with the hidden world.

America also has become affected by the mystic influence and scientists predict a universal wave of desire to explore the realms of superconsciousness, adding a warning against reckless indulgence in this experiment. Even astrologists see the dangers arising from seeking knowledge concerning life after death, predicting that many minds will become affected by attempting to pierce the wall guarding the future.

The strain of divination is intense, according to Miss Balfour, who adds:

“I do not like to use the power for trivial things, such as reading from rings. I believe we weaken it by forcing vision.”

Ye gods, where would a critic start? she can't have been serious. The *Salt Lake Telegram's* “Of Interest to Women”

columnist had this to say of “the strikingly statuesque Eve Balfour,”

As to the component parts of the British star’s beauty, they may be tabulated as follows: tall, lithe, slender, flaming cheeks, olive skin tints, wide, full scarlet mouth, riotous cloud of black hair cut artist fashion, eyes dark with mystery, or flashing with intelligence as their owner broods silently or bursts impetuously into a shower of conversation.

It is the Balfour eyes that must win for their owner the place of high cinema honor she enjoys in her own country. They are unlike any eyes we have seen. Theda Bara’s are light in comparison. Etsie Ferguson’s are not so rich in expression. The eyes of Giara Kimball Young and Pauline Frederick are each, in their way, as fascinating, but they are different both in color and expression. They are the eyes of the mystic, of a student of the occult sciences, as indeed Miss Balfour has been for some time.

“I have always been interested in the psychic,” she explained when I asked her about her allusions to thought reading. “I am not really English you know: I was born in New Zealand, in South island, the furthest point of the Antipodes. It is a wild, remote country. As a child I was very much alone. I spent most of my time out of doors. Being shut so much within myself I began to develop psychically, to get impressions, to become a kind of sounding board for thought waves.

“This ability fascinated me. I continued to develop it after I left home and went out into the world. I found it not only amusing but decidedly helpful.

“There is nothing mysterious about the psychic faculty. We all possess it. Some of us allow it to atrophy and die. A thought is a thing, like a spoken word or a note of music. Our minds are phonographs, equipped

with an endless supply of records. When a thought from without strikes an impression, all we must do is to set our minds in action, start the phonograph, and the records will give off the thoughts. The needle is our own souls. The more sensitive our souls the plainer we echo thought waves.

“The worst vampire in the world is the mental vampire. There are persons who steal our brains, who mulct us of our ability to disseminate thoughts until we are mentally a lump of putty which can neither receive correct impressions nor give them.

“It is possible to wish undesirable ones out of our life. It is possible to keep things out and things in your life—
PROVIDED THE WISH IS FOR YOUR GOOD.

“There is absolutely no power in evil. The things we get through the power of evil either destroy us or depart from us. It would be folly to wish for another woman’s husband, much as one might imagine one loved that husband. The wish is of itself, evil. Yet I am firmly convinced that a man and a woman who are made for each other, who are the complement of each other, neither of whom can find happiness without the other, will eventually be together. The consummation of such love is brought about in the most weird and unbelievable ways. Some call it destiny. It is just another link to the eternal chain which binds us to infinity.

“Think. Take a certain period of each day in which to be alone with your thoughts. In this way you will develop your psychic self. You will find yourself able to anticipate the thoughts and actions of others. You will read their minds, get beneath the polite surface and look at their real, unadorned selves. And you will find this ability better than a pair of seven-league boots to carry you to your ultimate goal.

“Let me have the ring you are wearing a moment,” said Miss Balfour. I handed it to her. She held it in the palm of her hand and gazed off into space.

“You are very happy,” she murmured. “Much good fortune has come to you lately. I can feel the rays of happiness radiating from your ring. They reach out into the future, a long, long distance.”

My chapeau is doffed to you, Miss Balfour. It was either a lucky guess or a fine demonstration of psychic communication.

You will need both to shine as brilliantly as our American stars of the first strata.³

A man named Royal Dixon, “Expert in Femininity and Flowers” and recently celebrated as a pioneer in the Texas LGBTQ community, wrote a full page article for the *Atlanta Constitution* magazine (and reprinted elsewhere) headed “Which Flower are You?” in which he asserted “Every woman represents some type of flower or plant.” Eve was a trumpet,

Miss Eva Balfour, the beautiful English actress, represents the red trumpet vine. Let this not be misunderstood for many will think only of the poisonous qualities of this plant. Yet Miss Balfour is not poisonous, but is the essence of life itself. She overflows with a rhythmical spontaneity of will and emotionalism. Only as the red trumpet vine allows its exquisite blossoms to perfume the atmosphere by swaying and dancing in the wind, so does Miss Balfour give to the world of herself and her art by the charm of her graceful, trumpet-like body.⁴

Er, trumpet-like body? imaginative stuff.



1 *Cobram Courier* (Vic.) 6 December 1917.

2 *Washington Herald* 13 March 1920.

3 *Salt Lake Telegram* 12 January 1920.

4 *Sunday Telegram* (Clarksburg, W.Va.) 30 April 1916.

Chapter 9: Arthur Stanley Howlett

In May 1911 Lawson Balfour returned alone to Christchurch. Eve's daughter Yvette Howlett was born in March 1913 and christened in August of that year when her parents were given as Stanley and Eva (Eve) Howlett.

In *Poudre d'Amour* in January 1914,¹ "the principal parts were sustained by Miss Eve Balfour and Mr. Stanley Howlett, who are of the younger generation".²

Later in 1914 *Diplomacy* went on tour, to Liverpool,³ Dublin,⁴ Belfast and elsewhere. Stanley Howlett was "wholly admirable... (with) superb elocution" and Eva Balfour was "a finished actress with a fine range of abilities".⁵ His portrayal "was admirable in its dignity and pathos" and she "acquitted herself with conspicuous ability".⁶

They would marry in 1918. Eve declared on the marriage licence that she was a widow, but Lawson Balfour was alive and well in Australia and they had never divorced.

Arthur Stanley Howlett was born in Hull, Yorkshire on 18 June 1886, the son of Edmund Henry Howlett, a surgeon born in India, and his wife Amy Lavinia Hutchins (or Hutchinson). He died in 1930 and Amy died in 1935.

Stanley is first mentioned in theatrical news columns in 1910 when he played Rosencrantz in a revival of *Hamlet* at the Queen's Theatre.⁷ He related his stage career to the *New York Herald* in 1921,

Stanley Howlett Tells of His Stage Career

Stanley Howlett, who made his American debut as *George Lucas* in Clare Kummer's comedy, "Rollo's Wild Oats," at the Punch and Judy Theatre, began his

career in London as a pupil with F. R. Benson (now Sir Frank) when he was nineteen.

"I well remember my first appearance on stage," said Mr. Howlett. "Just from college, I joined the company at Scarborough. The play was 'The Merchant of Venice.' I had a magnificent make-up box with many contrivances and filled with an array of grease paints which I was least likely to use. I put on a make-up which I proudly imagined resembled that of a Venetian peasant, but which looked more like an African sunset.

"In brief, there followed plays of hard work and good fellowship. I stayed with Sir Frank for four years, working my way up by hard knocks to the dizzy heights of second juvenile and a motley of other parts. It was all grist to our mill.

"Leaving Sir Frank Benson I was lucky enough to join H. B. Irving, whose company numbered some of the old guard who had served under Sir Henry, Frank Tyars, Charles Dodsworth and Tom Reynolds. Our repertoire was as varied as it was interesting— 'Hamlet,' 'Lyons Mall,' 'Louis XI,' 'The Bells,' 'Charles I.' Mr Irving was a great teacher, a very vivid lovable personality to those who understood him. From him I learned a very great deal, for he demanded the best of his people. I played *Horatio* to his *Hamlet* and understudied him, and his *Hamlet* was indeed a very beautiful conception of the role. I journeyed with him to the Antipodes where we played for a year.

"Severing my connection with him I went to Sir Herbert Tree.

"From there I went on tour, playing *Count Orloff* in 'Diplomacy.' Then I rejoined Sir Frank Benson for a space, playing those parts with him which I had envied others in my younger days.

“Then followed a brief but pleasurable excursion into musical comedy in which I played *Lucifer D Nation* in ‘Lady Trayle’ on tour, a very fine part and one of the few, if not only, straight dramatic parts that have been written into a musical piece.

“Then the war, in which I served without distinction but some success in the Royal Naval Air Service. Toward the end of service I became *O.C. Grease Paint* for our camp and produced many shows. After the Armistice I was engaged by Miss Doris Keane and her husband Basil Sydney for ‘Romeo and Juliet.’

“When this finished I joined the Henry Boynton company, playing Shakespeare all over England.”⁸

The “journey to the Antipodes” with HB Irving began in Australia in June 1911; in January 1912 the company played *Hamlet* at His Majesty’s in Auckland, with Howlett as Horatio.⁹ Next he played in *Louis XI*: “The part of the Dauphin was taken by Mr. Stanley Howlett. It was well acted....”¹⁰ They played one performance of *Hamlet* in New Plymouth,¹¹ Wanganui¹² and Palmerston North,¹³ returning to Auckland for *The Lyons Mail* before going on to Wellington,¹⁴ Dunedin¹⁵ (“Mr Stanley Howlett secured applause for his sincere acting” in *The Bells*¹⁶) and Christchurch,¹⁷ where the HB Irving Dramatic Company played cricket against a local team¹⁸ before leaving on the *Moana* for a two weeks’ season in Sydney and thence back to England. The New Zealand tour had been hugely successful.

Howlett was in the Royal Navy from 1917 and moved to the RAF in 1918. The Howletts’ address was 23 Radcliffe Road, South Kensington. Howlett worked in the United States 1921–1928 (many plays on Broadway) then returned to the English stage.



Stanley Howlett and Eleanor Woodruff in *Back to Methuselah*, 1923.

In 1923 he was working with the Provincetown Players and appeared at the Garrick Theatre in New York as the Rev. William Haslam in GB Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*; Eleanor Woodruff was Savvy Barnabas, his sweetheart.

He was in *Peer Gynt* at the Garrick in New York, also in 1923; in 1924 Strindberg's *The Spook Sonata* and later Anna Cora Mowatt's *Fashion*.

In 1925 he shared the direction and acted in Congreve's *Love for Love*, with Eve in a minor role, then *Morals* at the Comedy Theatre.

Back in England he worked, largely in Shakespearean roles with the Bensonian Company, in increasingly venerable parts and alongside increasingly famous actors (he was with Sean Connery in *South Pacific* in 1954).¹⁹

He died in Ware in 1959, four years after Eve; his executor was Yvette Panthea Baily. The *Stage* carried a very brief obituary,

Stanley Howlett, the Shakespearean actor, has died at Ware, Herts, aged 74. Formerly a member of Sir Frank Benson's company, he played many leading roles at the Shakespeare Memorial, Stratford-upon-Avon.²⁰

1 *Pall Mall Gazette* 23 January 1914.

2 *Western Morning News* 16 February 1914.

3 *Liverpool Daily Post* 2 October 1914.

4 *Dublin Daily Express* 11 August 1914.

5 *Northern Whig* 20 October 1914.

6 *Belfast News-Letter* 20 October 1914.

7 *Era* 7 May 1910.

8 *NY Herald* 24 April 1921.

9 *Auckland Star* 23 December 1911.

10 *New Zealand Herald* 15 January 1912.

11 *Taranaki Daily News* 16 January 1912.

12 *Wanganui Chronicle* 18 January 1912.

13 *Manawatu Standard* 19 January 1912.

14 *Dominion* 22 January 1912.

15 *Otago Daily Times* 19 February 1912.

16 *Evening Star* 27 February 1912.

17 *Press* 22 February 1912.

18 *Lyttelton Times* 12 March 1912.

19 A full list of the 219 plays Stanley Howlett appeared in can be seen at <https://theatricalia.com/person/sm/stanley-howlett/past>.

20 *Stage* 5 March 1959.

SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

APRIL 15th to SEPTEMBER 14th, 1935

Under the Direction of S. IDEN PAYNE

PERFORMANCES BY

The Stratford-upon-Avon Festival Company

Authorised Representative of the Secretary of the National Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

The Stratford-upon-Avon Festival Company consists:

RANDLE AYTON
HENRY BURKE
ROY EFFORD
ALAN CRADWICK
ROY EMERTON
HARRISON EVANS
C. RIVERS GADSBY
GEORGE GALLEON
ERNEST HARE
STANLEY HOWLETT
GEORGE IVOR
BASIL LARSON
ERIC NALON
PHILIP ROBERT
NEIL PORTER

RAYMOND BAUER
DENNIS ROBERTS
GERALD RAY DOOPER
KENNETH WICKSTEED
HILARY WINTNER
NORMAN WOODLAND
MARGARET FIELD-HYDE
BARBARA GOTT
SUSALIND IDEN
RODMUND JOHN
CATHERINE LACEY
RODMUND MEDFORD
JEAN SHEPARD
GWYNETH WHITEY

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Chapter 10: creative Eve

Eve Balfour also tried her hand at painting, sculpture, short stories, verse, film scenarios and synopses.

She painted and exhibited in Christchurch in 1905. “Mrs Lawson Balfour” was listed among the working members of the Canterbury Art Society and in the exhibition catalogue for that year are three works by “E. Balfour”— “Wasp,” “Evenglow” and “On the beach”.¹ She remained a working member until 1908 but did not exhibit her work there again. There is a record of E. Balfour exhibiting at the Auckland Society of Arts in 1905, an oil called “Wasp” of which the *Herald* reported,

“Wasp,” a study of a fox terrier’s head, by Miss E. Balfour, is a praiseworthy piece of work.²

It sold for four guineas.³ Lawson Balfour exhibited two paintings at Auckland in the same year, and his father three, none of which sold.⁴

She told the *New York Tribune* in 1919 that she was an artist by profession and had a studio in Chelsea before she went on the stage.

“I suppose it is rather unusual for an artist to become a motion picture actress, but to my mind it is an enormous advantage to bring to your screen work the knowledge of composition and drawing acquired in the study of art. Pictures are becoming more artistic every day, and the person who has originality and an artistic sense can do much to raise the standard all round.”

In the England and Wales Register for 1939 she gave her occupation in Stratford-on-Avon as “artist,”⁵ an ambiguous term that may or may not indicate she had returned to painting. The family has a satyr-like wood head sculpted by Eve.



In the round: Eve Balfour's rather tense and androgynous painted wood sculpture, from her grandson's collection: date unknown.

There is an undated poem “BY EVE BALFOUR” among her papers,

My dormant mind imprisoned cannot gauge the tide of
 Life’s true ebb and flow.
 I am pained
 At the world of little men who cannot grow.
 Where can I find a door out of the darkness
 Of their twisted laughter?
 “Fall in line” — that is the rebuke!
 What can you care or know what comes after?
 Measure your steps with other steps before
 Re-act to life — there is no other door!
 I know a door within *myself* I said.

I emailed this to my daughter who responded, “Oh wow—so she felt the pressures to conform to the life of the starlet? To be the pretty face who doesn't ask questions and goes along with what the men around her—the studio, her agent? —want from her. So Marilyn. So sad!”

There is also a short story (or two), published in *The World Magazine* (a supplement to the Pulitzer-owned *New York World* newspaper) on 10 April 1921,⁶

Two “Different” Stories

As a Famous Film Beauty Tells Them in Her
 Unique Volume of “Half Lengths.”

By Eve Hulston Balfour.

MISS EVE BALFOUR is better known to the public—especially the film-going public—as a “vamp” than as a writer of short stories. Before she came to America, a little over a year ago, she ranked as one of England’s greatest film stars. As her physical measurements are reputed the same as those of the Venus the Milo, she was greatly sought after by sculptors as a model. Since she

has been in New York, in addition to playing the leading roles in several pictures, she has written a book of "Half Lengths," which takes its name from its first story, "The Little Green Dress," published herewith.



*"In a gully
where a rock-
ing stone stood
sentinel, as
she sat wear-
ing green
rubes, the
little lizards
would come
close and gaze
at her with
their bird-like
eyes."*

THE LITTLE GREEN DRESS

I MUST say "once upon a time," for it sounds more like a fairy story, a little girl lived in a very distant

mountainous country in the Antipodes. Although she had parents and sisters and brothers, she lived alone with her thoughts, in a world all her own. The shrieking of the wind held all kinds of mysteries for her.

In a large gully, where a rocking stone stood sentinel, she would sit for hours weaving a canopy of green rushes, and listening to the ki-wi bird crying its pitiful note in the distance. The little lizards would come close to her and gaze at her with their lark-like eyes. She loved them all, and breathed in the warmth of the sun, and smiled in appreciation of all nature.

When she had completed the canopy of green rushes she threw it around her and danced in the sunshine. She had been told that Green was her magic color, the emerald being her birthstone.

She laughed in all joy, and gazed into the pool at her beauty, and reflected therein she saw a figure in the robes of a Prince smiling at her.

In her astonishment she dropped the canopy of green, and he disappeared. She smiled because she seemed to know him. She was always afraid to wear green after that.

THE years went by and she grew up to be a beautiful girl, and went to live in a big city, and became a famous actress. A little Japanese friend she called on one day told her fortune in the poetry cards, and he said her Prince appeared in them. She smiled and said:

“Of course it was only a fairy story, I dreamed of him once long ago.”

“You will meet him soon, and he will love you,” the fortune-teller said.

One day she was choosing a dress, and a wonderful green was put before her. She put it on, and from the mirror her Prince appeared, smiling at her. She smiled back at him. She bought the dress and went away.

SHE was hurrying to the theatre and some one touched her on the arm. It was her Prince in reality.

"I like your dress of green," he said. "I should love to paint you, come to my studio."

She was puzzled. He handed her his card. It was her Prince!

She smiled, and said she would like to see his work, for he didn't paint really, only he wanted to know her. It was very naughty of him, but there are naughtier schemes in the world than to meet someone one loves. She said she would ring him up on the phone.

Would they meet again?

IT was a rainy day. In a cozy little church tucked away in a corner of this big city, the little actress was being married. Her heart was full.



When the sacred words were being pronounced, a figure appeared in the doorway. The hands were about to be joined. The form disappeared again—in a dream she walked beside her husband.

ONE day she was burning a little green dress and gazing into the flames. She often gazes into the

flames, for they hold many of her thoughts that no one could know about—not even the little green dress.

AN ACTOR

I must tell you about this man. He was quite good-looking, and in his youth had been spoiled by his family. He had all he needed in life—I mean the necessities of life—all except happiness.

He thought he had brains, but peace did not come to him. He wanted to do something that would make people applaud him. He had very delicate, nervous hands, and the features of a man who should have been born in another age, so he thought. In that age he surely would have thought the same.

He was too handsome, that was a great drawback; everybody told him so at quite an early age. That is why he neglected to develop his mind.

He wanted to be an actor—he must. He knew Sir George Alexander, they were neighbors. He had read about Sir Henry Irving, he was sure he could act. He persuaded his parents, or “people,” as he called them, to allow him to study that noble profession the Drama.

AFTER a few disappointments he got a small part—some one whispered to him that he was very good—it was a woman. He listened; he believed—although the stage director seemed very disagreeable and made him go over lines more than six times, and whispered seriously to his colleague in the corner.

IT was a small part, and he played it. Nobody noticed. He waited anxiously for the newsboy the next morning—that district never sold so many copies.

One paper mentioned him, and said it was a pity that part was so small.

HIS parents, I mean his mother and sister, said he was wonderful, if he could only get his opportunity.

He walked along the street thinking, "I am sure people take me for a great actor or something," (something, surely!) If only he had his opportunity!

It came one day.

Illness released him from that ordeal, the first rehearsal. He never went back.

HE said he knew he could succeed in the pictures, and he knew he would be great, some day. Some one loved him, he did not know what that meant, he knew some day he would meet some one he could really love, when he was great and everyone in the world knew him. He must do pictures.

He tried very hard, and went religiously every day to see if he could get work at the film factories. He always said "the world was against him."

ONE day he got a part. But something seems wrong. He couldn't act! He knew he could if properly "produced." Perhaps he could?

Oh, what was the use of life, anyhow! The Hudson was flowing beneath him. In a moment he had thrown himself into the water. If he had only known there were no cards of identity in his pocket!

A few days later some swearing was going on, and the suicide was hooked out of the river. He did not look beautiful, ugh! He was taken to the Morgue, poor devil!

Suicides are supposed to hover around with their own bodies and what do you think he saw? He was a skeleton on wires in a film studio. His jaws were moving, and his hands. A camera was directed at him, they were taking a "close-up" of him!

The papers said the skeleton was the best actor in the show. Think of it, he was really an actor after all!

These are obscure tales. The first clearly has major autobiographical elements; is Augustus John the Prince? (“he didn’t paint really, only he wanted to know her”). What is the second about? is that skeleton of a real man the long suffering Stanley?

The World Magazine said “she has written a book of ‘Half Lengths,’” (the term is usually applied to waist-up portrait paintings, not to the hemlines of green dresses), but I can find no trace of her book and doubt if it was ever published.

Probably it was inspired by George William Erskine Russell’s *Half Lengths*, a 1913 collection of 20 biographical essays. Russell was a British journalist, biographer and Liberal member of Parliament.

1 <http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/Publications/Art/CanterburySocietyofArts/pdfs/Catalogue-1905.pdf> retrieved 13 March 2019.

2 *New Zealand Herald* 24 July 1905.

3 *New Zealand Herald* 25 July 1905.

4 <https://assets.aucklandartgallery.com/assets/media/pages-a-g-from-asa-artists-a-z.pdf> retrieved 30 May 2019.

5 1939 England and Wales Register.

6 *New York World* newspaper 10 April 1921. See also *Buffalo Morning Express and Illustrated Buffalo Express* (Buffalo, New York) 17 April 1921.

Chapter 11: endgame



MISS EVE BALFOUR

E. O. Hoppé

Who arrived from New York last week with the special object of arranging for the production of a film in which her great talents as a delineator of a star vamp are to be given every chance. She is incidentally very beautiful, and has been painted by Augustus John and also by the Princess Alexandra of Schleswig-Holstein, a daughter-in-law of the ex-Kaiser

In late 1928 the *Tatler* announced Eve's return to England and showed a photograph, again by Hoppé but perhaps more recent than his others (if so it is the last ever published), of Eve with the bust of a satyr (rather similar to her own wood sculpture).¹

The *Bystander* said, she was “now in England, where she is to appear in British films after a long screen career in America.”² An old Hoppé portrait, taken eleven years earlier, accompanied the text.



Published in the *Bystander* on 5 September 1928, but this was EO Hoppé's photograph of Eve in 1917. A wistful Eve nonetheless, looking back.

She was back and forth across the Atlantic....

It seems around this time Eve suffered an acute mental illness. Perhaps it was simply a depressive reaction to the loss of her child in New York. Or perhaps it was a manifestation of a longer standing condition. There are hints of hypomania in some of her reported plans, and other aspects of her activities seem to fit the suggestion of bipolar disorder.

Hypomanic symptoms include euphoric, elevated, expansive, or irritable mood and increased energy; excessive self-esteem or grandiosity; less need to sleep; talkativeness; rapid expression of ideas—the subject quickly changes topics or feels that thoughts are racing; trouble focussing; restlessness; and engaging in activities that have a high likelihood of negative consequences (for example, promiscuity, excessive spending, poor business decisions).

It is arrogant to diagnose in retrospect, but there are aspects of Eve's behaviour like that. Were the apparently impractical ventures into film production in England and America realistic or grandiose? Was her sexual behaviour simply the bohemian way of the time or was it a manifestation of an illness? Were the exaggerations of her achievements more than the patter of her publicity agent? was her claim to be the most beautiful woman in Britain her agent's gimmick or a symptom of excessive self-esteem? was the flight of ideas about her reincarnation from a previous life as an Egyptian princess and her psychic powers as crazy in her society as it seems now?

Among the family papers is a letter from Pyotr Demianovich Ouspensky dated 26 May 1929. Ouspensky was a Russian guru who had a large following in London. He wrote, from 14 rue de l'Arcade in Paris,

Dear Mrs Howlett,

I think I mentioned to you once that I do not meet people belonging to the Prieuré, or staying there.

So I think it would be better if in future you tell people this at once. Certainly they can write to me themselves and I will see what I can do. But it is better to give them to understand that their connection with the Prieuré does not speak in their favour.

I am in Paris now, working on translations of my book and probably will be here the whole summer.

Yours sincerely,

P. Ouspensky

Ouspensky and his colleague George Gurdjieff had fallen out to the extent that Ouspensky was not prepared to work with anyone associated with Gurdjieff's Prieuré hospital at Fontainebleau. His letter seems to be in response to a plea for help from Eve, either on her own or someone else's behalf. He was in Paris, working on *A New Model of the Universe: Principles of the Psychological Method in Its Application to Problems of Science, Religion and Art*. "Translated from the Russian by R. R. Merton, under the supervision of the author. New York: Knopf, 1931; London: Routledge, 1931". Grandiose? he was clearly not a self effacing man.

There is brief mention of Eve in the *Eastbourne Gazette* of 17 October 1934. She was now 52 and with Stanley Howlett was a member of the Bensonian Company which would present *The Merchant of Venice* and *Macbeth* at the Devonshire Park Theatre in Eastbourne.

Frank Benson led the Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespearian festivals from 1886 to the First World War. Henry V's famous line "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers" became the Bensonians' motto. His aim was to "train a company, every member of which would be an essential part of one homogenous whole, consecrated to the practice of the dramatic arts and especially to the representation of the plays of Shakespeare."³

Stanley Howlett probably remained with the Bensonians, for in 1939 the Howletts were living in Flat A, 8 High St Stratford-upon-Avon, the pleasant Georgian deco building now occupied by Starbucks and Waterstones. In the England and Wales Register for 1939 he said he was an “actor” born 1886 (true), she an “artist” born “1890” (not true: 1882).⁴



Eve Balfour Howlett disappears thereafter from the public record.

At some point Stanley Howlett contacted their daughter Yvette saying he had had enough and Eve would have to go into care—but enough of what? was she bipolar? was she dementing?

There is no further record of Eve until her death on 19 March 1955 in Birmingham. She was (although she would have denied it) 73; her cremation certificate says 64 (I doubt if Stanley ever knew her age). Her death went publicly unheeded. There was no obituary, no death notice in the English or New Zealand papers. Her ashes were scattered in the crematorium’s Garden of Remembrance. Her death was registered in the Selly Gate district. The probate gives her address at the time of death as Hollymoor Hospital, Northfield, Birmingham. It was a prewar

lunatic asylum, a military hospital during WWII and a psychiatric and geriatric unit after the War. There were 590 patients in 1949.⁵

She was cremated at Lodge Hill Crematorium on 24 March: on the certificate her home address is given as 8 High St Stratford-on-Avon, though Stanley Howlett's was by then 25 Baldock St, Ware, Herts., where he would die four years after her, in 1959.

Eve bequeathed effects valued at £561.13.4 to her husband.⁶



1 *Tatler* 10 October 1928.

2 *Bystander* 5 September 1928.

3 Sylvia Morris 2012. Stratford's Band of Brothers: the Bensonian Company. <http://theshakespeareblog.com/2012/09/stratfords-band-of-brothers-the-bensonian-company/> retrieved 2 April 2019.

4 1939 England and Wales Register.

5 <https://www.countyasylums.co.uk/hollymoor-birmingham/> retrieved 2 April 2019.

6 England and Wales, National Probate Calendar 1858–1895.

Chapter 12: Eve Balfour's plays and films

Plays in England

Henry of Navarre

The Crystal Gazer

Beethoven

False Gods

The O'Flynn

The Last Flicker

Twelfth Night

The Octaroon

The Taming of the Shrew

Expiation

One Summer's Day

Macbeth

The Death of Tintagiles

Orestes

In a Balcony

After Actium

The Experimentalist

Hedda Gabler

A Short Way with Authors

The Pursuit of Pamela

Poudre d'Amour

Diplomacy

Lucifer

Films

1914 *The Mystery of the Diamond Belt*: Kitty the Moth.

1915 *Five Nights*: Viola.

1915 *The Woman Who Did*: Herminia Barton.

1915 *Royal Love*: Anita.

1915 *Jack Tar*: Margherita.

1915 *Love*: Vera Coleman.

1916 *Burnt Wings*: Margaret Dennis.

1916 *Eve's Daughter*: Veronica Leigh.

- 1916 *Cynthia in the Wilderness*: Cynthia Elwes.
 1917 *All the World's a Stage*: Lavender Lawn.
 1919 *Russia: Land of Tomorrow*: Anna Cargill.
 1920 *The Scarlet Wooing*: Mrs. Raeburn.
 1920 *The Black Sheep*: Laurie Fenton.
 1920 *The Woman of the Iron Bracelets*: Norah Berwell
 (or Bennett).
 1920 *Fantomas*: The Woman in Black.

Broadway

- 1925 *Love for Love*.
 1926 *The Half Naked Truth*.

Fox News footage of Eve's arrival in New York on 24 December 1919 is in the MIRC-DVR collections of the University of South Carolina and can be seen online at <https://mirc.sc.edu/islandora/object/usc%3A52446>. It is the only surviving movie of Eve Balfour. The 37-year old New Zealander looks ill and cold on this bleak snowy New York Christmas Eve in her felt hat pulled down to her eyebrows and her fox furs, hands deep in her garment. Even in this short clip she is coy but strong and engaging....







Chapter 13: afterthoughts & acknowledgements

Family

In January 1925 Eve's daughter **Yvette Howlett** appeared as a peasant in the Children's Hospital Fancy Dress Ball at Hull City Hall¹ and in June 1931 as Sir Pharamond in the Newland High School's King Arthur Pageant; the *Hull Daily Mail* thought her "distinctive".² She was living with Stanley Howlett's parents in Hull while Eve and he were in New York. Yvette and Arthur John Borradaile Baily (a lawyer) were married in Surrey in 1938 and she was living alone (her husband away at the war perhaps) at 87 Haverstock Hill, Camden, Hampstead in 1939 when she gave her occupation as free lance commercial artist. They had two children—Juliet B Baily, born after the War in 1948 in Hammersmith, married Richard J Innes in 1970 and was living in Royston in 2019—and her brother Joseph W Baily, born 1951 in Hatfield, near Ware in Herts, married Nicola J Lavington Evans in Taunton in 1980 and was living in Cambridge in 2019. Yvette died at Ware on 4 June 2004.

In 1912 Eve's sister **Queenie Hulston** and Percy Stanley Nicholls were married. They had three children, Winston, Kenneth and Evette. Kenneth Edwin Nicholls, born in 1913, left photographs, including one of Eve, to the Canterbury University Library—presumably Eve sent it to her nephew Kenneth or her sister Queenie, so they must have corresponded.

Her brother **Henry Charles ("Harry") Hulston** married Jeanie Hopkins in 1902, they had Harry James born 1903 and Edna Jean born 1906. Harry senior died in 1935 aged 55. Harry James married Lola Clorine Martin in 1936 and they had two children, Richard and Jeanette. Edna Jean married Frank Sidney Granger in 1925 and they had four children, William, Ian, Elaine and Sylvia.

Her brother **Charles Frank Hulston** married Frances Nora Sherriff MacInnes in 1920 and he died in 1927 aged 32. They had one child Charles in 1921. Charles married but had no children.

Her status

Eve Balfour Howlett left no diaries and few other intimate memorabilia. To consider her character—her likes, her dislikes, her feelings, her friendships, her personality—one must try to read between the lines of newspapers and the publicly expressed opinions of her contemporaries.

In 1933 the Auckland Star reviewed New Zealand stars—ie, actors who had...

... attained the equivalent of stellar rank. Foremost among these is Eve Balfour, who a decade ago was one of the most popular actresses on the silent screen. Born on a lonely New Zealand farm, she made her name in British Films, and was later seen in several big Hollywood productions.³

Her publicity myths clearly lived on: she was born in Christchurch city (not on a lonely farm) and she made only *Fantomas* (not “several big” films) in America. She got to Hollywood but she did not succeed there. She was secretive about her age, she exaggerated her achievements in Britain to American reporters and her achievements in America to British reporters. Her publicly declared plans often came to nothing.

That is all we have: the public pictures of Eve Balfour, the newsworthy events and the carefully constructed images of the glamorous film celebrity. But despite the paucity of the information and the heady exaggeration and downright fabrication of some of it, despite the silliness of her affected mysticism, the nonsense of her Egyptian reincarnation, we

should celebrate this important woman—as New Zealand’s first real movie star, Britain’s first woman film producer and an activist feminist of some note. New Zealand women aged 21 and over had been able to vote since 1893; Eve was old enough to vote in Christchurch in the 1905 general election at which Richard Seddon’s Liberals were returned in a landslide; she joined the leaders of women’s suffrage activities on arrival in London in 1908. Finally the Representation of the People Act of 1918 saw British women over 30 gain the vote, when Eve was 36.

She enacted strong women in many of her plays and films, yet they were strong women who propped up the pillars of a mancentric society. Her public image seems to have been rather like that: suffragist, career-oriented, yet glamorous, delicate and seductive. A vamp.

What was she really like? I wonder.

Her times

Silent cinema began in the Victorian era and faded away at the end of the roaring twenties, just before the repeal of prohibition in America. So silent films were made in the context of around four decades of social change. It was a time in which women fought for the vote, workers campaigned for greater rights, the world went to war, the Russian empire fell, the aeroplane was invented, the motorcar drove horses off our streets, factories built assembly lines, radio waves circled the globe, and attitudes to sex and censorship went through revolutions.⁴

Eve Balfour was a strong independent woman, yet in 1919 she was quick to reassure her new American audience about her moral beliefs,

On the legitimate stage in Britain there is an unfortunate tendency toward the risqué play just at present. It is part of the aftermath of war, this laxity of standard. At the same time, I don't think it is necessary. People are always ready to take anything you give them, and if the offering is fine enough they will want more of the same kind.⁵

British film had struggled to survive against the strength of Hollywood, British productions rarely achieving critical acclaim and their stars rarely successfully promoted. By 1924 only 5 percent of films shown in British cinemas had been made in Britain. British stars averaged £10 a week while Hollywood leaders were earning £20,000.⁶

That was why Eve Balfour left England for the United States in 1920. But it was too late. She was no longer young and her stardom was brief.

Back in England she was replaced by Betty Balfour, who was “able to register on screen a charm and expression unequalled among the actresses in British film”.⁷

Eve Balfour died alone, publicly forgotten, yet she had been “noted as Great Britain's most beautiful actress, who is also England's only woman motion picture producer”.⁸ A feminist, a great beauty, a businesswoman, a talented actor, a star.

Eve Balfour's motion pictures

What of her films? Martin Scorsese's Film Foundation estimates over 90% of American films made before 1929 are lost and the Library of Congress estimates that 75% of all silent films are lost forever. Many silent films were intentionally destroyed, considered obsolete when the talkies arrived, or used as silver mines.

Furthermore the nitrate film used before 1952 is chemically unstable and can decay into a highly flammable sticky mass or powder. In poor storage conditions it will burst spontaneously into flame—fires destroyed entire archives at Fox Pictures and at MGM.

Of Eve Balfour's films the American *Fantomas* is considered lost,⁹ but none of the others (all British) is included in lists of lost British films.^{10, 11} Mind you that may be because nobody has noticed—only six are even included in one list of all British films before 1920 (*Five Nights*, *Jack Tar*, *Royal Love*, *The Woman Who Did*, *Cynthia in the Wilderness* and *Eve's Daughter*),¹² suggesting perhaps that the rest were not important enough to rate a mention. On the other hand the British Film Institute does have clippings of reviews relating to all but two of Eve's films, but no moving images or other original materials for any.¹³ Some may be in other collections, but probably all are lost.

Historical errors

Newspapers and websites sometimes do make mistakes.

The *Perthshire Advertiser* of 4 June 1921 advertised “Episode 4 of the great new serial, ‘Bride 13,’ featuring Eve Balfour” but though she was in the United States in 1920 when these episodes were made by Fox Studios, she is not credited anywhere with having taken part.

Similarly West Australia's *Albany Advertiser* advertised “‘The Reaping’... featuring Eve Balfour” in 1916 but it was Lillian Drew who starred in that 1915 film.

In 1916 the *Bulletin* stated she starred in *Three Weeks* but that was Madlaine Traverse in 1914—Eve starred in *Five nights* in 1915.

The *Mansfield Reporter* advertised “‘The Law Divine,’ featuring Eve Balfour” on 22 September 1922, but the actors in that 1920 film were Eve Moore and Evelyn Brent.

The British Film Institute website says the 1934 film *Anything might happen* was based on the novel by Eve Balfour and Wikipedia has it based on the novel by Evelyn Balfour (the organic farmer): indeed that 1933 book was written by “Hearnden Balfour”, pseudonym of Beryl Hearnden and Evelyn Balfour who co-wrote mystery novels.¹⁴

You cannot blame the media for publishing different versions of her date of birth: Wikipedia has 1895, which would mean she was married at age 10. In England she commonly claimed 1890, taking eight years off her chronological age. Her New Zealand birth record shows she was born in 1882.

There were at least four Eve or Eva Balfours in the British news in the early 20th century and it has sometimes been hard to know which one was being referred to. There was a Gilbert and Sullivan operatic singer in Hastings, an Eva Katherine Balfour (later Lady Buxton) in Scotland and Evelyn (later Lady Eve) Balfour the organic farmer of Haughtrey. I hope I have not confused or conflated them with Eve *aka* Eva Balfour *aka* Eve Balfour-Hulston *aka* Eva Balfour Howlett *aka* Eva Hulston Balfour, etc.

Potentially to confound matters further, in the 1920s one Betty Balfour (no relation of course) became the biggest star of British silent film.

YouTube has a clip on how to make an Eva Balfour cocktail (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PlzmYWaEON4>). I would love to find a connection, but I cannot.

Acknowledgements

I should state that none of those mentioned below have been responsible for anything I have written here.

I am very grateful to Derek Cooper, the Hulston family historian in New Zealand, for details of Eve's relations in New Zealand. And to other members of the extended Hulston family for encouragement.

Ann Collins kindly gave me the benefit of her genealogical expertise in tracing Eve's grandchildren in England and her stillborn son in New York.

When I contacted her grandson Joseph Bailly he told me he was already helping Belgium based New Zealand writer Martin O'Connor who was writing Eve's biography. Martin and I agreed to collaborate and our relationship has been (I hope mutually) very productive.

The first result explored Eve's relationship with Katherine Mansfield.¹⁵ The present collection of notes on Eve contains material assembled by each of us. We planned a formal biography but the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 prevented the completion of our research: these notes must therefore suffice.

David Lee White kindly provided the images for *Fantomas* from his copy of the original press book for the series.

Wendy & Gordon Hawksley traced WBE Ranken's portrait of Eve to Leeds and supplied helpful information about him and it. Nigel Walsh, Curator: Modern and Contemporary Art at Leeds Art Gallery, searched but found it had been missing since at latest 2000.

I have derived much of this material at home from online newspaper archives: *NewspaperArchive.com*, *Papers Past*, *Trove*, and *British Newspaper Archive*.

I accessed *Times Digital Archive* and *Proquest Historical Newspapers* at the National Library, Wellington.

Other references I found online or at the Alexander Turnbull Library (whose staff I thank sincerely, notably Oliver Stead who was very helpful with searching for the portraits).

I am grateful for help from staff at the British Library, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the State Library of New South Wales, the Yale Center for British Art and the Beinecke Library.

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- 1 *Hull Daily Mail* 9 January 1925.
 - 2 *Hull Daily Mail* 29 June 1931.
 - 3 The *Star* was paraphrasing a story that appeared in the *Australian Women's Mirror* 27 December 1932 p20.
 - 4 "It started with a kiss: sex and the silent cinema." British Silent Film Festival. <https://britishsilentfilmfestival.com/2017/09/06/it-started-with-a-kiss-sex-and-the-silent-cinema/#more-1266> retrieved 29 April 2019.
 - 5 *New York Tribune* 28 December 1919.
 - 6 Olivia Gilmer 2019. Remembering Britain's silent past. *Silent Film Quarterly*. <https://silentfilmquarterly.com/2019/01/29/britishsilentfilm/> retrieved 29 April 2019.
 - 7 Rachael Low 1996. *The History of British Film: Volume IV*. London & New York: Routledge. See <https://womenandsilentbritishcinema.wordpress.com/the-women/betty-balfour/>
 - 8 *New York Tribune* 18 September 1921
 - 9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_lost_films retrieved 3 April 2019.
 - 10 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Lost_British_films retrieved 3 April 2019.
 - 11 <http://www.britishpictures.com/articles/missing.htm> retrieved 3 April 2019.
 - 12 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_British_films_before_1920#1914 retrieved 3 April 2019.
 - 13 <http://collections-search.bfi.org.uk/web/search/simple> retrieved 3 April 2019.
 - 14 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0026078/> accessed 3 April 2019 and Bookfinder.com.
 - 15 Ian St George & Martin O'Connor 2019. "There goes Eve Balfour". *Katherine Mansfield Society Newsletter* 33 (August): 27–30.

... the New Zealand actress Miss Eva Balfour, whose genius and charming personality took London by storm....

— *Greymouth Evening Star* 2 September 1916.

... tall, lithe, slender, flaming cheeks, olive skin tints, wide, full scarlet mouth, riotous cloud of black hair cut artist fashion, eyes dark with mystery, or flashing with intelligence....

— *Salt Lake Telegram* on Eve Balfour, 12 January 1920.

Vamp NOUN *informal* A seductive woman who uses her sexual attractiveness to exploit men. **Synonyms:** seductress, temptress, siren, femme fatale, enchantress, delilah, circe, lorelei, mata hari.

—*Oxford Dictionaries.*

You will not try to turn me into the ordinary married woman. I could not accept those duties and that life. I want to live in my music, in the heaven of Ideas, as I do now. And to you I want always to be the vision, the dream, the spirit of your thoughts: never the wife, the mother, the keeper of the household, occupied with worldly matters.

—Victoria Cross: Viola in *Five nights*.

So far as my will goes, I am yours, that much I yield, but not my life, my future, not my individuality, not my freedom—it would be treason to my sex.

—Grant Allen: Herminia Barton in *The woman who did*.



