

# CHAPLINITIS

by Charles J. McGuirk

**A little Englishman, quiet, unassuming, but surcharged with dynamite, is influencing the world right now. You can feel him in the theater; you read of him in the magazines; you get a glimpse of his idiosyncrasies in some twist of fashion. Among the happy youths of the slums, or the dandies of clubdom or college, an imitation of a Chaplin flirt of the coat, or the funny little waddle of the comedian, is considered the last word in humor. To be Chaplinesque is to be funny; to waddle a few steps, and then look naïvely at your audience, is a recognized form to which successful comedy is trending. You are artistic, perhaps. You were born with the gift of drawing or painting, or maybe you are a sculptor. Your gifts run to other lines. Maybe you are a poet or a writer. Very well, the thing to do now is to paint a portrait of Charles Chaplin in one of his characteristic poses, or to model him in clay. A poet can always sell a Chaplin poem; a writer finds a market for a Chaplin story. Any form of expressing Chaplin is what the public wants. The days of the minstrel's lay have come again. The world has Chaplinitis.**

*Auszug aus: Motion Picture Magazine. New York, Juli 1915.*

Das amerikanische *Motion Picture Magazine* war das weltweit erste Fanmagazin und wurde von 1911 bis 1977 herausgegeben. Im Juli und im August 1915 erschienen mehrseitige Artikel über die weltweite Begeisterung um Chaplin. In ihnen wurde nicht nur sein Genius dem von Thomas A. Edison und Leo Tolstoi gleichgesetzt, sondern vor allem die Auswüchse der *Chaplinitis* aufgezählt: Chaplin ist allgegenwärtig, an jeder Straßenecke, in jeder Bevölkerungsschicht wird sein Watschelgang imitiert, und Künstlern und Schriftstellern wird die Beschäftigung mit Charlie als Bestseller nahegelegt. Die Welt hat *Chaplinitis*.