

The Princes in the Tower

UK : 1913 : dir. Cecil Hepworth
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
[Eric Desmond \(Reggie Sheffield\)](#)
 Adult cast unknown

Silent : ? min

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ € Z ⚡	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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The Moving Picture Boy entry on Desmond:

"Matthew Reginald Sheffield Cassan came from a family with a strong sense of pedigree. He claimed direct descent on his father's side from the 17th-century soldier, poet and courtier John Sheffield, 1st Duke of Buckingham, and on his mother's side from Benjamin Franklin. Hopes of a transatlantic dynasty were not, as it turned out, to be wholly disappointed.

The sturdy, curly-haired little boy was discovered by the British director, producer and inventor Cecil Hepworth, and appeared as Reggie Sheffield in what is said to have been his debut film, "LIEUTENANT PIE'S LOVE STORY". In August 1913 he changed his screen name to Eric Desmond (after the Earls of Desmond?) but appeared on the London stage the following month, in a Charles Hawtrey farce, as Reginald Sheffield. It was as Eric Desmond, though, that he continued busily to perform for Hepworth until 1915, when he became a war evacuee to the USA and appeared in his first American film - as Reginald Sheffield. All very confusing.

In 1939 a sturdy, curly-haired little boy called Johnny Sheffield burst into the Hollywood jungle wearing nothing but a loincloth, but otherwise looking the spitting image of pre-1914 Eric Desmond. Needless to say, this was

the evacuee's son, and the evacuee himself had made a very useful Hollywood career as a debonair, aristocratic character actor - one which he kept going right up to his death in 1957. He played President Grant in "CENTENNIAL SUMMER" (46).

It hadn't, though, lived up to the hopes of one who had played the hero of "DAVID COPPERFIELD" both as a child (in 1913) and as a man (in 1923). The boy David in Thanhouser's 1911 "DAVID COPPERFIELD", incidentally, was played by one of the company's female stars, Flora Foster."

[no listing in "Classics of the Silent Screen", "A Pictorial History of the Silent Screen", "Silent Movies: A Picture Quiz Book", "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. Eric Desmond was 12. For a good contemporary study of him, see his biographical entry. He also featured in "LITTLE BOY BOUNTIFUL" (14), "ENTERTAINING UNCLE" (14), "THE MAGIC CLASS" (14) and many others.

See subject index under **ARISTOCRACY / ROYALTY, HISTORY** and **SILENT CINEMA**.