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FEATURE FILMS

A CHRISTMAS CAROL


In a preface to an early edition of "A Christmas Carol," Dickens said: "I have endeavored, in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put my readers out of humor with them-selves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly and no one wish to lay it." To translate this "Ghostly little book" to the screen and have this foreword none the less applicable to the picture was no mean task for M.G.M., but they have succeeded admirably. The picture is just as unpretentious as the book and equally charming. It is delight- fully acted by a very able cast, and its endearing qualities easily overshadow its few flaws.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Excellent

Children, 8 to 12
Excellent

THE DAWN PATROL


Filmed for the second time, "The Dawn Patrol" justifies the contention that a good story can be successfully retold. It brings back a phase of airplane warfare in the days of 1916 when a handful of veteran flyers of the Fifty-ninth Squadron of the Royal Flying Corps, with replacements of pitiably young and inexperienced aviators, were sent out against the coldly cruel Von Richter (pre-sumably Von Richtofen) and his efficient patrol. It is tense drama of brilliant, high-strung men, whose exploits in the sky hold one spellbound by their skill and daring and flair for perilous adventure. But there is also the somber side which comes very near to us now that thunderheads of war again threaten the world, the appalling tragedy and futile waste, the heart-rending sacrifice of youth because it is ordained by "criminal idiots who sit around a table" and plan to
remake the map. Errol Flynn takes the part of Courtney with keen understanding and judgment; David Niven, Basil Rathbone and Donald Crisp are almost equally convincing; in fact, every actor in the film seems to live his part. Edmund Goulding’s direction is powerful. It is a picture which will be remembered not for a day but for a long time.

Adolescents, 12 to 16: Children, 8 to 12

Strong fare: Too tense

EXPOSED ♦ ♦


Click, the girl photographer of a modern pictorial magazine, is sued for taking views of a once-famous prosecutor who has fallen upon days of poverty and wretchedness. In trying to extricate herself from a bad situation—she gets into more trouble and eventually lands in the toils of gangsters. In the end the same prosecuting attorney comes to her rescue. While somewhat complicated in construction, it is a fast-moving film with some good acting. Otto Kruger is excellent in his portrayal of the various stages of his regeneration.

Adolescents, 12 to 16: Children, 8 to 12

Too mature: No

THE GIRL DOWNSTAIRS ♦ ♦

Franciska Gaal, Franchot Tone, Walter Connolly, Rita Johnson. Direction by Norman Taurog. M.-G.-M.

Comedy at its best is presented in “The Girl Downstairs.” Franchot Tone is cast as a gentleman in disguise, and Fransiska Gaal, piquant Hungarian actress, plays a Cinderella role as a scullery maid whose charms are more availing than those of her mistress. The cast is excellent and the picture is beautifully directed.

Adolescents, 12 to 16: Children, 8 to 12

Entertaining: Mature

GOING PLACES ♦ ♦


If you remember “The Hottentot,” that breezy farce in which a salesman from a sporting-goods house masquerades as a famous Australian steeplechase rider to advertise his firm, you will recall that the gentleman’s riding experience had been confined to mechanical horses, and that when circumstances forced him to mount Jeeppers Creepers, a man-killing horse, the results were hilarious and thrilling. The story has been modernized with highly effective musical interludes, notably the swing number, “Mutiny in the Nursery,” in which Louis Armstrong, his colored band and chorus, and Maxine Sullivan are starred. “Jeeppers Creepers,” the theme song, is a high light. Armstrong as Gabe, the groom and trainer, has found that the vicious horse has one vulnerable point, a weakness for a song composed for him. The scenes in which Gabe, then Peter Mason (Dick Powell), and then the band use this song to soothe the animal are extremely funny. Dick Powell, Walter Catlett, Alan Jenkins and Harold Huber are very entertaining when they compose “Oh, What a Horse Was Charlie.” The comedy is good, the music catchy, and the steeplechase effectively thrilling.

Adolescents, 12 to 16: Children, 8 to 12

Excellent: Good

HEART OF THE NORTH ♦ ♦


Stirring melodrama with the Royal Mounted Police of Canada tracking their man through terrific physical difficulties. It is a lusty tale of adventure set in magnificent country and photographed in technicolor. If some of the action is faked it is so cleverly done that no hint is given the audience who sit breathless through scenes of violent action and cheer when the “mounties” get their men. Very entertaining of its type.

Adolescents, 12 to 16: Children, 8 to 12

Entertaining: Depends on taste

HIS EXCITING NIGHT ♦ ♦


Charlie Ruggles is amusing in the role of a timid bridegroom who is kidnapped on his wedding day, and Stepin Fetchit contributes some laughable scenes. Otherwise this is a below-average, slapstick farce.

Adolescents, 12 to 16: Children, 8 to 12

Poor: No
KENTUCKY


Close your eyes and think of Kentucky. Start with the period of the Civil War and hurry your imagination along to the present. All the scenes that come to your mind, you will find in the picture called "Kentucky." You will see plantation days, with the breeding of thoroughbred horses in Kentucky's bluegrass. You will see the Kentucky Derby won by the horse you want to have won. You will see the remnants of a feud which dies with the passing of the man who witnessed the reason for its being, and you will realize that with him passed a very colorful phase of American life. As a play "Kentucky" creaks, but it is nevertheless enjoyable, an experience similar to rereading a familiar and well-liked book. Technicolor photography is in the hands of Ray Rennahan, whose fine sense of color values and color harmony will delight the aesthete.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Interesting
Children, 8 to 12
Yes

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE


If this film should succeed, no better proof is needed that the average audience has a twelve-year-old mind. Nor is it particularly adapted as entertainment for the actual twelve-year-old. The kindness, affability and social consciousness of Annie are probably true to the character developed in the newspaper cartoon, but a better background could have been chosen for her good deeds than the prize-ring. Several scenes are beyond the bounds of good taste, and one, which features a fight between housewives and loan sharks, is definitely offensive. It is unfortunate that a picture so poorly conceived should, by its title, attract children.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No—Lower standard of appreciation

Children, 8 to 12

LITTLE TOUGH GUYS IN SOCIETY


It is to be hoped that the New Year will draw the curtain on the cycle of boy gang films, for anyone who has seen one knows them all, and they are getting no better very fast. This one differs from its predecessors in its would-be comical approach to the problem of youth delinquency, but it features the same rowdy types of hoodlums with their same crudeness and bravado. The story tells how six boys from the East side of New York, escaping from the police, find refuge in a country estate, and upon advice of a psychiatrist, cure a problem child of an advanced case of sulks. While the picture is very nearly a slapstick comedy, one cannot be sure that some of it is not meant to be taken seriously, and it leaves a most unpleasant impression of false values.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No
Children, 8 to 12
Very misleading

PACIFIC LINER


So depressingly realistic is this picture that seeing it is like living through the horrible experience it portrays. Crusher McKay, played by Victor McLaglen, is the leading character. Brutal, overbearing Chief Engineer of a crew of stokers on an ocean liner, he drives his men like slaves. When cholera breaks out in the engine room, the occupants are quarantined and the room is turned into a temporary hospital where men die and are cremated by their comrades. Crusher is stricken, but when mutiny threatens he leaves his bed to resume command until the ship is brought to dock. As a realistic study of a certain type of man and of the hardships suffered by stokers, the film may be interesting to a limited audience.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Depressing and brutal
Children, 8 to 12
Horrible
PARIS HONEYMOON  


Perhaps the most difficult picture to comment on is one which is neither good enough for praise nor poor enough for censure. "Paris Honeymoon" is standard of this type. It includes such variations as Shirley Ross singing in a bath tub and Bing Crosby singing in a tea wagon, and other less novel backgrounds for songs. Add a setting in the Balkans, colorful peasantry, a native festival, a pretty little minx (Franciska Gaal) for love interest, a harried butler (Edward Everett Horton) for humor, and a diligent scoundrel (Akim Tamiroff) for menace. The plot is tucked away between rose petals and you can easily supply it without straining the imagination.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12
Mature  
No

PYGMALION


George Bernard Shaw's well-known comedy modernizes the Greek myth of the artist who prayed that his lovely statue might be endowed with a soul. The Pygmalion of the play is Higgins, a professor of phonetics. During moments of casual research he comes across a drab, unempt cockney flower-girl, and to win a bet he undertakes to transform her into a lady of fashion, to remove all trace of her dialect and to teach her grammar and behavior. The results of the experiment, on the screen as in the play, are highly entertaining. The ending of the picture version hints at the possibility of romance between Higgins and Eliza, a solution which Shaw completely rejected in the analysis of his characters in the "sequel" to his play. The change, however, does not detract from the extremely clever satire, and the movie does preserve to a remarkable degree Shaw's sly, pungent humor. Mr. Howard seems perfectly suited to the role. Wendy Hiller, an English actress of unusual charm, is delightful as Eliza. Her performance is superbly shaded from broad humor to dramatic poignancy. Wilfrid Lawson as the girl's father deserves credit in his amusing character role. Scott Sunderland, Jean Ca-

dell, Marie Lohr, and David Tree are all exceedingly good. This is rare entertainment not to be missed by those desiring the unusual.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12
Mature but good  
Interest depends on maturity

RIDE A CROOKED MILE


If you intend to see "Ride a Crooked Mile" prepare to wade through a long stretch of slime and mire in order to reach the letus bud. It is a melodramatic story of a Russian Cossack who has turned cattle rustler and of his son for whose sake he attempts to reform. Motivated by a theme which eventually points in the right direction, it is distasteful in general effect, and no amount of fine horsemanship, Russian songs, and sincere acting can make it otherwise. It is rather obviously constructed as a vehicle for Akim Tamiroff and on that account seems somewhat artificial.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12
Unsuited  
No

SECRETS OF A NURSE


The title is a very definite lure for a film which will disappoint those whose curiosity is aroused by it. The nurse may know but she certainly doesn't tell any secrets. She is principally concerned with a battered pugilist who arrives at the hospital more dead than alive. His subsequent attempt at another type of life involves him in a murder of which he is innocent. He is sent to the death-house, and reprieved at the last minute when a gangster confesses the name of the killer. Most movie-goers would probably prefer to have mental anguish served in smaller doses. If the movies are a form of escape, the average "Babbitt" would rather escape to something less dour.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12
No  
Unsuited
SWEETHEARTS


Herbert Stothart has woven the lovely melodies of another era of musical operetta into a modern pattern. "Sweethearts," as the older generation knew it, is the background for a story of today where two glamorous stars find their private lives entirely moulded to the demands of publicity and the traditions of the stage. These stars, who are genuinely charming people, are tired of the routine of six years of the same production, the same songs, the kindly advice of their "royal families" whose own long experience before the public makes them overcritical. When Hollywood lures, with glowing promises of more leisure variety and freedom, complications develop which threaten their marriage. The picture may be called radiant. Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy are admirably cast, seeming to play together with greater zest than ever. The costumes are exquisite, the color is glitteringly beautiful, and, for the ladies, there is a fashion show which will long be remembered for its glamor.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Good, girls particularly

SWING THAT CHEER


"Swing That Cheer" is far better than most college pictures, not for the reason that it is livelier or more spectacular by football standards, but because it makes a successful effort to show college people as they really are. The coach, the two main football players, and the girls are individuals whose like can be found on many a campus, as are the group in the fraternity house and the local night spot. The question of retaining a fine coach who has had several losing seasons, and the rivalry between the spoiled youth who carries the ball and the one whose skilled interference has built up the glory of his team mates are vital issues in many an academic center. There is an excellent feeling of fair play, and while football is the keynote of the story, professors are permitted to flunk athletes for inferior work, which after all is as it should be.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Very good

Children, 8 to 12

If they like football

THANKS FOR EVERYTHING


This farce pokes lively fun at polls of taste, at high pressure advertising, and at those behind the scenes who foment war hysteria. When Henry Smith wins a $25,000 prize for having average taste, the slick advertising firm, by dishonest trickery, refuse to give him the money but keep him on their pay-roll to use him as a human guinea pig, thus profiting by his daily reactions. The underlying idea is clever, and many audiences will not object to the fact that its presentation is pure slapstick because the theme is so thoroughly American. Under more subtle direction, it might have been keen satire with real significance, but author and director have tossed overboard logic, clarity, and coherence in a riot of antics. Jack Haley takes the acting honors. He has ability for more sympathetic humor.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Within their interest

Children, 8 to 12

Passable

TOM SAWYER, DETECTIVE


Quoted in the January, 1939, Readers' Digest, is the following letter from Mark Twain to a Mr. Kester who had asked permission to make a play of "Tom Sawyer":

"I should like to see 'Tom Sawyer' staged. You need not submit the play to my approval. Turn the book upside down and inside out if you want to. If you wish to add people, incidents, morals, immorals, or anything else, do so with a free hand. My literary vanities are dead and nothing I have written is sacred to me.

"Sincerely yours,

"S'L Clemens"

It is well that Mark Twain was so lenient, for this film merely uses the familiar characters and locale in a new adventure in the spirit of the more melodramatic chapters of "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn." In the picture two boys are acting as de-
Despite the presence of a murder charge, the story is no more plausible than a child's day-dream in which he sees himself the hero of a blood-curdling tale. There is nothing objectionable in the picture and the setting and characters are interesting, but on the whole it is only passably entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12

TRADE WINDS


Among its several good points this murder mystery has a fine cast, beautiful sets, dialogue by Dorothy Parker, and distinguished photography. Its plot has to do with a pretty girl (Joan Bennett), who is suspected of having shot a man, and a philandering detective (Frederic March), who trails her round the world to collect a reward and finally proves her innocent instead. The picture is an entertaining but unimportant addition to the stars' repertoire.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12

ZAZA


The screen revival of this once-popular play reflects few qualities that would account for the success of the original. The story is an emotional one of love and sacrifice. Zaza loves a man who is deeply infatuated with her, but she breaks off the affair when she discovers that he is married and is the father of a little girl. Settings and period costumes add a piquant touch to the film, but technically it is disappointing, and though Miss Colbert is charming, her interpretation of the title role is not sufficiently inspired to redeem an undistinguished production. Bert Lahr as Cascart, Zaza's vaudeville partner and manager, is exceptional.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
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BOY SLAVES    

This is a nauseating picture of young boys and a girl working in a turpentine camp under shocking conditions of brutality and oppression. Imprisoned by barbed wire fences, fed on "slop" and driven like galley slaves, they finally make a break for freedom. A foreword to the picture warns mothers of the country that these conditions actually exist, but even if this is so, such an orgy of brutality has no place among so-called entertainment films and should not be released for general audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16   Children, 8 to 12
Impossible   Impossible

BURN 'EM UP O'CONNER    

This exciting narrative of automobile racing is based on a book by Sir Malcolm Campbell and shows innumerable authentic scenes of race tracks and crashes, which, for devotees of the sport, will make the film sufficiently entertaining without the addition of the who-caused-the-accident mystery about which the story revolves. Though thrilling, the accidents are not gruesomely pictured. However the idea that a murderous villain is responsible for the death of one driver after another is rather a horrid and sinister thought if the plot is to be considered at all plausible. Dennis O'Keefe is pleasing in the part of the young daredevil driver.

Adolescents, 12 to 16   Children, 8 to 12
Passable   No

DISBARRED    

This picture exposes the unethical practices of a disbarred attorney and shows the social consequences. A woman lawyer is innocently his tool until her suspicions are aroused. The entertainment values are a matter of taste, depending upon whether one is interested in seeing the way the law may be (and frequently is) circumvented, but the unpleasant story is handled in an able fashion by a competent cast and director.

Adolescents, 12 to 16   Children, 8 to 12
Doubtful value   Unsuitable and uninteresting
EDGE OF THE WORLD


This a gripping story of life on the rock-bound, forbidding island of Foula off the coast of Scotland, when diminishing population, exhausted peat fields and barren lands make life an unendurable hardship for the few who are left. The story is a tragic epic of stern reality. It is comparable in many ways with "Grass" and "White Gold." In this story the forces of nature have to be reckoned with and overcome, necessitating a mass movement into more fertile lands. The scene depicting the exodus is the finishing touch to this stirring drama. The older generation in combat with the younger is a theme which runs through the play and is responsible for much of the tragedy that befalls the sons and daughters around whom the romance centers. Strong and stubborn personalities and deeds of daring adventure are depicted with much artistry and great ability. The cast throughout is exceptional, and several players are outstanding. Notably so are Peter (John Laurie), James (Finley Currie), and Andrew (Nial MacGinnis).

On the whole it is an unusually fine picture, very much out of the ordinary and done with discriminating judgment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Very drab and heavy

FOUR GIRLS IN WHITE


Here is a light, superficial melodrama which points no moral and settles no problems. While set in a hospital environment, it gives a somewhat burlesqued idea of hospital procedure and the training of nurses. Four girls enter training: one to fit herself to support her child; one apparently to get food; another to be with her older sister; and the latter to get a rich husband. Florence Rice plays the role of the predatory woman, and she handles it very well. Ann Rutherford is charming as the little sister who wins the doubtful honor of marrying a rich play boy. Mary Howard is sacrificed in an unnecessary and tragic death, and Una Merkle gives the comedy touch with her usual skill. Norma Page (Florence Rice) is consistently ruthless. Though her heroism in the melodramatic climax suggests a change of heart, the audience is left questioning whether it is a lasting reformation. It is mildly entertaining but will soon be forgotten.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
No

THE GREAT MAN VOTES


Garson Kanin, director of this film, also directed "A Man To Remember," an unheralded picture that proved to be excellent entertainment. "The Great Man Votes" is also an unpretentious film and again it turns out to be unexpectedly good entertainment. It gives wide latitude to John Barrymore's gift for broad humor as well as to his ability to portray sincere emotion. He plays the role of an affectionate ne'er-do-well parent of two delightful children (played by Peter Holden and Virginia Weidler). Though a former professor at Harvard and a respected writer, he has lost all incentive and ambition because of his wife's death and has become a night-watchman with his daily quart of bootleg liquor. His children's belief in him and an opportune chance to be an important cog in the wheel of a political election, bring things to an hilarious climax. The emotional scenes are not overdone, and the lines and situations are absurdly funny. Mr. Barrymore alone could have put over the verbose witticisms, but Peter Holden and Virginia Weidler are close seconds for acting honors.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Amusing

GUNGA DIN


No adventure related by Private Mulvaney in Kipling's most extravagant prose could rival the exploits of Cutter, MacChesney, and Ballantine in R. K. O.'s "Gunga Din." This is a film which, for battle smoke, knife wounds, charging cavalry, and magnificence of outdoor scenery, has never been surpassed. It carries on the tradition of Great Britain's supremacy in India, and the British soldier's delight in hazardous adventure. Cutter, MacChesney, and Ballantine are a combination of Kipling's "Soldiers Three" and Dumas' "Three Musketeers." Sergeants attached to a British outpost in India, they are happy when bailing each other and happiest when facing the possibility of assassination by marauding natives. An uprising of the Thugs, (worshippers of the goddess, Kali) who strangle and knife their victims, is the occasion for the terrific battle which is the climax of the film, but throughout the preceding reels, there have been enough bloody
Five

skirmishes to keep the audience on the edge of their seats, and one scene, laid in an abandoned outpost, is so fraught with terror and suspense that the fighting comes as a relief. Besides furnishing the name of the production, Kipling’s poem provides an appealing character who plays an important part in preventing the wholesale slaughter of the British troops. *Cutter, MacChesney* and *Ballantine* perform amazingly reckless feats, and though they occasionally seem more stupid than brave, they are a delightful trio whose humor is often unexpectedly subtle. Cary Grant is remarkably clever in his handling of the role of *Cutter*. The film is a triumph of direction, especially in the mass scenes. Though it makes no entirely new contribution to screen stories of its type, it is different enough from its forerunners to stand on its own merits.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**
Entertaining; though long and violent

**Children, 8 to 12**
Too long and exciting

**IDIOT’S DELIGHT**


Robert Sherwood adapted his Pulitzer prize play for its screen presentation and therefore apparently approves the changes made. The film is still a highly entertaining satire on war, although those who enjoyed the more sophisticated Theatre Guild production will miss its smart subtlety and will object to the happy ending by which much of the irony of the original is lost. In the film we are first introduced to *Harry* when, wounded, he disembarks from a troop ship returning from France during the great parade when New York welcomed the victorious American Legionnaires. The scene where an ambulance is refused permission to cross through the column of marching soldiers establishes the ironic mood. The following sequences show the meeting of *Harry* and *Irene* in Omaha when *Irene* is introduced as a simple but human and imaginative trouper in a vaudeville acrobatic act. Miss Shearer’s acting is nicely shaded both in this characterization and later as the pseudo Russian aristocrat traveling through Europe in the company of a munitions magnate. Clark Gable is very amusing in the role of song-and-dance man, manager of a group of chorus girls touring Central Europe. The two meet again in a frontier town when war is declared. The setting is dramatic—an inn set high amid magnificent snow-capped mountains. Below is a hidden air port; thundering planes give a sinister warning; soldiers on guard contribute to the military atmosphere. All this is in stunning contrast to the original purpose of the inn (a place for sports enthusiasts), and to the personalities of the guests who are unwillingly interned there. Although the minor characters have been subordinated to the leads and therefore contribute less to the poignancy of the satire, they are outstanding in their roles. Charles Coburn, as Dr. Waldersee, the German scientist abandoning his research for a cancer cure because “men only desire to kill each other,” gives a splendid characterization. William Edmunds is equally fine as Dempsey, the kindly peasant. His comment on becoming an alien overnight through the Versailles Treaty is a touching incident which makes his immediate response to the call to arms deeply moving. Others in the cast also are exceptionally good: Peter Willis, Pat Patterson, Joseph Schildkraut, Burgess Meredith, and the girls of the troupe. Some of Miss Shearer’s costumes are ludicrously unbecoming but this is quite incidental in a production which is so interesting and entertaining a contribution to modern American cinema.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**
Very mature

**Children, 8 to 12**
Too mature

**JESSE JAMES**


“James, Jesse W. (1847-82), American outlaw, born in Clay county Mo., the son of a Baptist minister. The family were Southern in their sympathies during the Civil War, and as a consequence were persecuted by their Union neighbors. Jesse joined Quantrell’s guerrillas and soon earned a name for reckless daring. In 1866 he was outlawed, and from that time until his death was constantly pursued by officers of the law. During these years he attained a world-wide notoriety by the crimes he committed, by his romantic adventures, and his almost invariable success. These exploits were generally bank or train robberies. Finally Governor Crittenden of Missouri offered a reward of $10,000 for his capture, dead or alive, and, tempted by this brio, two members of his own band, Robert and Charles Ford, killed him in his home at St. Joseph, Mo., (April 3, 1882.) ‘His brother Frank, a consumptive, received a government pardon.’—New Standard Encyclopedia.

The film story avoids raising the ghosts of
Civil War animosities but uses instead the equally doubtful expedient of picturing incredible and shocking brutality on the part of railroad representatives as the initial cause of Jesse James' career of banditry. Thus when his mother is killed by railroad agents attempting to confiscate the James homestead, Jesse takes revenge by shooting the murderer, and embarks on a campaign of train robberies to even his score against the railroads. Soon crime becomes an end in itself for him and his brother Frank, and they continue to rob and kill for the love of adventure. The picture is a Western melodrama and thriller of magnificent proportions, superbly photographed in Technicolor against the authentic background of the Ozark Mountains. Undeniably entertaining, it nevertheless ends on a discordant note in an eulogy of the notorious lawbreaker, calling him a man of whom America is proud. These lines might better be omitted for the sake of American self respect. Although the cast is generally good, the picture would have been stronger and more acceptable ethically had Tyrone Power been able to make a convincing change from a likable boy to a ruthless desperado. It takes a mature viewpoint and a cool head to discount the sympathetic aura thrown around the character by Tyrone Power's winning personality and a persuasive script.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12

Not recommended
Too violent and unethical

NANCY DREW, REPORTER ◆ ◆

The "Nancy Drew" stories by Carolyn Keene have no great literary merit but they have a wide following among adolescents, girls particularly, in a certain stage of their reading development. They are thrilling adventure tales, not very subtle, but romantically melodramatic, and in the same catagory as detective stories for adults. The films are fashioned in the same mold. They are packed with action and excitement, but even twelve-year-olds recognize their lack of realism and the fantastic luck which the heroine enjoys in her impossible escapades. In this second picture in the series, Nancy wins a journalism contest and reports for a promised month's trial on the reporter's staff. She cheats a little on an assignment and earths a murder mystery. She and her friend (Ted Nickerson) taking wild risks, and showing superhuman sagacity, succeed in solving the case although the criminals are actually caught through a prank played by Ted's small sis-

SON OF FRANKENSTEIN ◆ ◆

It is hard for anyone who does not like horror pictures to understand why anybody should want to see one. This production has a fine cast, is technically extremely good and perhaps fascinating to those who are not repelled by its hideousness. The close-up details of facial expressions of the monster and of those whom he terrifies make the picture sickening to look at. The film is a sequel of
the last Frankenstein picture. The son of
Frankenstein attempts to revive the monster
his father had created, and to carry on the
experiment of trying to provide him with a
human brain. The monster breaks loose, ter-
rorizes the community, and is finally disposed
of in a pit of boiling sulphur.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Very bad Terrible


SOUTH RIDING
Edna Best, Ralph Richardson, Edmund
Gwenn, Ann Todd, Marie Lohr, Milton Ros-
mer. Based on novel by Winifred Holby.
United Artists.

This English film has with fine simplicity
pictured the contrasting characters who com-
pose the Housing Committee of a Town COUNCIL. As the social problems are settled
the destinies of all concerned are affected. The
story is told so naturally that the people seem
to live. The direction is excellent. Careful
attention to details of lighting, seasonal
changes, and natural surroundings gives re-
ality to a subject which offers food for
thought and which will appeal to audiences
interested in more serious drama.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Rather too serious No interest


STAND UP AND FIGHT
Robert Taylor, Wallace Beery, Florence
Rice, Helen Broderick, Charles Bickford,
Charley Grapewin, Barton MacLane. Direc-
tion by W. S. Van Dyke. M.-G.-M.

The South in pre-Civil-War days is the
setting for this tale of gory clashes between
railroad builders and the manager of a stage
coach line. Robert Taylor, as Blake Cantrell,
is an improverished Southern gentleman who
gets into the thick of the fight on the side of
the Bullet Stage Company. The plot becomes
rather involved and seems loosely put to-
gether, but the picture is a good enough one
of its kind, with its historical background,
beautiful outdoor scenery, and exciting action.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Yes Probably too violent
and confusing


THE STORY OF A CHEAT
Sacha Guitry, Jacqueselle Delubac, Serge
Grave, Marguerite Moreno, Roger Michel,
Rosine Derez. Produced and directed by
Sacha Guitry. English titles by John Erskine.

Extremely interesting both in theme and
method of presentation, this unique French
picture is an intellectual treat. It tells an
ironical story of a waif who escapes death
because he committed a theft and is thus led
to embrace a strange philosophy of right
and wrong which influences his entire life.
The narration is spoken by Sacha Guitry who
plays the lead, and is accompanied by silent
action illustrative of the incidents described.
The film is without frills and appeals mainly
through the cleverness of the script and M.
Guitry's surpassing ability as a raconteur.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Mature but
interesting


THEY MADE ME A CRIMINAL
John Garfield, Claude Rains, Ann Sheridan,
May Robson, "The Dead End Kids," Gloria
Dickson. From the novel by Betram Mili-
hauer and Beulah Marie Dix. Screen play
by Sig Herzig. Direction by Busby Berkeley.
Warner Bros.

Those who admired John Garfield's work
in "Four Daughters" are likely to be greatly
disappointed in the role assigned to him in
"They Made Me a Criminal," a picture
which, contrary to the connotation of the title,
depends for its interest on action rather than
on character development. Its story is about
a tough prizefighter who escapes a murder
charge by fleeing from New York to Grand-
ma's date farm in Arizona. There he falls
in love with his employer's daughter, teaches
six incorrigible boys (The Dead End Kids)
to box, and helps to refine the date farm by
fighting a barn-storming heavyweight at
the risk of being recognized and returned to
New York. The plot leaves much to be de-
sired both ethically and logically, but the
action is well staged and the cast is good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Very sordid in parts
Entirely unsuitable
and unethical


TOPPER TAKES A TRIP
Constance Bennett, Roland Young, Billie
Burke, Alan Mowbray, Veree Teasdale,
Franklin Pangborn. Based on novel, "Top-
per Takes a Trip," by Thorne Smith. Di-
rection by Norman Z. McLeod. Hal Roach
Pictures.

As in the first Topper film, this picture de-
pends for its humor upon trick photography
and the pranks of playful ghosts. Marion
Kirby is still a ghost who is trying to do a
good deed in order to gain permanent resi-
dence in the next world, and the bewildered
Topper and his silly wife are still the objects
of her officious ministrations. This film, not
so clever as its forerunner, naturally suffers
from repetition, but it is nevertheless an en-
gaging bit of frothy entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Good fun
Probably not suffi-
ciently interesting


WINGS OF THE NAVY
George Brent, John Payne, Frank McHugh,
Oliveia de Havilland. Original screen play by
Michael Fessier. Direction by Lloyd Bacon.
Technical Advisor, Lt. Commander Hugh S.
Sease, U.S.N. Photography by Arthur Ede-
son, A.S.C. Warner Brothers.

"Wings of the Navy" will hold special
interest for boys who delight in aeroplanes
and flying. It has a colorful and authentic background because much of it was photographed at the U. S. Naval Air Station at Pensacola, Florida, and at the West Coast Naval Air Base, North Island near San Diego, California. Prospective pilots will be thrilled by the actual inside shots of the new PBY-2 flying destroyers and by the spectacle of hundreds of patrol bombers, pursuit and training planes and many larger ships flying in formation. The scenes of students in action give a taste of what navy training means, its routine, its thrills as well as its dangers. The story itself has been told before. It concerns the rivalry of two brothers in work and in love, but it is less important than the romance of flying, the intensive training the students undergo, and the hazardous tests they must pass in order to win their valued wings. It is stunningly photographed with shots of formation flights, blind flying, and test flights which are emotionally thrilling. While it is a propaganda film in the sense of arousing enthusiasm for defense by air, it does not touch on the subject of actual or possible war, but as the dedication states, it glorifies the men who "in peace time are giving up their lives to maintain and improve our greatest safeguard against war—a powerful Navy—a powerful fighting force "The Wings of the Navy."

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Excellent Depends on taste—long and noisy

YOUTH MARCHES ON

Two reels.

The breezy wholesomeness of this unpretentious film is most refreshing and heartening. While it is recognizable as bearing the stamp of the Oxford Group philosophy, particularly the thought that a better world would result if each individual would deliberately seek a better way of life, its Thesis is universally appealing. The message is delivered pleasingly and is illustrated by the spiritual awakening that came to various youths when they spent some weeks together at The New Empire Camp. The production is frankly amateurish but its sincerity is the more apparent on that account.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Very good Good

SHORT SUBJECTS

POWER

Written and narrated by Frank Whitbeck, M.-G.-M.

The Colorado River and a certain local project currently known as Boulder Dam are used to prove that movies are your best entertainment. Starting with a grateful acknowledgment to the Department of the Interior, some rather overpowering statistics, and instructive photographs of the river, the dam and the power plants, the picture follows the electric current into the hands of a technical staff at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Here electricity illuminates excerpts from that studio's about-to-be released pictures. As a catalogue of future bookings, it may be informative but as a vehicle of instruction it is as disappointing as a side-show that doesn't live up to the eloquence of the barker.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Yes Yes
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Beverly Hills
An experiment in moving picture programs for children is now being conducted by the Extension Division of the University of California. At least one Saturday afternoon a month, and sometimes more often, programs are held in Royce Hall Auditorium on the Westwood campus.

The project, approved by school principals, parent-teacher groups, librarians, and others, is meeting a real need for wholesome entertainment for the younger children.


The number of programs given is necessarily limited on account of the lack of suitable material.

Preceding the picture, Mr. Harry Q. Mills, local organist, gives half an hour of music especially for the children. Attendance at the musical program is optional, but has steadily increased until now, the musical program is being featured. An international program with music from all nations proved to be very popular.

Admission to the program, 15 cents, two for 25 cents, adults 25 cents.

Persons who wish to receive notices of future programs may have their names placed on the mailing list by writing to 815 South Hill Street, or by calling VAndike 2401.
FEATURE FILMS

THE ADVENTURES OF JANE ARDEN

Based on a newspaper comic strip, this mystery thriller relates how a girl reporter on the trail of another story happens upon evidence that exposes a ring of jewel smugglers. It follows the familiar pattern of newspaper-underworld stories and is passably entertaining of its type.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Not recommended because of element of crime

AMBUSH

If repetition is a factor in learning, we should all have committed to memory the "crime-doesn't-pay" lesson by now. "Ambush" chooses a bank robbery and an attempted escape to demonstrate this truism. Among other defects, the picture suffers from added casting. Miss Swarthout does not sing; Mr. Nolan does not menace and Mr. Truex is not a farceur. Of the three Mr. Nolan proves most versatile in stepping out of his niche. As for the plot, gangsters being pursued by the police, that's nickelodeon stuff, cops and robbers brought up to date.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Unsuited

THE ARIZONA WILCAT

Jane Withers is cast as a hoyden with good intentions but lawless methods, and, as often happens, her part is exaggerated. Leo Carrillo, as El Gato, her foster parent and father of five adorable little Mexican boys, displays his usual irresistible charm. He is a reformed bandit, who is routed out by Jane to effect the release of a nice young man unjustly incarcerated by a rascally sheriff. Once again El Gato finds himself in difficulties when he and his band are brought to trial. It is the Wild Western type of entertainment with fast riding, masked bandits, and an abundance of activity.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Exciting

BOY TROUBLE

Taking two unwanted boys into his home brings about a beneficial change of character in a crabby middle-aged man. Full of situations pointing to the softening of a heart by love and trust, this picture leans heavily on the sentimental side. The prospect of the motherless hitch-hiker is one to arouse a zeal for social work, and the therapeutic effect of mother-love is brought out. In addition, the cost of dishonesty is pictured and a timely penance extracted. All in all it is full of moral cliches, not too deeply buried within the text. It may please uncritical audiences with its almost burlesque adult characterizations, and the genuine feeling of Donald O'Connor and Billy Lee. Charles Ruggles and Mary Boland present their usual characterizations ably, and young John Hartley shows himself a likely new-comer with much personality and good looks.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Passable, but over-sentimental

CAFE SOCIETY

Amusing dialogue, beautiful photography, a very glamorous leading lady, a favorite leading man, and an atmosphere of glittering opulence make this a picture which is sure to be popular. The theme is a hardy perennial; poor young man marries spoiled society girl and proceeds to improve her character by administering the discipline she should have had in her childhood. Novelty is introduced in the methods employed to tame this particular shrew, and some of them are extremely funny.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Too sophisticated

CHARLIE CHAN IN HONOLULU

Comedy, human interest, and suspense are well blended in this Charlie Chan picture wherein Charlie not only solves a murder mystery but becomes a grandfather as well. When a man is found murdered aboard a freighter, Charlie and two of his sons inves-
tigate the crime. As usual, they succeed in trapping the criminal but not before another victim is shot and a large sum of money is stolen. Despite the murders, the picture is not gruesome, for interest centers in the solution of the crime and in Charlie's family affairs. Additional diversion is provided by a menagerie on board the ship. Sidney Toler is an able successor to Warner Oland.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Entertaining
Questionable, depends on temperament of child

FAST AND LOOSE ☑ ☑

The characters of Joel and Garda Sloane found in "Fast Company" appear again in "Fast and Loose" although Robert Montgomery and Rosalind Russell replace Melvyn Douglas and Florence Rice in the roles. Joel is a dealer in rare books. Garda, his wife, acts as his clever but flippant secretary. Their lives seem always complicated by theft and murder, and they turn to sleuthing, but the suspense is overshadowed by comic situations and the final impression is that of light comedy rather than melodrama.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Sophisticated comedy
Children, 8 to 12
Unsuitable

FISHERMAN'S WHARF ☑ ☑
Bobby Breen, Leo Carrillo, Henry Armetta, Leo Patrick, Rosina Galli, Slicker. Direction by Bernard Vorhaus. R.K.O.

The story of "Fisher man's Wharf" is slight, telling of how the love and confidence of a little orphaned boy for his foster-father are almost disrupted by the self-interest of a calculating woman. But the charm of the picture lies in the colorful life of the Italian colony on San Francisco Bay, in the relationship of simple kindly people who love each other, and in the emphasis on spiritual and moral integrity. Bobby Breen's voice and the musical score are delightful. It is a charming film for family audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Yes

HONOLULU ☑ ☑
Eleanor Powell, Robert Young, Gracie Allen, George Burns, Rita Johnson, Clarence Kolb, Willie Fung. Original story and screen play by Herbert Fields and Frank Partos. Direction by Edward Buzzell. M.-G.-M.

Since dancing musicals need little in the way of plot, this story of a movie star who changes places with his double is adequate. Robert Young plays a dual role, a Hollywood favorite who is tormented by auto-

graph seekers, and a planter from Honolulu who, to please his fiancée, is trying to acquire a more romantic personality. The two meet by accident and decide to change places. Brooks Mason, the actor, enjoys a vacation in Honolulu while George Smith, the planter, spends most of his time in hospitals recovering from over-enthusiastic greetings from fans. The complications make amusing comedy when Brooks, having fallen in love with a dancer, must also be attentive to George's girl who now finds her supposed fiancé subtly different and much more romantic. Eleanor Powell dances brilliantly on a luxurious liner and at a night club on the island. Gracie Allen is as "goofy" as usual with some hilarious lines. George Burns is not constantly his wife's stooge and adequately plays a role which gives him more character. Settings are lavish, music is popular, and the production entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Entertaining
Not much interest

HUCKLEBEER FANN ☑ ☑
Mickey Rooney, Walter Connolly, William Frawley, Lynne Carver, Rex Ingram, Jo Ann Sayers, Minor Watson, Elizabeth Risdon. Adapted from novel by Mark Twain. Screen play by Hugo Butler. M.-G.-M.

Most lovers of Mark Twain have mental images of Huckleberry Finn. To many, Mickey Rooney fits the part as ideally as anyone who might be chosen to enact the role. His unconventional appearance, husky voice, and inherent charm fit as nearly as possible the character of the inimitable scamp of the story. The incidents chosen for the picture lack some of the boyish pranks found in the film version of Tom Sawyer, but the plot is equally melodramatic, and the dialogue has the real flavor of Mark Twain's humor. Huck, running away to save his benefactress from paying blackmail money to his father, meets the slave, Jim, escaping to avoid being sold down the river, and although at heart bitterly opposed to Abolition, he gives Jim his help. Huck and Jim run into the two miscreants "The King" and "The Duke" and thereby find themselves mixed up in adventure of the wildest sort. Exceptional tolerance, loyalty and kindness are expressed by the characters of Huck and Jim, and there is an intriguing interest in the settings of a bygone period. Much of the dialogue has heart-warming sincerity and humor. The scenery along the Sacramento River gives a feeling of the Middle West along the Mississippi where the story was laid, and many of the shots of the river and the steamboats are very lovely. The cast is excellent and the screen play by Hugo Butler, very fine, retaining as it does the spirit of the original.
THE JONES FAMILY IN HOLLYWOOD


When Father Jones is chosen as delegate to the American Legion convention in Hollywood, all the family insist upon accompanying him in the trailer. He spends his time and breath blowing on a gigantic horn in the parade and dodging mounted Arabs in the studios, while Lucy seeks a career in pictures, Jack is charmed by a movie star, and Roger learns to run a motion picture camera. They have a gay time while it lasts but in the end find Hollywood disillusioning and are quite satisfied to return home. It is a thoroughly wholesome picture, full of light and amusing episodes which will probably interest those who have never seen the film capital more than those to whom such scenes are familiar.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12

Yes
Yes, if interested

KING OF THE TURF


Adolphe Menjou usually plays the smart sophisticate whose emotions are perfectly insolated, and it is therefore a surprise as well as a pleasure to see him in a part which calls for the expression of deep affection and courageous sacrifice. Through most of the picture he is associated with young Roger Daniel, a very natural boy in his early teens, lively and engaging, and it is a happy combination for both of them. The story relates the fortunes of Jim Mason, once the greatest figure in the racing world, now through drink and gambling fallen to the lot of a common tramp. The adoration and trust of Goldie, who has run away from home to become a jockey, give him the incentive to battle his way back to his former position. Perhaps the development of the plot relies too heavily upon coincidence, but it never loses interest. The race-track scenes are well photographed and are very thrilling. Both sides of the racing picture are presented: the best ideals of fine breeding, sportsmanship and fair play and, in contrast, the dishonorable practices of maiming horses and manipulating races through bribery.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12

Somewhat mature
No

LET FREEDOM RING


Since foreign release of our American films has been restricted, we may now raise our voices for our country without treading on some other nation's ego. The stage has set the precedent, as witness the patriotic fervor of a number of productions on Broadway. Thus it is only natural that the screen follow suit, and we may well see motion picture audiences rise and file out singing "My Country T'il of Thee" led by the inimitable voice of Nelson Eddy. "Let Freedom Ring" has a patriotic exhilaration which carries the burden of entertainment gallantly all the way through. It concerns the problem of ignorant immigrants who were the easy prey of economic tyranny until, spurred on by realization of their rights as American citizens, they became a powerful force for democracy. The railroad, as in "Jesse James," is again the villain. In its march across the country, the lawless methods of individuals caused many hardships which, for dramatic emphasis, have been exploited. The film uses this tyrannical force as a spur to renew a realization of individual rights and to stimulate appreciation of American superiority to any form of dictatorship. It is a grand Western melodrama with thrilling suspense in gripping action and, for climax, Nelson Eddy's glorious voice bringing emotional response to a high peak.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12

General effect good
Violent action

LIFE DANCES ON (Un Carnet de Bal)


American audiences who have been fortunate enough to see other pictures directed by Julien Duvivier ("Polo de Carotte," "Marie Chapdelaine," "The Golem") will not want to miss this most interesting film. In using an unique device by way of a plot, it presents a series of absorbing character studies enacted by some of France's most able actors. Christine, played by Marie Bell of the Comédie Francaise, finds herself alone in the world after the death of her husband, and sets forth to rediscover the romance of her youth. On an old dance card are the names of men who in the past professed to love her, and she determines to find each in turn to discover what has become of them and whether any of them is the one with whom she could have found happiness. The stories of these
men as she finds them are sometimes tragic, sometimes amusing, and always absorbingly interesting, and superlatively acted.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Unsuitable  No

THE LITTLE PRINCESS  ◇  ◇

When Shirley Temple is starred in a well-known, children's classic, young hearts beat apprehensively for fear that the original will be lost in a setting for the star. These fears may be set at rest concerning "The Little Princess" for, while the story is altered in part, it retains the spirit of the original, and in reuniting Sara with her beloved father, it softens the pathos of Miss Burnett's book. It is quite the best story Shirley has had in recent times. Because children's books of the '90s were melodramatic, they make good theatre, and there is enough of fairy tale magic in this one to thrill even modern children. Miss Minchin with her grasping materialism is brought to life. Her sister has been changed to an amusing and sympathetic brother (delightfully portrayed by Arthur Treacher) who, because of a music-hall past is qualified to tread a few secretive taps with Shirley as his "pardner in crime." Cesar Romero is a romantic Ram Dass, perfectly selected to bring about the enchanting metamorphosis of the drab hole to which Sara has been exiled after her money has disappeared. Shirley shows high dramatic ability in her role, and Sybil Jason is outstanding as the little Cockney slavey, Becky. A charming interlude is an exquisite dream sequence, a ballet. Another is the scene where Queen Victoria is sympathetically gracious to the child searching for her father among the wounded in the hospital. Technicolor adds greatly to the beauty of the picture. It is family entertainment which is delightfully reassuring among a plethora of films dealing with crime and disillusionment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Very entertaining  Good but emotional

MADE FOR EACH OTHER  ◇  ◇

It is a departure for a movie to start, not close, with a marriage. Thus "Made For Each Other" is a novelty. It is a genuine slice of life, the heart-rending disappointments and small irritations of a young couple who, on a limited budget and in too close quarters, are compelled to live with a disapproving mother-in-law. When a baby arrives the situation becomes even more complicated. Jo Swerling has evolved realism and written natural and human lines. In fact much of it is almost too real to entertain in the accepted sense. It is life brought to the screen with all its poignant pathos as well as with its sweetness and inherent comedy which at the time is so often overlooked. The ending becomes melodramatic; a desperately sick child; serum rushed by plane across the continent through fear-some elements; and a finale which promises easier living. The cast is excellent and the direction uncommonly satisfactory. Carole Lombard plays without her customary exaggerated comedy. James Stewart is good in a familiar type of role. Charles Coburn and Lucile Watson are splendidly human and ideally cast. The picture is distinguished by the usual values of the Selznick productions. Its appeal will depend entirely upon audience taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Mature: little interest  Too mature

MR. MOTO IN DANGER ISLAND  ◇  ◇

This is another Mr. Moto mystery very like the others in the series. The well-known detective is sent to aid the governor of a remote island in apprehending a gang of murderers and jewel smugglers. After searching a haunted swamp, he finally gets his man.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Passable  No

MR. MOTO TAKES A VACATION  ◇  ◇

When an archeologist discovers the crown of the Queen of Sheba, Mr. Moto accompanies him back to America because he has a well-founded suspicion that some famous jewel thief will be in the offing and he hopes to have the pleasure of making the capture. This situation develops into one of the most successful of the Mr. Moto series with a real surprise at the end. The plot is swift-moving, and the dialogue pungent. Characterizations are unusually good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Yes  Yes, if interested
MOTION PICTURE REVIEWS

PERSONS IN HIDING ◆ ◆

Taken from a book by J. Edgar Hoover, the story shows both sides of a life of crime: the activities of powerful criminals and the methods used by the Federal Government in destroying them. In this case, the brain work of the gangsters is done by a woman who leaves her monotonous life as a beauty-parlor operator for a calling which will net her expensive perfumes and mink coats. Patricia Morrison is competent in this part. Exploits of the criminals are exciting, unscrupulous, and cruel. The constructive part of the film gives an insight into the work of the G-men: the efficient files of criminal histories, fingerprinting and statistical records of geographical areas. It is doubtful if the final lesson balances the sordid and depressing details of the story. Repetitious presentation of crimes and criminals does not aid extensively in social development.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
No Impossible

ST. LOUIS BLUES ◆ ◆

With a Mississippi show-boat for its background and some well known singers and vaudeville performers for its cast, this ought to be an entertaining, if scarcely novel film. However, it falls short of possibilities. The story is poor and unconvincing and the music is not good enough to make the picture otherwise worthwhile.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Passable Little interest

THE SAINT STRIKES BACK ◆ ◆ ◆

Probably those who are familiar with The Saint of the Leslie Charteris stories will read enough into the the picture to find it satisfactory; the majority of others will feel that it does not quite "click," and that The Saint fails to be the suave and magnetic adventurer he is supposed to be. Introduced as a modern Robin Hood, with the police often at his heels and often winking at his methods, he takes pot shots at a few enemies and is only one step removed from the status of a criminal, although he turns his unusual powers to the chivalrous defense of a young woman. Together they succeed in re-establishing the good name of her deceased parent. The action is involved, but everything clears up fairly well at the end.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Not constructive Too complex

SILVER ON THE SAGE ◆ ◆

Although talking pictures have many advantages over the old silent medium, a definite loss was suffered in the matter of rhythm. Only the Westerns have preserved that quality to any degree, and perhaps that is the reason why many people who would not choose the themes find real satisfaction in a good Western. "Silver On the Sage" has a fine rhythm in the riding, the strains of cowboy music, even in the dealing of cards in the gambling hall. The plot of this "Hop-along Cassidy" story follows the familiar lines, but there is enough ingenuity in the various episodes to give it freshness and color. The hero is bent on capturing a gang of cattle rustlers, and his problem is given complexity by the fact that the leaders are two brothers so alike in appearance that one can establish a perfect alibi in his gambling saloon while the other is leading his desperadoes on evil ventures.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Enjoyable Too exciting for some

THE SPIRIT OF CULVER ◆ ◆ ◆

The making of an anti-social youth into a worthwhile citizen by means of military school discipline and the influence of a fine roommate is the theme of this film. Jackie Cooper plays the part of a lad who is picked out of a bread line by the American Legion and sent to Culver. Embittered by early hardships, he resents the training at the school and looks with cynicism upon the medal for bravery which he believes had cost his father's life during the World War. Gradually, however, his roommate (Freddie Bartholomew) succeeds in imparting to him a love of service to his country. So far the story is real and appealing. Then enters the war-scared father who turns out to be, not a hero who died in battle, but a shell-shocked deserter, and from then on the story is mawkish and unconvincing. However it may be enjoyed for the sincere acting of the boys and the scenes of life at a military academy. As in other films dealing with the
subject of military training, its message may be interpreted according to the individual bias of the beholder.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12  
**Passable**

**STAGE COACH**  

When Walter Wagner decides to produce a Western, though he may use some of the stock characters and situations of frontier stories the result is no ordinary picture. In "Stage Coach" there is a sense of reality and importance in every scene, and great beauty in the far-flung desert wastes with their majestic mesas and cloud-strewn skies. Even in this day of fine outdoor photography, the effects are exceptional. The sense of reality is due primarily to clear-cut character drawing, well-written dialogue and a cast who enter with zeal into the individual parts. When the story opens Geronimo is on the warpath in Arizona Territory, but with one exception the occupants of the stage coach bound for Lordsburg are so goaded by their own exigencies that they are willing to brave the horrors of Apache warfare to reach their destination. The first lap of the journey goes well, with a company of troops to act as guard; however, the soldiers have received strict orders to return, and additional escorts are missing. At the second stop, matters are complicated by the arrival of a baby with the assistance of an abruptly de-alcoholized doctor. As the Apaches are closing in, the only alternative is to bundle everyone into the coach and go forward. When the travellers believe themselves on safe terrain, the Indians swoop down for a spectacular and thrilling battle with a providential rescue at the end. Unlike most Westerns, this one does not paint moral values clearly black and white. The two most important characters are an outlaw and a woman of ill-fame who have managed to retain certain admirable qualities and make a bid for tolerance and the simple chance to survive.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12  
**Needs adult evaluation**

**TAILSPIN**  

Daring exploits in the clouds, parachute jumps, spectacular crashes—one accidental, the other a suicide—and a love triangle. The usual ingredients of aviation pictures are here. But the novelty is that the fliers are women and that the setting is the National Air Derby. If one is in search of excitement, "Tailspin" has its quota but the story is weak and the ethics dubious.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12  
**Not recommended**

**THREE MUSKETEERS**  
Don Ameche, Ritz Brothers, Binnie Barnes, Lionel Atwill, Gloria Stuart, Pauline Moore, Joseph Schildkraut, John Carradine, Miles Mander, Douglas Dumbrille, John King, Russell Hicks. Direction by Allan Dwan. 20th Century-Fox.

"Three Musketeers" is a gay, nonsensical version of Dumas' classic with the Ritz Brothers cast as three lackeys masquerading absurdly as Porthos, Athos and Aramis, while Don Ameche plays D'Artagnan in the approved romantic style. The task of making such a combination acceptable would seem to present an impossible problem, but Director Allan Dwan has solved it with distinction, and the film is proof that with skillful handling almost anything may be turned into good entertainment. The plot is based on that part of the novel in which D'Artagnan with the aid of the musketeers restores to the French queen the brooch which she has indiscreetly given to her lover, and thus foil Richelieu's plot to undermine her influence. In this version the musketeers are replaced by the lackeys in disguise who, though they have none of the musketeers' prowess with the rapier, employ their own very effective methods with gusto. Production values are excellent and the interpolated songs are pleasing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12  
**Entertaining**

**TWELVE CROWDED HOURS**  

In order to free the brother of the girl he loves, Nick, a newspaper reporter vies with the District Attorney in tracking down a gang of racketeers, and incidentally puts the D. A. to confusion. There is all the excitement and thrill and brutality of the usual gangster film, and these qualities remain more impressive than the stereotyped lesson of "crime doesn't pay." One is left with a feeling of insecurity and a bad taste in the mouth, although the criminals are defeated in the end. Richard Dix does well enough to deserve a better vehicle.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12  
**Wrong emphasis**

**Gruesome**
YES, MY DARLING DAUGHTER ♦ ♦
Priscilla Lane, Jeffrey Lynn, Roland Young, Fay Bainter, May Robson, Genevieve Tobin, Ian Hunter. From the stage play by Mark Reed. Screen play by Casey Robinson. Direction by William Keighley. Warner Bros.

This picture is a daring departure from the accepted themes usually presented by Hollywood. It involves the same problem as the stage production concerning the reactions of a modern miss and her family to an unconventional episode which the girl demands the right to enjoy because she has pieced together the pattern of her mother's somewhat irregular past and assumes that what was good for the goose is equally right for the gosling. The cinema version is exceedingly well done. The cast is excellent, and the characterizations are adeptly delineated. The lines are humorous and sophisticated, and difficult scenes are superbly handled. However, it lacks the subtly witty sophistication of the stage production. In adding a new character in the role of a grandmother who takes matters into her own hands, it turns clever satire into broad farce. “Yes, My Darling Daughter” does not qualify as encouragement of propriety. It ends on a conventional note, but its suitability is limited to adult audiences who recognize that it frankly ridicules laxity in accepted social customs.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No: requires adult interpretation
Children, 8 to 12
No.

YOU CAN'T GET AWAY WITH MURDER ♦

In a picture entitled “You Can't Get Away With Murder,” First National proves that you can, at least in the field of entertainment. The picture is stark, typical of what one would expect of an author who has the grim responsibility of controlling convicted criminals and who wrote “Twenty Thousand Years in Sing Sing.” Billy Halop of “Dead End” fame is really the leading character. Most of the vehicles in which he has appeared have been shaded by a grotesque humor. Even this was relief to an anxious, tense, and often pained audience. “You Can't Get Away With Murder” lacks this vague humanitarianism. It is the story of a youth who gets into trouble through bad associations and who is finally murdered by a fellow-convict during a prison break. Of current productions, three have taken us to the death house, and for law abiding citizens, this is much too often.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Definitely no
Children, 8 to 12
No.
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Almost a Gentleman ♦ ♦


For dog lovers, this picture will have considerable appeal because of the beautiful German shepherd dog which plays an important part in the story. The plot seems a bit artificial and uses a familiar situation to provide an emotional effect (the dog is accused of a vicious killing which is afterwards traced to a wild animal). However, the underlying theme is unusual. A social misfit, who has quarreled with his blue-blood in-laws, befriends their dog when they have condemned it to death because it is not a thoroughbred. There is a great deal of bitterness in the atmosphere of the film, but it is somewhat relieved by the happy ending and the presence of the beautiful Picardy Max.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Emotional.

Chasing Danger ♦ ♦


Newsreel cameramen, plotting Arabs, a girl spy, shooting, wild riding in a desert, and broad, sometimes vulgar, comedy are combined in this mixed-up adventure story which may be characterized in the words of Gertrude Stein as "Not great accomplishing something being struggling."

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Questionable.

DARK VICTORY ♦ ♦


"Dark Victory," is an emotional tragedy which is significant because of splendid direction and the exceptional acting of Bette Davis. In interpreting the behavior of a
young girl who is in love and who knows that she has only a short time to live, Miss Davis pictures varying moods so adeptly that her portrayal is masterly. The other persons in the cast, notably, George Brent, Geraldine Fitzgerald, and Humphrey Bogart, give outstanding performances, but of necessity they become background for the art of Miss Davis because she must give the character reality and make us appreciate the courage which takes the sting from death and gives the girl the power to make her life so successful that it will leave only beautiful memories for those who will be left when death has won.

Several scenes are startlingly dramatic but the one where she meets the doctor and yields to his insistance that a diagnosis be made of her symptoms, is one of the most human and artistic bits of direction and acting that we have seen on the screen. Its restraint and dramatic value have rarely been equaled. The excellent musical background, photography, sound recording, and editing, add distinction to a production which is notable for its artistry.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
No: depressing

DODGE CITY  

Exquisite color photography is the chief interest of this melodramatic western. Many of the scenes call for spontaneous applause: prairies with herds of grazing buffalo; wagon trains winding through high grass, accompanied by hundreds of longhorn cattle; riders outlined against a sun-set sky. The stampede of steers is brilliantly pictured, and a free-for-all fight in a saloon is violent enough to enthral anyone with a yen for vicarious adventure. But the film is not an epic. The story lacks inspiration and belongs to a bygone period of cinema technique.

The railroad reaches its farthest outpost in Kansas just after the Civil War, and the terminus is called Dodge City. As the town grows, the lawless element runs wild. Our hero is asked to settle there and enforce law and order. He hesitates until an innocent child meets a horrible death in an accident indirectly caused by a street brawl. The murders and terrorizing of citizens suggest the atrocities in foreign countries of which we read today, but these are pictured only for emotional, melodramatic effect and to serve as a medium for displaying the physical prowess and sterling courage of a picturesque hero. It is the type of film which formerly thrilled junior matinee audiences, but modern junior high school critics demand greater finesse, and the scenes of extreme violence make it questionable fare for younger audiences. However as a "rip-snorting western" it meets all requirements, and one can enjoy the ravishing color and the sweep of action, and can be assured that a most attractive hero will subdue the villains, win a lovely bride and then go on to clean up all points farther west.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Matter of taste  
Children, 8 to 12  
Violent and Emotional

THE FLYING IRISHMAN  

Douglas Corrigan is not an actor, and his voice and stature are not the sort to insure immediate screen appeal. But his sincerity is so apparent that, especially in the flying scenes, he manages to overcome these handicaps and even arouse a measure of real enthusiasm. The picture is almost documentary in effect. It introduces a novel departure in telling its story by having a narrator bridge over years of effort and hardship. Possibly the production would have been improved had the narration also included the scenes of the flyer's early boyhood and the unpleasant episodes involving his father. But when Mr. Corrigan himself enters the picture the action emphasizes a fine spirit of sound ambition, of perserverance accompanied by rigid discipline, and of courageous refusal to accept defeat, which makes the scenes of the trans-continental and the overseas flight to Ireland splendid accomplishments. The final impression is inspirational in presenting a hero entirely worthy of admiration.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Constructive and interesting  
Children, 8 to 12  
Yes, if interested

FRAM FOR FRAMGANG (Road to Success)  

American audiences will be interested in this introduction to the Swedish tenor, Jussi Bjorling, whose beautiful voice has recently been heard at the Metropolitan Opera and over the air. He is not a romantic hero nor does this amusing comedy attempt to make him one. He plays the role of a singer who strives for a radio audition and finally resorts to forcing his way in to sing to the head of a broadcasting station, unaware that
they are on the air. He realizes that he has ruined a broadcast and goes into hiding from the police not knowing that they are looking for him because his voice has won recognition. Jussi Bjorling sings several folk songs and arias from "The Masquerade Ball," English subtitles give clear understanding of the action and the foreign locale adds interest and novelty.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
If musical  Little interest

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES  

"The Hound of the Baskervilles" may well be a preview of your next nightmare! Those who follow a name to the movies will be a bit disappointed to see Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes, for his ability is in no way taxed by this run-of-the-mill part. Set in a manor house of grim history on the bleak, craggy, treacherous moors of Devonshire, the story has a background of supernatural suspense which is emphasized by telling photography and eerie sound effects. Sir Henry Baskerville inherited the Baskerville estate and with it a certain bit of folklore concerning the violent deaths of his predecessors. Determined to rid himself of this legend, Henry goes to Devonshire and is almost killed by a huge dog which has been brought to the scene by the heir next in succession. Richard Greene and Wendy Barrie are necessary bits of sunshine in this all too grim tale, and if you aren't frightened out of your wits by the time the mystery is solved, you'll be amused by Mr. Rathbone's last line, "Come Watson, the needle."

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Exciting  Too nerve wracking

THE ICE FOLLIES OF 1939  

In the advance notices concerning "The Ice Follies of 1939," one gathered that Miss Crawford would skate. Intrigued by the promise of this new accomplishment, patrons will be disappointed to find that she doesn't. The role played by Miss Crawford seems a secondary one considering her stellar standing and could have been filled by any of the attractive girls that studios have under inexpensive contracts. The picture is held together by a stereotyped plot about a wife whose career interferes with her home, but it has moments of bright dialogue and fresh, delightful situations. The skating, however, is superb. Unfortunately, the first skating sequence is in gray film, poorly illuminated and poorly photographed so that much of the perfection in the chorus numbers is lost, but the second sequence called "The Cinderella Finale" brings all the light and color one has come to associate with "The Follies" and is so close to perfection in staging and execution that when the picture has had its run, "The Cinderella Finale" in technicolor ought to be lifted from the film and sent out as a short.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Entertaining for the skating  Mature problems treated in story

I'M FROM MISSOURI  

Bob Burns with his homespun humor is the inspiration for this lightly entertaining comedy in which he plays the role of a Missouri mule-trader who takes his family and his pet mule to London. While his wife tries unsuccessfully to break into London society, he puts over a deal with the British Army to buy the entire product of the Missouri mule market and thus confirms the popular belief that to get along among foreigners a smart American business man need only be himself.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Yes  Yes

THE LADY AND THE MOB  

This tells of an enthusiastic crusade against crime, led by an eccentric old woman who succeeds in clearing up dishonest practices in her city. Audiences will find it mildly entertaining because of its light-hearted quality. One is always conscious of the ridiculous and incongruous elements of which it is composed, but the story is held together by interesting characterizations, especially that given by Miss Bainter. Old Mrs. Leonard is a type of role unlike any she has essayed before on the screen, being less real and rather a tour-de-force for her. Ida Lupino skims through her part, Henry Armetta's performance is heart warming as well as laugh provoking, and Warren Hymer and others of the gang are good.

Since the whole approach to the crime question in this case is for humorous purposes, one must not expect any serious solu-
tion. Mrs. Leonard’s principle is, obviously, that the end justifies the means, and she uses extra-legal methods to bring about what the law has failed to do. The climax is reached when she begs the exploited merchants to resist the dictatorship of the racketeers and “be Americans.” Thus two favorite movie themes, gangster and patriotic, are expounded in the same film. It is not an outstanding production but will be passably amusing on a double bill, if one must endure this exhausting procedure.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Passable  Better not

THE LADY VANISHES  ♦ ♦
Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave, Paul Lukas, Dame May Whitty, Cecil Parker, Linden Travers. Direction by Alfred Hitchcock. Gaumont-British.

“The Lady Vanishes” achieves distinction in its field, not because of any striking performance, exceptional photography, or unusual sets, but because it is a smooth, highly entertaining mystery, in the solution of which the audience will find genuine pleasure and amusement. The action takes place, first in an Alpine inn where various travelers are marooned for the night because of an avalanche, and then on board a train which carries villains, victims, and numerous minor characters who add lively interest to the plot.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Entertaining  Too involved and exciting

THE LONE WOLF SPY HUNT  ♦ ♦ ♦

With no attempt at finesse, logic or realism a search for stolen plans races through to a successful finish involving detectives, professional, amateur, and junior, in startling and exciting action. The film is of no great importance from any point of view.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Not worth while  Too confusing

LOVE AFFAIR  ♦ ♦

“Love Affair” is one of those rare films which happily appear just often enough to restore public confidence in the belief that a motion picture can be a thing of beauty and a joy to those who see it. It has no burning issues to settle nor is it one of those fearless expositions of contemporary problems which lately have been called the cure all for the anemia which is said to have attacked the screen. It merely tells the love story of two somewhat oversophisticated people, but it tells it in such a way as to make their idyllic love believable and their sorrows poignant real. The lines have both wit and sentiment, and the acting and direction combine to make a truly outstanding production. Though Charles Boyer and Irene Dunne give exceptionally fine performances, Maria Ouspenskaya’s portrayal of the lovely grandmother will be longest remembered.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Mature  No interest

MIDNIGHT  ♦ ♦

An ingenious plot, adroit direction, and a particularly clever cast, combine to give us one of the most hilarious farce comedies of the season. It concerns the astonishing adventures of a penniless American chorus girl who arrives in Paris in an evening gown and without baggage after an embarrassing streak of bad luck in Monte Carlo. A taxi driver befriends her but she runs away from him only to find herself mistaken for a guest at a fashionable musicale. John Barrymore sizes up the situation and begs to use her as a decoy in order to break up a romantic affair his wife is enjoying. She agrees and the resulting masquerade is uproariously funny as Claudette claims marriage to a man she’s never met and divorces a man she never married.

Miss Colbert is at her best in this type of role. John Barrymore does his best comedy. Don Ameche, Mary Astor and Francis Lederer are perfectly cast. Minor roles deserve recognition. The sets and gowns are beautiful and lavish. For sophisticated, witty comedy with a Continental background, we recommend “Midnight.”

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Sophisticated and mature  Unsuitable

NEVER SAY DIE  ♦ ♦

A young millionaire hypochondriac, wintering at a Swiss health resort, has his health chart mixed by laboratory workers with that of a dog patient and is warned when he goes to get the results of his tests that he has only a month to live. He and his valet then spend their time fleeing from a
pursuing widow, and in their efforts to escape, collide with the young daughter of an American millionaire whose father has brought her to Europe in search of a title. The "title" is an impoverished prince who is hounded by creditors and eager to marry the young heiress. With that setup the rest of the story is obvious. Despite the hackneyed plot and slapstick detail, there are some amusing lines, but the picture as a whole is only a mediocre farce which narrowly avoids being vulgar.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Not recommended

PRISON WITHOUT BARS
Corinne Luchaire, Edna Best, Barry Barnes, Mary Morris, Martita Hunt, Margaret Yarde, Elsie Shelton, Lorraine Clewes. Direction by Brian Desmond Hurst. Korda-United Artists.

In the manner of other current exposés of the treatment of social delinquents, this melodrama investigates the problems of a girls' reformatory. Enlightened kindness versus brutality in the handling of the inmates is presented in a story which uses many of the situations which seem inevitable in the picturization of such themes. The new director, an attractive young woman, tries to put her theories into practice but is impeded by the distrust of those who supported the former administration and the lack of cooperation among the worst element in the institution. She is eventually vindicated, but in the meantime loses her fiancé, the institution doctor, to one of the trusted inmates. Interesting to film addicts because it presents a new foreign actress, Corinne Luchaire, it will appeal otherwise only to audiences who have a definite liking for this type of entertainment. Better than average acting and technique may excuse its trite scenario but cannot make it a significant contribution to the current screen output.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Most unsuitable

RISKY BUSINESS

There have been many films in which a smart newspaper reporter turns sleuth, but a novel twist is given to this picture by making a radio announcer the hero who solves a kidnapping and exposes the criminals. The action is dramatic enough to hold the attention of audiences who find the subject matter to their liking.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Questionable

SERGEANT MADDEN

With the fear that the audience may not recognize the underlying theme, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer states it at the beginning of the picture. Being thus forearmed, one learns that there are heroes on every block though one may not recognize them, and of these, the policeman on the beat, because of his adherence to duty, is outstanding. As proof, Wallace Beery, cast in the role of policeman and father, shows that his years of discipline and service force him to place his duty before his love for his son when that son turns into a murderous outlaw. The picture is sentimental, laden with the little, human details of everyday living. It becomes violent in action when a boy turns criminal, and ends with a pleasant if rather feeble anti-climax.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Involved ethics

THE STORY OF ALEXANDER
GRAHAM BELL
Don Ameche, Loretta Young, Henry Fonda, Bobs Watson, Charles Coburn, Spring Byington, Sally Blane, Polly Ann Young. Screenplay by Lamar Trotti, from an original story by Ray Harris. Direction by Irving Cummings. 20th Century-Fox.

In writing the life of this famous American, the scenarists have contrived a happy blending of realism and romance. We see in the early scenes the familiar struggle of the hero and his faithful friend against poverty and derision. Don Ameche's acting is a fine sensitive piece of work that immediately endears young Bell to his audience. We follow with sympathy his experiments, his casual first meeting with the deaf girl who finally becomes his wife, and his teaching of a little deaf mute boy to talk. When he finally wins the backing of the little pupil's father and the father of his fiancée for the perfecting of his telephone and goes to Europe with his lovely young wife to demonstrate the new device to Queen Victoria, we follow his fortunes with absorbing interest. Then enters the villain in the form of the Western Union Company, which claims priority of patent on the new invention. The court room scene in which Bell's young bride reads one of his early love letters is somewhat melodramatic and unreal, but the story as a whole is a fine, inspiring piece of work, beautifully acted and directed.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Excellent.
THE STORY OF VERNON AND
IRENE CASTLE


For those who have seen Irene and Vernon Castle at the height of their career, this picture will evoke a charmed nostalgia. Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire recreate enough of our fading impressions of the Castles to give credence to their impersonations, and the beautiful love story is sufficiently true to fact to satisfy what we know of their lives. It is an exquisite picture about charming people, set in a period which to many will recall the glorified magic of youth. The music, once universally popular, recalls happy memories, and since many of the dance tunes presented are being revived, even modern youth may recognize the spell they conjure.

The production develops the evolution of the modern ballroom dance, and few today could demonstrate this cavalcade as beautifully as Mr. Astaire and Miss Rogers. They are perfectly paired, and we hope that their careers will not be separated and that they may continue to combine their skill in interpreting dancing in its perfection of rhythm and grace.

The gowns, designed by Irene Castle, of the period 1911 to 1918 are pictured in such charming perfection that it is easy to appreciate the vogue for "Castle Styles" which once swept the country. (And how many of us too assayed the "dutch cap" and bobbed our hair?) The exaggerated eccentricities of the "Castle Walk" which some dancers once affected were never popular with those who saw it danced by its originators, and after this expression of rhythm performed again with rare skill and dignity, we appreciated anew the consternation which affects the older generation when "jitterbugs" get under way. The cast is perfect, with Edna May Oliver's and Walter Brennan's delectable humor and Lew Fields, Etienne Girardot, Janet Beecher and Rolph Sedan adding capable characterizations to an exceptional performance. The direction of H. C. Potter is very fine. For all audiences we unreservedly recommend "The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle."

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Excellent

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. MEAD


If the subject of this picture is worthwhile propaganda for rural districts, it serves its purpose. It is in fact a novel departure for a B class film in as much as it introduces the serious problem of adequate medical care in a backwoods community. A prominent New York surgeon, trying to get a vacation where he will not be known and thus not be called upon for consultations or talks before medical groups, hides in a section of the country where an untrained man is the only available practitioner. This man's prejudice and ignorance bewilder the physician, and an epidemic arouses his professional ire. At last he succeeds in bringing order out of chaos. The production is not without interest but it is inferior in script, direction and performances.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Not recommended
No interest

THREE SMART GIRLS GROW UP


Deanna Durbin, with her spontaneous charm and lovely voice, seemingly is all that is needed to make a film popular. However, for good measure this production offers Charles Winninger in one of his entertaining characterizations. The plot is almost too absurd especially in its ending, but the film is full of lively incidents and on the whole is a well turned out, nicely finished product. Miss Durbin is again an exuberant young miss who manages the love affairs of her sisters and brings a neglectful parent to the realization of his deficiencies.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Good
Yes

TROUBLE IN SUNDOWN


Cowboy songs and outdoor scenery provide about all the entertainment there is in this routine western. The main characters are: a banker who is suspected of robbing his own bank, the banker's daughter, the hero who is in love with her, and the respected citizen of Sundown who turns out to be the arch criminal. The lines are stilted and the acting stagey.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Passable
Too much shooting
WIFE, HUSBAND AND FRIEND ◆◆
Loretta Young, Warner Baxter, Binnie Barnes, Cesar Romero, George Barbier. Direction by Gregory Ratoff. 20th Century-Fox.

Clever script and skilful touches in direction raise this comedy above the average although the farcical nature of the denouement is not in keeping with the original tone of the production, and in some scenes the characters lose sympathy due to their behavior under emotional strain. The theme concerns the modern problem of the woman who wants a career above marriage, but in this case she has not the talent to excise her ambition and the husband finds an unusual weapon for defense when he discovers that his own talent surpasses that of his wife.
Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
No value No

WINNER TAKE ALL ◆◆

When Henry Armetta plays the part of "Papa Gambini," the kindly, excitable Italian head of a large family, he gives sufficient originality and humor to almost any picture to make it worth the price of admission. His presence in "Winner Take All" combined with some realistic prize-fight sequences will probably lure enough of the public to reimburse the producers and exhibitors. However, the picture has no other claims to merit, and patrons who are fond of "Papa Gambini" will be sorry to see him mixing in prize-fight rackets and betting a charitable organization's funds on a fight, even though he wins thereby enough money to enable the Garibaldi Society to build a recreation hall for young people. Tony Martin plays the part of a Montana cowboy who works as a dishwasher in Gambini's restaurant and through the encouragement of a girl news writer becomes a champion pugilist.
Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Ethically poor No

WITHIN THE LAW ◆◆

M-G-M has dusted off an old play which last made its appearance on the screen under the title of "Paid," starring Joan Crawford. Reassuming its original title, "Within the Law," it is dressed in clothes by Dolly Tree and otherwise brought up to date to become a starring vehicle for a promising young actress named Ruth Hussey. Her role is that of a girl who is wrongfully convicted of larceny and who promises to avenge herself on the man who sent her to prison. While in prison she studies law and learns a great deal about unethical practice and how to remain just within the law. Fortified with this knowledge she sets her stage and for a while her plot progresses, but the right man brings about a change of heart. With the exception of Ruth Hussey and Tom Neal most of the players are seasoned performers and their capable handling of secondary roles assists in making this a better than average film.
Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Unsued No

WUTHERING heights ◆◆

Faithful to the story and atmosphere of the novel from which it was adapted, "Wuthering Heights" is a somber, psychological study of inner conflict and the tragic influence of warped philosophy. It is an unusual character study of persons whose mental trends verge on the psychopathic. The retrospective method of presenting the story is skilfully achieved. Beautiful photography, an effective musical score, expert acting, and superb direction contribute to an artistic achievement. But with all the assets of the production and through no fault in interpretation, the unreality of the plot makes the characters seem as far removed from real life as was the sheltered author of the book. Heathcliff, the wild gypsy waif, is like the surrounding background of the moors, dour, bleak, relentless and forbidding. Cathy, less dominated by surrounding circumstances because of her natural inheritance, has generosity, fire and a great capacity for passionate love. These traits are so uncompromising that they form within her almost a dual personality. She both loves and scorns the man who allows her frustrated love to poison the lives of all around him. These roles are magnificently interpreted by Laurence Olivier and Merle Oberon. The supernatural ending may arouse controversy but it is not out of keeping with the spirit of the book. This presentation of a Victorian novel is an interesting experiment, and the technical excellence.
will arrest attention even in a world preoccupied with serious contemporary problems. Certainly it affords no escape into a happier realm, for its somber mood is established at once and is sustained throughout.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
An adult theme.

✦

YOU CAN'T CHEAT AN HONEST MAN

What plot there is to this boisterous farce concerns the efforts of a carnival owner to keep out of the way of the sheriff who is after his bankrupt show. W. C. Fields displays his usual brand of humor and continues his feud with Charlie McCarthy. There are funny episodes but as a whole it is dull.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Matter of taste.

✦

ZENOBIA

Zenobia is the elephant whose infatuation for a doctor who healed her injuries is so amusingly recounted in the H. C. Bunner story. Since the use of her name in the title of this picture infers that she is still the heroine, her friends will be surprised and disappointed to discover that the human characters almost push her out of the scenario. The material of the original story in the hands of skilled craftsmen might have made an hilarious comedy, but to the fanciful framework of the original story the screen writers have tacked a treatise on social snobbishness. Most of the cast play "straight," and the inconsistencies in treatment turn the production into a hodgepodge of farce and serious drama including the currently popular appeal to patriotic emotions. Of the cast, the colored members give the most consistent performances.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Passable

Possibly enjoyable.

✦

SHORT SUBJECTS

THE GREAT HEART

A somewhat theatrical and fictional but moving dramatization of the work of Father Daman, who humanized the care of lepers isolated on the lonely island of Molokai in the Pacific. It is beautifully photographed in sepia with intelligent narration. It is more suited to adult attention than to childrens'.

✦

MAMMA'S NEW HAT
A Captain and the Kids Cartoon. M.-G.-M.

This animated cartoon in black and white features a horse that will give greater universal amusement than any of the most promising ponies that run at Santa Anita. Family.

✦

MARINE CIRCUS

A marine studio has been established on the coast of Florida for the scientific study of subaqueous life. Portholes at different levels of a large tank make possible a comfortable scrutiny of marine zoology. In his inimitable fashion Pete Smith enlightens us as to the names and feeding habits of many of the specimens we see. Family.
MOTION PICTURE REVIEWS
Women's University Club
943 So. Hoover St., Los Angeles, Calif.

................................................., 1939

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- Union Pacific

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FEATURE FILMS

BACK DOOR TO HEAVEN  ◇  ◇

Once more the boy victim of adversity is the central figure in a crusading melodrama. The story centers around the small-town schoolhouse where we are shown graduation exercises of the typical grammar school class. There is the potential banker, the artist, the singer, etc. Frankie, the hero, who comes from a drunkard's home, is urged by his teacher to prepare to take part in the closing exercises, and, lacking any means for complying, steals a harmonica from a music store and plays a solo. He is arrested and sent to a reformatory. From this springboard we dive into a dreary succession of incidents showing Frankie and two companions going from bad to worse until Frankie is finally sentenced to the electric chair. The story is merely a series of prison close-ups unrelieved by even robust dialogue. Returning to the little home town just as the former grammar school class (now all middle-aged men and women) are staging a reunion honoring their old teacher, Frankie, being pursued by the lice, takes shelter in the old schoolhouse, and there, in an almost farcical scene, bids his assembled classmates good-bye and dashes out to be shot. For some audiences the good acting and emotional appeal may obscure the sentimentality of the story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Too sentimental and emotional  No

BIG TOWN CZAR  ◇  ◇

Consumed by ambition and a desire for quick money, a man from the slums becomes the leader of a gang. His younger brother leaves college for the greater excitement of a criminal life and both lose their lives. While the picture has the usual "crime does not pay" lesson, too much of the technique of crime is shown and a belated penalty is not an adequate moral counterbalance to a whole film of lawlessness.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
No  No, definitely
MOTION PICTURE REVIEWS

BROADWAY SERENADE  ◆ ◆

M.-G.-M. didn't let the script of "Ice Follies" gather any dust, for here it is again, revamped for "Broadway Serenade," with music replacing the rink. Two young people are struggling along together. The girl becomes enormously successful, the boy can't make the necessary adjustment, and a bitter misunderstanding ensues; but eventually, when he also becomes successful, they are reconciled. There is enough of Jeanette MacDonald's singing to satisfy the most avid fan, and so much music ranging from opera to swing that the plot is sometimes obscured by it. A rather bizarre symphonic finale which places the two types of music in juxtaposition could have been interesting if the staging had been less complex, but the dark setting, the grotesque masks and the continuous changes in camera angles are confusing and tiring. On the whole the picture is disappointing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Possibly entertaining  Tiring—no interest

◆

CALLING DR. KILDARE  ◆ ◆

The second picture in the Dr. Kildare series picks up the story where the first left off, with Dr. Kildare still an interne acting as Dr. Gillespie's assistant. Dr. Gillespie believes he has found in Dr. Kildare the material for a great diagnostician, but when he discovers a weakness in the younger doctor's work, aggravated by a certain cocksureness, he seeks to remedy it by a "sink or swim" expedition. Although this film is one of a series, it is an entity and no previous acquaintance with the characters is necessary. While the story contains humor, pathos, suspense, and human interest in such happy proportions that a hearty acceptance of the picture will probably be general, for the purpose of dramatic entertainment, situations are introduced which are certainly not typical of the average intern's experiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Probably not  Too mature

◆

CAPTAIN FURY  ◆ ◆

With the historical theme of the early convict colony of Australia as material, this picture gets away to an exciting start when a new shipload of criminals arrives from England and is sent to work on one of the large sheep ranches. The opening scenes depict brawls with other convict workers and the feud between the legitimate settlers and land-grabbers who are stealing their estates. Captain Fury, one of the late-comers among the convicts, meets the daughter of the man to whose service he has been assigned, falls in love with her, and decides to head a gang to help her father and his law-abiding neighbors win out against the depredations of the cruel landlord. The succession of fights is so swift and continuous that one finds it difficult to tell sometimes who belongs to which group, but with a dead man miraculously coming to life in the final act, everything is settled satisfactorily. Though the film may be distressingly violent for some audiences, others will find it absorbingly interesting and all will enjoy its unusual locale, its excellent comedy relief, and the beautiful pastoral scenery.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Not recommended  No

◆

CONFESSIONS OF A NAZI SPY  ◆ ◆

Any title containing the word "confessions" is likely to connote something lurid, something presented for its sensationalism rather than its factual values. It is gratifying, therefore, to find "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" evading sensationalism. It is neither the hysterical outburst of an alarmist nor just another story of espionage, but rather a logical and vivid presentation of facts which should bring us all to a vivid awareness of the dangers that are developing in our midst. Being a calm, easy-going people, comfortable in the security of natural barriers, we have too long been apathetic toward possible threats to our political well being. The action is woven about the trial which took place in New York several months ago, in which four spies were convicted of espionage. By following the activities of these four people up to the time of the trial, the picture gives a very good idea of actual Nazi activities in the United States, including use of
nation wide propaganda and spy systems, the influence of Bunds, the terrorism of the Gestapo and their methods of dealing with disloyal members. "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" is not a picture to be easily forgotten. It deserves unqualified praise because of its uncompromising handling of a vitally serious problem and the absorbing way in which the material is presented.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  Possibly mature, but worthwhile

EAST SIDE OF HEAVEN  ♦  ♦

Besides its singing star, the big drawing card of this delightfully gay comedy is a fascinating baby named Sandy Lee, who is temporarily left in the care of two bachelors, played by Bing Crosby and Mischa Auer. The story is hardly more than a vehicle for Bing Crosby’s songs (including a lullaby), but many of the situations are hilariously funny and the acting is good enough to develop interest in the characters and their problems. This is one of the best Crosby films.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  Very good

THE FAMILY NEXT DOOR  ♦  ♦

Unfortunately the family next door is one which no one would care to cultivate. It is dominated by an ambitious mother who wishes to impress the suitor of a silly daughter. The family investments furnish the suspense in the slight and melodramatic plot of a mediocre production.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  No

THE HARDYS RIDE HIGH  ♦  ♦

We have so counted on the Hardy series as being superlatively human and natural that it is disappointing to find the family "riding high" in a way which suggests that Hollywood has gained the upper hand at last. When an unexpected legacy seems about to place the Hardys in the millionaire class, adjustment is difficult for all but Mother, but to Andy comes the most disagreeable experience. That he has the judgment to run away from a bad situation is in his favor, but the suggested sophistication is not in keeping with the usual treatment given these stories. Mickey Rooney as Andy is becoming a bit tiresome in his brash behavior, and one wonders whether he is to continue to be the perennial adolescent in spite of the wise and philosophical leadership of the kindly Judge. When there is no character development in a series such as this, each new episode becomes just another repetitious hour of light entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  Yes

HERITAGE OF THE DESERT  ♦  ♦

"Heritage of the Desert," by Zane Grey. That seven word statement is almost comment enough. As one might suppose, it is a Western melodrama which provides abundant gun-play, rough dialogue, and unlimited action. The plot concerns an Eastern man who claims his heritage and assists in settling an old frontier feud. A certain license is granted Westerns, since they usually portray life in a locale which administers law in its own way, but in this one the murders are too casual even for this type of story. Gangster methods are gangster methods in any setting.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  Too much violence

INVITATION TO HAPPINESS  ♦  ♦

Even if this picture were better than it is, it would still be a mistake. To cast Irene Dunne, who has proven her ability in high comedy, in such an unflattering role as that of the headstrong wife of a particularly stupid prize-fighter, to photograph her in horribly unbecoming clothes and to give her a script with no subtlety and very little sense is almost tragic. As Eleanor Wayne, the daughter of a rich and socially prominent man, she meets King Cole, a prize-fighter with no idea in his head but that of becoming the heavyweight champion of the world. Incredibly, she falls in love with him, pursues him to his training quarters, and marries him. Their marriage is slated for failure but is saved after ten years of misunderstandings by putting the burden of their troubles on the shoulders of their little
son. The only real seeming thing in the picture is the prize-fight in which King Cole receives a terrific beating.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**  
Children, 8 to 12  

✦

**JUAREZ**


It is difficult to say whether the film "Juarez" is most notable for Paul Muni's Juarez, Brian Aherne's Maximilian, or for its extraordinarily fine handling of a theme which is uppermost in the minds of Americans today. Though the life story of the Indian who rose from obscurity to become the democratic leader of his country provides ample stirring material for a biographical spectacle, Warner Brothers have made a film which is not only outstanding in the field of dramatic entertainment, but truly significant as a document on the cause of democracy. The situation of Mexico at the time of Napoleon III's occupation reveals unmistakable parallelism to the predicament of small independent democracies today, and the opposing political philosophies of self-government and the rule of a monarch, however benevolent, are clearly symbolized in the persons of Juarez and Maximilian. To have produced a picture which carries such a definite message without sacrificing any of the qualities of artistic entertainment is an achievement upon which the producers are to be congratulated. The cast is composed of fine artists who are at their best in this production. The dramatic incidents are handled with a restraint that often gives them terrific impact. The photography and the musical score are superb, and the portrayal of the love of Maximilian and his lovely wife, Carlotta, is touchingly beautiful.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**  
Children, 8 to 12  

✦

**THE KID FROM TEXAS**


This is an unexpectedly fresh and amusing comedy of outdoor life which will enhance any double bill. Dennis O'Keefe is excellent in the role of Wild Bill Malone, an egotistical, wisecracking cowboy who sets out to show the four hundred in Long Island how he plays polo. He is put in his place quite effectively and is sport enough to appreciate his shortcomings. Jessie Ralph and Buddy Ebsen have humorous lines, and good support is also given by Florence Rice and Virginia Dale. The film has spirited and entertaining action and will appeal to family groups.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**  
Children, 8 to 12  

✦

**KING OF CHINATOWN**


Anna May Wong in a restrained and sincere performance tries to redeem a hackneyed melodrama of racketeers in San Francisco's Chinatown.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**  
Children, 8 to 12  

✦

**THE LADY'S FROM KENTUCKY**


Interest in this race-track drama is centered in a fine horse whose joint owners are a tough bookie and a nice young girl. Most audiences will enjoy the rustic scenery, the pictures of the beautiful horse, and the lesson in the training of thoroughbreds. The part of the story which deals with the shady practices of bookies seems unpleasant but inevitable, and the making of a gambler into a high principled sportsman is not entirely convincing.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**  
Children, 8 to 12  

Ethically poor  

✦

**MAN OF CONQUEST**


Republic is to be congratulated in bringing the characters of Sam Houston and Andrew Jackson to the screen in a story which, while taking some liberties with factual accuracy, still admirably preserves the spirit of the times, pays a fine tribute to great men, and dignifies a fascinating period of American history. Sam Houston's love of adventure and loyalty to the Indians to whom he was devoted, played an important part in shaping his character, but at the same time disrupted his marriage, and for a time after
his divorce he lead a life of degradation. In the picture his sense of values is restored by the Indians among whom he lives. He espouses their cause at Washington and later takes up the battle to free Texas from Mexican dominion. After the massacre of the Alamo, he is chosen as leader of the Texans and, at the Battle of San Jacinto, defeats the Mexican general, Santa Ana, frees the territory, and is influential in securing its admittance to the United States. The film is a dramatic and stirring narrative, a robust picture of an historical era, and a telling portrayal of an interesting character whose name has been honored by the city of Houston, Texas. Richard Dix is excellent in the character of Houston. Edward Ellis also is extremely good in the part of Jackson. Other roles are finely etched, all contributing to recreate a vivid impression of memorable moments in a period which shaped the destiny of the country in which we live today.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Good

Children, 8 to 12  
Tense and mature

MYSTERY OF THE WHITE ROOM  


A murder takes place in the surgery of a hospital and involves several members of the staff. Except for the unusual setting of this mystery, and the sincerity of the cast, the picture has few values. Laxity in usual hospital discipline and lapses in professional ethics lead one to suppose that the doctor who wrote the book from which the screen play was adapted, must have had his tongue in his cheek.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Unsuitable

Children, 8 to 12  
No

THE RETURN OF THE CISCO KID  


In “The Cisco Kid,” Warner Baxter did a vast amount to further the tradition that Mexican bandits are charming people. His second appearance confirms that impression, although the new film has not the luster of its forerunner. The plot reads like that of many another Western: the Kid, escaping from a firing squad with two henchmen, holds up the stage, falls in love at sight with one of the passengers, and becomes the girl’s champion in a fight to regain title to a stolen ranch. Lovely photography, the delightful musical setting, and its lighthearted mood make it an enjoyable film.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Good

Children, 8 to 12  
Too heavy

SIXTY GLORIOUS YEARS  


Once more we find Queen Victoria at the threshold of her reign of sixty glorious years; then as the bride, wife, and mother, as well as “every inch a Queen.” We follow her dealings with her ministers, particularly the Duke of Wellington; her struggles to put her Prince Consort in a favorable light; her seclusion after his death; and her re-emergence to round out her long life as England’s beloved symbol of permanence and respectability. The film is essentially biographical and broader in scope than either “Victoria Regina” or “Victoria the Great.” Many important historical events are presented from the standpoint of comments found in Victoria’s own diary, and thus the film covers authentically much material which effectively illuminates the background of England’s domestic problems as well as the part it played as a powerful nation in world affairs. The production has great finesse and dignity, and, in spite of moments of heaviness, an enormously sympathetic appeal. The exquisite photography in Technicolor, the costumes and authentic settings, make it a masterpiece of pictorial beauty, while the large and capable cast give vital portraits of the royal family, the statesmen of the period, and the English people. The final sequence showing Victoria’s funeral procession leaves a lasting impression of the tremendous influence exerted by a great queen upon her devoted subjects.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Very good

Children, 8 to 12  
Too confusing
Sudden Money    ◇ ◇

Charles Ruggles, Marjorie Rambeau, Charles  
Grapewin, William Frawley, Broderick Crawford,  
Billy Lee, Evelyn Keyes. Based on the  
Screen play by Lewis Foster. Direction by Nick  
Grinde. Paramount.  

When a drug clerk wins a fortune on a  
sweepstake ticket, the sudden wealth brings  
chaos to his family, for each foreshakes the  
routine of his life to pursue his favorite  
hobby. With the loss of the money, the  
family returns to normalcy. In the light of  
the plot, "Whatever Goes Up," the title of  
the original play, would have seemed a more  
appropriate and less obvious title than "Sud-  
den Money," and would have indicated the  
farceful nature of the picture. Fresh dia-  
logue mixed with old situations make this  
good but not remarkable entertainment.  
Adolescents, 12 to 16    Children, 8 to 12  
Perhaps    Mature  

They Made Her a Spy    ◇ ◇

Sally Elters, Allan Lane, Fritz Leiber, Frank  
H. Thomas, Theodor Von Eitl. From an  
original screen story by George Bricker.  

In this age of suspicion and international  
recrimination it is inevitable that espionage  
should be used as a theme for motion pictures.  
Whether so implausible a plot as this is  
worth while is debatable, but the production  
is full of action and exciting melodrama. Its  
influence is at best negative, for few adults  
could take it seriously.  
Adolescents, 12 to 16    Children, 8 to 12  
No    Brutal  

Union Pacific    ◇ ◇

Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, Akim  
Tamiroff, Robert Preston, Lynne Overman,  
Brian Donlevy, Anthony Quinn, Evelyn  
Keyes. Screen play by Walter De Leon, C.  
Gardner Sullivan, Jesse Lasky, Jr., Jack  
Cunningham and Ernest Haycox. Music  
score by George Antheil. Direction by Cecil  
B. de Mille. Paramount.  

"Union Pacific" is an exceptionally good  
frontier melodrama. With a theme which  
affords a rich vein of dramatic material, and  
under the direction of a master in the art of  
creating spectacular effects, the production  
is predestined for success. It has all the  
familiar elements of the epic type of pioneer  
adventure: rivalry between the two railroads  
to beat each other to the junction at Ogden,  
labor troubles fomented by unscrupulous ene-  
emies, fights with mauling Indians, shoot-  
ings, carousals, and an appealing love story.  
Imagination and skill have gone into its  
screening and the result is genuine, virile  
entertainment.  
Adolescents, 12 to 16    Children, 8 to 12  
Good    Too strenuous  

Sorority House ◇ ◇

Anne Shirley, James Ellison, Barbara Read,  
Adale Pearce, J. M. Kerrigan, Helen Wood,  
Doris Jordan, June Storey, Elizabeth Ris-  
don, Margaret Armstrong, Selmer Jackson,  
Chill Wills. Screen play by Dalton Trumbo.  

"Sorority House" is a somewhat extreme  
and emotional picture of the evils attendant  
upon the sorority system in girls' colleges. It  
undoubtedly contains food for thought in  
showing the effect of the false emphasis  
placed by some young women on the desir-  
ability of being invited to join a sorority,  
but in exaggerating the snobishness of the  
more fortunate as well as the hysterical re-  
actions of those who have been left out, it  
loses force both as entertainment and as a  
b brief for an improvement in the system. Its  
appeal lies in the sincere portrayals given  
by the three girls who for one reason or  
other have to adjust themselves to being  
on the outside.  
Adolescents, 12 to 16    Children, 8 to 12  
Passable but over-    No  
emotional  

Stolen Life ◇ ◇

Elisabeth Bergner, Michael Redgrave, Wil-  
fred Lawson, Richard Ainley, Mabel Terry  
Lewis, Doris Fordred. Story adapted by  
Margaret Kennedy. Direction by Paul Czin-  
nier. Orion Production—Paramount.  

Exhibiting her facility in a dual role, Eliza-  
beth Bergner again charms American audi-  
ences with her luminous personality and  
imparts to "Stolen Life" an importance which  
it does not otherwise deserve. The story  
seems artificial and obviously made to order  
 to prove that one individual cannot success-  
fully "steal" another's identity and live that  
other person's life, even though the mas-  
querade may defy detection. In "Stolen Life"  
this proposition is illustrated in the case of  
twin girls, one of whom assumes the identity  
of the other. Miss Bergner is exceptionally  
clever in making a subtle distinction be-  
tween the twins, who, though exactly alike  
in appearance, are opposites in temperament.  
However, in spite of its incredibility, the  
plot is the kind which makes people "stand  
by" for the finish. The film is unusual and  
piquant entertainment.  
Adolescents, 12 to 16    Children, 8 to 12  
Too sophisticated    No
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January Through June, 1939

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EVALUATING PICTURES FOR CHILDREN

The School of Education of a large Mid-West University asked us recently what criteria we used in selecting pictures for children between ten and twelve years of age. It has been our custom to present these criteria in our pages from time to time, and we reprint in part our reply to the question, believing that it may help our readers more readily to understand our methods of classifying films.

"We believe, with you, that 'individual experience should be considered to the same extent in selecting pictures as it is in book selections.' As we point out to our reviewers, what one child will get from a movie will be absolutely different from what another will get, and any decision in regard to the value of any film will have to take into consideration the cultural background as well as the intellectual, emotional and mental development of a child; factors which vary as much as his physical development and nervous stability. This makes it extremely difficult to make recommendations for the ten to twelve age (and more so when we include eight to twelve). Our work in evaluating pictures began in the era of silent films. Since sound has come into effect, pictures are even less suitable for children, in subject matter and treatment, and we recommend pictures reluctantly for those under twelve. In a course for our previewers some time ago led by Dr. Miriam Van Waters and Dr. Elizabeth Woods, we analyzed the functions of the family, and among those functions were the following

1. To transmit customs, habits and systems of ideas
2. To begin educational processes
Four

3. To provide moral standards
4. To develop the basis of good citizenship

The Family should be the agency which imparts these norms or standards. Unfortunately the Family is passing through a time of stress and adjustment, and outside agencies are taking from the functions of the home. The motion picture is undoubtedly one of these forces and its influence is both constructive and destructive. It is the objective of our critics to distinguish, in as far as possible, the social values of films. From the psychological side we laid down definite rules based on the fact that a child's fundamental needs are

1. A feeling of security
2. The satisfaction of curiosity
3. Healthy mental activity
4. Motor activity

Pictures should not inform younger children of unsuspected dangers and unknown motives which would cause them to arrive at a belief that society is insecurely organized and that there is a division of authority. The most gifted children are the most curious, and while some movies portray conditions correctly and thus satisfy curiosity, they may also over-stimulate it. On the other hand, comparatively few pictures portray life honestly. Movies should stimulate healthy mental thoughts so that healthy activities may result.

Long hours at theatres tire, strain the eyes and nerves, and frequently create naughtiness from sheer exhaustion. The time would be better spent in normal active play, certainly for 'protected' children. This is particularly true now when the double bill is the rule. Habitual attendance at unselected pictures may precipitate emotional stages too early, particularly in adolescence.

We do not recommend pictures in which scenes of cruelty are shown, since we believe that even individual scenes may dangerously impress children, especially younger children who do not follow the whole story as a unit, and their highly organized nervous systems may receive a shock. We do not recommend pictures which emphasize the criminal side of life in spite of the fact that producers claim that their productions show that 'crime does not pay.' We do not recommend films picturing so called 'fast society' because we believe that they are untrue to the fundamental standards of life, undermine the ideals of family life, fail to provide moral standards, and are definitely dangerous for young people who, in this changing world, are too prone to accept laxity as an accepted norm of today. We try to recommend for children only those films which they can understand, which can hold their interest, which offer some constructive ideas, which do not hold up to ridicule individuals or institutions for which we should have respect. We thoroughly approve the classes in film evaluation given in many schools today. The work is helping to create discriminating taste which is showing in attendance now and will continue to show in the future with younger children as well as with adolescents. Finally, we repeat: in choosing pictures for any child, it is most important to consider each child as an individual."
FEATURE FILMS

BOY FRIEND  

Jane Withers’ name in the cast will undoubtedly attract the younger generation’s attention to this film, which is unfortunate because its improbable plot is of the “cops and robbers” variety, and while it shows the police to advantage, it is hardly wholesome for imaginative youngsters. Sally’s mother runs a boarding house for rookies training for the police force. Her “boy friend,” Billy, has a brother in the school who is killed in a hold-up, and the two precocious youngsters determine to run down the murderers. The plot is complicated by the fact that Sally’s brother is apparently one of the gang. The action is what one would expect in a melodrama of this type—exciting, frantic and tense. It is a vehicle to exploit a child star and is badly directed in an attempt to allow her to hold the spotlight.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12

Not worthwhile

BRIDAL SUITE  
Annabella, Robert Young, Walter Connolly, Reginald Owen, Billie Burke. Direction by William Thiele. M.-G.-M.

Released under a title which was chosen for publicity purposes, and which gives little idea of the nature of the film, “Bridal Suite” is a light, rather artificial affair with a pallid plot. A young man with a doting mother and unlimited spending money becomes so utterly devoid of responsibility that he jilts the same girl three times, but he is finally persuaded to knock down to work, by a simple lass and a gruff old psychiatrist. A picturesque hotel in the Swiss Alps contributes a light-opera atmosphere, and no film can be a total loss which contains the charming Annabella, albeit she is not at her best. Robert Young and Billie Burke have played similar parts so often that they could play these roles in their sleep. It is a picture to be run in as part of a program, scarcely solid enough to stand by itself.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12

Too sophisticated

CHARLIE CHAN IN RENO  

The ubiquitous Mr. Chan is now in Reno to unravel a murder mystery in a fashionable hotel. Mrs. Bently, the victim, was stabbed to death while staying at the hotel waiting to marry an about-to-be divorced man. Jealousy is thought to have been the motive. With the famous detective working on the case, the guilty person is certain to be apprehended and a satisfactory solution of the crime provided. Murder-mystery fans will probably enjoy watching Mr. Chan at work, though the locale of his latest activities and the characters with whom he associates are less interesting than usual, and Mr. Chan seems to have lost some of his finesses.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12

Unwholesome  
Not suitable

EX-CHAMP  

Ordinarily, one would say boxing and sentimentality do not go hand in hand, but they do in “Ex-Champ.” With an underlying theme of paternal devotion, the plot accents situations that are a little too patterned, a little too sticky. However, while it is engineered to play on the emotions, it does not tax them too severely. The ending is meant to be a surprise, but the plot development makes it quite obvious. On the whole, “Ex-Champ” is negligible entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12

Passable

FOR LOVE OR MONEY  

A light and unconvincing race track melodrama in which $50,000 intended for a bookmaker is lost in transit. The plot concerns the frantic efforts of various people to recover the money. Drinking, gambling, and the unsavory methods of gangsters, combined with inadequate production values make this picture poor entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12

No
THE GIRL FROM MEXICO


Denis, sent to Mexico to find talent for a certain radio sponsor, finds the tempestuous Carmelita, who comes back to New York with him. A law unto herself, she causes a furor wherever she goes, finally sings herself into fame and the heart of Denis. The comedy is often slapstick and the development of plot improbable, but it has a good deal of color and variety.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
No No

GOODBYE, MR. CHIPS


Success in this changing world depends upon one's viewpoint. No doubt Mr. Chips was a material failure and, since he realized his ambition to become Head Master only through a world cataclysm, he might have been called a scholastic failure as well. But in his relations to his students, his kindly, understanding friendship which meant so much to them throughout their lives, he achieved a spiritual triumph which could not be valued in dollars and cents, and therefore who can say that his life was not successful in the highest degree? The picture is a faithful adaption of Mr. Hilton's novellette. It begins with Mr. Chips' arrival at a famous boys' school as a very young, shy and lonely man, so introspective and lacking in self-confidence that his control over the boys is painfully inadequate. A kindly German teacher takes him on a vacation walking tour, and he meets a lovely girl whom he marries, and who brings out in him all the fine qualities she recognizes, and leads him to meet the students on an understanding plane. Although she dies soon, she is his inspiration always. Sentimental perhaps—but a sincerely moving portrayal of a life which was rich in human relationships and Mr. Chips' love for his boys, "thousands of them," as he says just before his death. Robert Donat succeeds in presenting his most distinguished screen performance. He pictures the life of a man—an average man—and makes him lovable and human. His appearance through the changing years is most convincing, and the character development always understandable. Greer Garson is a lovely heroine whose brief appearance is radiant throughout. The courtship scenes are exquisite and the direction is superb. The picture was produced in England. Many of the scenes were actually filmed at a famous boys' school, and hundreds of the students give authenticity to the life pictured. One of the strongest appeals is this picturization of English Public School life: the beautiful traditions and codes; the passing generations of families who return to the school; the respect, admiration, and loyalty the boys have for the institution. It is a film which will appeal to discriminating audiences, both for the high production values and for the beauty of its theme.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Good Probably too mature for deep interest

THE GORILLA

Jimmy Ritz, Harry Ritz, Al Ritz, Anita Louise, Patsy Kelly, Lionel Atwill, Bela Lugosi, Joseph Calleia. Screen play by Rian James and Sid Silvers, based on the play by Ralph Spence. Direction by Alan Dwan. 20th Century-Fox.

"The Gorilla" and "The Bat" were two of the chills-down-the-spine thrillers of past decades, and both were very successful on the stage. In "The Gorilla," detectives arrive on the scene to save a man and his pretty niece who have been threatened by a huge gorilla with homicidal propensities, and eventually help to solve a mystery. The film adaptation is not so realistic as the stage play. The Ritz Brothers, torn between playing detective or being just themselves, are neither very convincing nor very funny; Patsy Kelly, as the hysterical maid, garners more laughs. "The Gorilla" presents a good example of make-up work and is repulsive enough for anyone, but the production is so stagey and loosely put together that one is never convinced of the probability of the situations.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
No

THE GRACIE ALLEN MURDER CASE


A murder mystery written by S. S. Van Dine especially for Gracie Allen is a new species of film, the enjoyment of which may possibly be limited to her admirers. Gracie finds a murdered man at a cafe, calls the police and in her own inimitable way chatters through the investigations. Philo Vance, who is retained to discover the real criminal, tolerates her because he is afraid to let her out of his sight. In the end, quite inadvertently, she finds the murderer.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
If they like Gracie No
HOTEL IMPERIAL  


Aside from its picturesque setting and some singing by a Don Cossack choir, this war-spy melodrama has little to offer. The scene is laid in an Austrian village which is occupied alternately by Russian and Austrian troops. The heroine is a traveling actress who remains in the village to find out why her sister has committed suicide there. After many intrigues and narrow escapes, she finds the person responsible for her sister's death, and she falls in love with an Austrian officer. The plot and acting are quite commonplace, and the atmosphere is rather unpleasant.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12  

IT'S A WONDERFUL WORLD

Claudette Colbert, James Stewart, Guy Kibbee, Nat Pendleton, Frances Drake, Edgar Kennedy, Ernest Truex, Andy Clyde. From an original story by Ben Hecht and Herman J. Mankiewicz. Screen play by Ben Hecht. Direction by W. S. Van Dyke II. M.-G.-M.

James Stewart in a role that would have been a "natural" for James Cagney, turns in an excellent performance as a private detective who is trying to save his innocent client from the electric chair, not so much for humanitarian principles as for $100,000. In this he is aided and abetted by a slightly daft poetess (Claudette Colbert) who is alternately a jewel and a "pain in the neck." Through his persistent efforts and her sometimes clumsy, sometimes intelligent aid, the real murderer is apprehended. A final softening of our hero forces him to admit that $100,000 is a minor consideration when one has found love. The situations and gags are new and amusing, and the expert acting gives a human and rather touching effect.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12  

THE KID FROM KOKOMO


It is a bit of a shock to find May Robson in just this type of boisterous farce, but from the moment we first see her in the role of a drunken old kleptomaniac leering at the judge in a night court, she steals the picture. Her role is unpleasant, but she plays it splendidly. Wayne Morris, since his success in "Kid Gallahad," seems doomed to play a prize-fighter. Here, he is a sentimental, not too bright, country bumpkin, waiting patiently down on the farm for the return of the "mom" who left him as a baby on a doorstep. When he knocks out the village blacksmith in a brawl, a rogue of a fight manager lures him to sign a contract by promising him greater opportunities to find the mother on whom his heart is set. His adventures with this manager, with an ex-bubble dancer, the creature whom they pass off as his mother, and the "bruiser" who claims to be his father in order to continue the "fleeing" are far from edifying. There are some well-staged fight scenes, but May Robson's acting is the only real high light of a picture which doesn't actually "click," and which is on the whole distasteful.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12  

LUCY NIGHT


This is a most unworthy vehicle for two popular stars. Myrna Loy as a bored rich girl who has run away from home, meets a young man on a park bench, drinks with him in several night clubs, and marries him before dawn. The rest of the picture is taken up with the attempts of the young wife to make a success of her marriage in spite of the husband's drinking and irresponsibility. The humor is a poor example of the "haywire" variety.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12  

THE MIKADO


"The Mikado" is a cinematic curio, a facsimile of the original comic opera, faithfully and reverently presented, and shortened only to meet screen proportions. It adheres strictly to the traditions of the stage, making no concession to the modern realism of cinema technique. Dialogue is reduced to a minimum, and music and staging hold the attention. It is filmed in exquisite technicolor. The cast, with the exception of Kenny Baker, is made up of members of London's famed D'Oyly Carte Company, and the recording is unusually good. The production is in effect a photograph of a well-beloved
favorite and will delight all followers of Gilbert and Sullivan's most popular production.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent
Children, 8 to 12 Possibly less interest—familiarity with the plot would increase enjoyment

ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE


Faintly reminiscent of "Alexander's Raggtime Band," this picture accents that part of the ragtime-jazz era which the earlier picture did not stress, the period from about 1920 to 1925. It was the period of the speak-easy, of Ziegfeld's Follies, of such songs as "The Vamp," "Ja-da," "My Man," and "Rose of Washington Square." It saw Al Jolson on Broadway at the peak of his theatrical career, singing the "Mammy" and "Dixie" songs which made him famous, and his presence in this picture lends it an atmosphere of authenticity. All the parts are well taken, especially a finished bit contributed by Joyce Compton. The song "My Man" really tells the story. It concerns a promising young singer who falls in love with and marries a man whose weakness she recognizes. In spite of this and his eventual apprehension by the law, she goes on loving him, thus fulfilling the line of the song—"but whatever my man does, I am his forevermore." The picture has varied elements of entertainment and in general may be considered good but unimpressive.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Ethically confused
Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitéd

6000 ENEMIES

Walter Pidgeon, Rita Johnson, Paul Kelly, Harold Huber, Nat Pendleton, Grant Mitchell. Screen play by Bertram Millhauser, based on story by Wilmon Menard and Leo L. Stanley. Direction by George B. Seitz. M-G-M.

When the D. A. convicts a woman on circumstantial evidence and insists that it is impossible to "frame" a person, one is reasonably certain that he will suffer a like fate. He is sent to the penitentiary where 6,000 convicts try to get even with him for sending them up. The brutality of the prison scenes have never been equaled before; the prize fight is an orgy of sadism. Sentimentalism is at times overpowering. Walter Pidgeon is an excellent actor with a delightful personality. He should be used in roles in which his qualities are not sacrificed.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No, definitely
Children, 8 to 12 Absolutely not

SOCIETY LAWYER

Walter Pidgeon, Virginia Bruce, Leo Carillo, Eduardo Cianelli, Lee Bowman, Frances Mercer. From the novel "Penthouse" by Arthur Somers Roche. Direction by Edwin L. Marin. M-G-M.

Notable for lively treatment, smart clothes, gorgeous cafe settings, and good acting rather than for any intrinsic value of plot, "Society Lawyer" defends the status of the attorney in criminal cases, makes him a champion of the unjustly accused. That Hollywood still has a soft place in its heart for gangsters is proved by the casting of Leo Carillo, with his inevitable charm, in a gangster role, making the moral lesson dubious. Walter Pidgeon and Virginia Bruce play their parts with efficiency and finesse. Those who favor murder mysteries will be entertained.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
No. Poor ethics

SOME LIKE IT HOT


Take a cheap beach resort, a Barker, a jazz band out of work, a "blues singer," and a crowd of jitterbugs, shake them together—make a picture. Plot? "Boy meets girl," and why the girl wants the egotistical, unsuccessful promoter no one knows. It requires a true lover of modern jazz at its loudest and "hottest" to appreciate the qualities of this production.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12 Trivial—a matter of taste

THE SUN NEVER SETS


Generations of Randolphs have been true to the British Colonial Service until the youngest member rebels. The tradition of the family is great enough, however, to swerve him from his purpose, but in acquiescing he feels he has been run over by an Empire. Later, a crisis which involves his own career and that of his brother brings forth a latent sense of nationalism. Argentina raises cattle, China raises tea, but England raises sons, and these sons are sometimes sent to the most farflung corners of the Empire to take with them British law and British tradition, in spite of heat, rains, fever, and hostile natives. This particular son is sent to the Gold Coast in Africa. His initial
experience makes an exciting tale of adventure. The plot is absorbing, made believable by the sincerity of the cast, its flaws apparent only in retrospect. There is a thrilling climax which seems rather fantastic, but one has only to read the daily newspapers to find that fact is stranger than fiction. To appreciate thoroughly the powerful traditional force which sends young men of fine families to remote, obscure, uncomfortable posts without a what's-in-it-for-me motive, one need not be British, but it might help.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Children, 8 to 12

Tell no tales


This is an unpretentious picture which is very entertaining. It is the story of a newspaper editor whose paper is suddenly ordered discontinued by its owner, thus throwing out of work many old time employees. Throughly baffled and discouraged, the editor accidentally gets hold of a hundred-dollar bill which has been passed by kidnappers. He immediately decides to track down the criminals alone and unaided in order to have an exclusive story for his final edition. His success is rewarded by having the paper continue its distinguished existence. In the exciting action the plot introduces five different stories of the persons who have handled the "hot money." This is a novel and interesting departure, and while the drama might have been worked up to a more smashing climax with all the threads tied more closely together, it is on the whole engrossing entertainment, much above the average of its type. The cast is large and competent. Melvyn Douglas is excellent and Gene Lockhart and Theresa Harris (a colored girl) score individual triumphs.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Children, 8 to 12

Exciting and mature

They asked for it


Three recent college graduates, a doctor, a lawyer and the editor of a small town paper have met with so little success that they are about to give up, when the town drunkard dies. The three of them, never for a moment doubting that his death was caused by overindulgence, hint at murder in order to give the paper a headline and a new lease on life. This bit of fiction accounts for the title and a vast amount of unexpected activity which takes place in the sleepy little Middle-Western town where they live. This is a run-of-the-mill sort of play in which each actor is adequate in his role. Isabel Jewell distinguishes herself by another performance that is good enough to be beyond criticism.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Children, 8 to 12

No
UNMARRIED ◊ ◊


In this picture, the theme of the regeneration of adult characters through the love of a child is well enough worked out to compensate in some measure for a really hackneyed beginning and decidedly ambiguous ethics. A prize fighter and a night club hostess are mistaken by an orphan boy for a married couple who were friends of his father, and they, knowing the circumstances which have left him alone in the world, decide to make a home for the boy. Whatever appeal the picture may have is due to its human touches.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Misleading

YOUNG MR. LINCOLN ◊ ◊


"Young Mr. Lincoln" is a biographical drama picturing our national idol as he was before his personality and achievements brought him fame. It presents an endearing portrait of Abraham Lincoln as a young man in Springfield, Illinois, where he began his law practice. His fairness, his honesty, his wit, and his simple friendliness are appealingly shown in his relations with the people with whom he associated. The chief virtue of the production is in Henry Fonda's sympathetic and sensitive performance of the title role, although a good cast and admirably restrained direction contribute greatly to the generally pleasing effect. It would have been a more significant biographical portrait, however, if it had given a better rounded conception of the various influences which actually contributed to Lincoln's development. The fault of the film is in its overstressing of one incident of his career, the trial of two young rusties whom he defended against a murder charge. However, it is good inspirational entertainment and well worth the attention of discriminating audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Excellent

SHORT SUBJECTS

ANGEL OF MERCY ◊ ◊

(M.-G.-M.)

Founder of the Red Cross in 1861, Clara Barton struggled to build up the organization which has become world-wide in its scope. She encountered opposition from the fact that she was a woman in a day when woman's place was definitely in the home, and it was long before she received true recognition for her work for suffering humanity. Excellent for all ages.

CLOWN PRINCES ◊ ◊

An "Our Gang" comedy. Directed by George Sidney. M.-G.-M.

This "Our Gang" comedy is nicely motivated but in comparing the finished performances given by some experienced actors of five, six and seven with the work done in this film, the gang seems quite amateurish. Boresome to anyone over ten.

DARK MAGIC ◊ ◊

(M.-G.-M.)

A comedy short stars Robert Benchley who brings home a box of magic tricks from the store. Strangely enough, some of the demonstrations are successful. Done with the characteristic Benchley humor, this is fun for children and parents alike.

PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR ◊ ◊

(M.-G.-M.)

A historical short subject of the life of Matthew Maury, nineteenth century American, places him in the ranks of those to whom honor is due for great achievement. Crippled so that he could not follow the sea he loved so well, he still followed it in every thought and desire, and charted the wind currents over the water so well that his findings are used to the present day for ocean and airplane travel. All ages.
RADIO FANS ♠ ♠
(M.-G.-M.)
When a boy becomes an amateur radio operator, the whole family is inspired to join him in his hobby. Here we are shown how there can be an opportunity for real service, relaying messages from those in need of help in remote territory and on the sea. All ages.

SONS OF LIBERTY ♠ ♠
At the present time there is a trend in motion pictures to exalt American ideals, to make democratic standards as important as the dictators have made their ideologies to their people. In doing this there have been shown many passages of our history which have seldom been featured or at the best have been forgotten. This is one of those pages from history, beautifully pictured in technicolor, convincingly acted by Claude Rains and others in the cast: the life of Haym Solomon, a Jewish immigrant who was imprisoned, gave all his earthly goods, and persuaded his friends in the synagogue to make heavy sacrifices that the struggling young republic might survive. For all ages.

THE STORY OF DR. JENNER ♠ ♠
With excellent narrative to accompany the action, this interesting film shows the courage and persistency of a small-town English doctor who lived at the end of the eighteenth century, combatting hypocrisy and superstition to prove the efficacy of his serum for the dread disease, small pox. It should make a good picture for the class room and also be of value in stressing the importance of vaccination for the general public. Family.
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Evaluating Pictures for Children
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CONCERNING PICTURES

A recent edition of the Los Angeles Evening Herald-Express speaks of "Hollywood's compromise entertainment—the anemic screen literature which spell box office shortage," and pertinent comments by Mr. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. as follows:

"Roughly speaking, Hollywood makes three types of motion pictures—one, for adults; two, for juveniles, and, thirdly, the one which compromises between adults and juveniles. The major mistakes lie in this third classification because it constitutes a jarring compromise."

"Many a good adult story has been sacrificed by an attempt to inject angles which will appeal to juvenile minds and, conversely, many good productions which would be worth while entertainment for juveniles have had their entertainment values impaired by an effort to inject an adult slant, Fairbanks points out.

"As a result, he says, the effort to satisfy everyone from 7 to 70 has in some cases yielded a product "watered" to the point of becoming anemic screen literature."

"If all great novelists and playwrights were forced to make similar compromises, books and plays could never make healthy contributions to literature. For instance, John Steinbeck's 'Grapes of Wrath,' an overnight bestseller recently purchased by 20th Century-Fox, would have been meaningless had Steinbeck attempted to include a slice of 'Heidi.'"

"Carrying this argument directly to film exhibitors, it is Fairbanks' view that the road to freedom of the screen can be opened if the men who show the pictures will take the problem in hand. He suggests a national exhibitors' convention to devise a new and up-to-date system of showing pictures."

"As their discretion dictates," he declared, 'they may find it possible for certain hours of certain days to be set aside for children's matinees. Or a plan under which separate houses for children and adults are designated may prove workable. Perhaps an information service,
telling in advance the nature of a forthcoming picture, thus sharing responsibility with parents themselves, is the right answer."

He is repeating what many critics of motion pictures have thought for years. It is impossible to satisfy audiences from seven to seventy with the same subject matter and treatment. An occasional, vital theme, directed with taste and skill will hold general interest. But there are no feature pictures for junior matinees today, and few pictures for children under twelve. Socially minded critics recognize this. There is, however, information at hand for parents so that they may "share the responsibility." An increasing number of libraries over the country furnish an information telephone service based on reviews from reliable sources. Schools are training children in critical evaluation. Parents have recourse to publications of unbiased opinions. The theatres, alone, fall short in their service to the public through ill chosen double bills, and failure to provide family night programs, and they overlook the fact that even the goose that lays the golden egg at the box office will sooner or later put it to other uses.

**FEATURE FILMS**

**BACHELOR MOTHER**


This is not one of Miss Ginger Roger's dancing pictures, but it does not need to be, for it is a really funny farce-comedy, and Miss Rogers is a delightful comedienne. The story is a nonsensical yarn about a foundling and a working girl who is thought to be the baby's mother and an employer who tries to do his bit for humanity by helping the poor girl to bring up a fatherless child. Everybody misunderstands everybody else, and the more misled they are the more hilarious the picture becomes. The dialogue is unusually clever, and considering the theme, there are remarkably few lines with which to find fault.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
*Entertaining*

**FIVE CAME BACK**


This picture presents a very interesting portrait gallery of human types, using as its vehicle the familiar but not yet hackneyed device of the airplane trip. Twelve persons of widely varied personalities embark on the journey to South America, meet disaster in the wilds of the Andes, and are forced to spend several weeks together there while the two young pilots struggle to repair the plane. During that time their characters are shown in sharp relief against a background of hardship, and the usual evidences of courage and cowardice come to the surface. The types chosen are somewhat stereotyped; there are the runaway lovers, the woman of questionable morals, the scientist, the criminal, etc. But the actors handle their roles competently, and the picture holds the spectator absorbed as it rushes on to its startlingly dramatic climax. The final scene of human heroism, soaring to its loftiest heights, as the repaired airplane disappears behind a bank of clouds, is one of the finest bits of drama presented by the screen for many a day. The photography is especially notable.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
*No—Needs adult evaluation*

**FORGOTTEN WOMAN**


Oh, Annie she was 'gently bred, And with her husband dear, Set out for Florida one day, Alas, she knew no fear! Two gangsters posed as gentlemen And with them rode along. A bank was robbed, their car was wrecked. The gangsters done them wrong. With husband killed, a lone widow, Poor Annie went to jail. She plead her innocence, but oh! She grew more wan and pale. Ah me, her little babe was born Behind the prison bars, And this should teach you not to ride With unknown persons in your cars.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
*Too emotional*

No
THE GIRL AND THE GAMBLER ☆☆

It is surprising to note that an old stage play, "The Dove" which was colorful, exciting and amusing, becomes a depiction of lurid and unsavory cafe life on the screen. Even some of the lines are in bad taste. Leo Carrillo is fairly romantic as El Rayo, a sort of Mexican Robin Hood who does right or wrong as the fancy seizes him, and Tim Holt and Steffi Duna add an interest of young love, but summing up good points and shortcomings, the film is merely lukewarm entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No—Objectionable scenes

GRAND JURY SECRETS ☆☆

John Keefe's moral laxity is opprobrious. His sins including such items as planting a short-wave broadcasting set in the grand jury room to obtain a "scoop" and posing as a priest to elicit a doomed boy's confession. By contrast it is a satisfaction to find that his brother, the District Attorney, is both upright and brainy. The interlocking themes of the brother rivalry and the value of "Ham" (amateur radio) operators in crime detection include so many episodes that one is left with a feeling of mental indigestion. Some of the individual performances are good, but the picture as a whole is too involved to sustain interest and never rises above mediocrity.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too much emphasis on trickery

IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU ☆☆

The picture begins with an excellent sketch of the life of a young married couple, in which a fine, loyal wife is striving to discover means to win recognition for her talented but unaggressive husband. As a vivid and distasteful contrast follow the scenes of a "stag" party with wild chorus girls and drunken company executives on a night off. When the party is followed by a murder, the District Attorney's office is shown in a bad light, the young wife in a noble one, since she alone traces the clue to the real criminal and vindicates her husband. The direction is good in holding suspense to the very end.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No
Children, 8 to 12

INSIDE INFORMATION ☆☆
Dick Foran, Harry Carey, June Lang, Mary Carlisle. From a story "47th Precinct" by Martin Mooney and Burnet Hershey. Screen play by Alex Gottlieb. Direction by Charles Lamont. Universal.

This is second-rate entertainment. A young "rookie" in the police force tries to substitute modern scientific methods for the "flat-foot" procedure of his superior officers and succeeds in learning the identity of a gang of gem thieves. Some of the details are brutal and objectionable.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No
Children, 8 to 12

LAND OF LIBERTY ☆☆
Visitors to the two fairs will find it well worth while to attend a showing of "Land of Liberty," the Motion Picture Industry's exhibit. It is an ambitious, extremely interesting, and novel production in which hundreds of sequences depicting events in the history of the United States have been taken from motion pictures and news reels and skillfully combined to give a stirring panorama of major events in the development of our country. Also as was its intention, it conveys a startling realization of the enormous field of motion pictures. The project was in the hands of the master craftsman, Mr. Cecil B. DeMille. It is suitable in content for all audiences, but its great length would make it tiring for young children.

MAISIE ☆☆

A tough-but-honest, wise-cracking chorus girl is no novelty on the screen, but Maisie, as played by Ann Sothern is unexpectedly refreshing. Stranded in a small western town, she commandeers a job at a nearby cattle ranch as lady's maid to the owner's wife. The picture becomes a mixture of western comedy and courtroom melodrama but what happens is not so very important. Audiences who have forgotten the plot will remember wistful, tough little Maisie with her swaggering self reliance, her forlorn honesty and her genius for pert repartee.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Depicts adult problems
Children, 8 to 12

Too mature
MAN ABOUT TOWN  

Besides the screen presence of a popular radio star, this film offers beautiful settings, good dancing, catchy music and lavish costumes. Jack Benny shows off to advantage in a lot of hilarious sophisticated nonsense about a shy, bungling young man who pretends to be a Lothario and almost succeeds in getting himself shot. The production is fast-paced up-to-the-minute entertainment in the manner of a "Benny" radio program.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12
Sophisticated  
No interest

THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK  

Here is swashbuckling, romantic adventure, a lively adaptation of Dumas' story, "The Man in the Iron Mask," the fanciful tale of intrigue and struggle for the throne of France when twin sons were born to Louis XIII. In order to assure the succession, one boy is spirited away. He grows to manhood unaware of his royal blood, under the watchful care of D'Artagnon (Warren William) and his three musketeers. His twin is crowned at five years of age and, under the crafty influence of the ambitious Forget (Joseph Schildkraut) becomes a selfish and cruel king. The double role is admirably played by Louis Hayworth who subtly, by voice and demeanor indicates the spiritual difference in the two characters. The plot and setting call for dramatic and vigorous action and suggest the dark historical period of social and political unrest of the times, Joan Bennett is very attractive as Maria Theresa, Spanish Princess who is betrothed to Louis XIV, and she gives an effective performance. The supporting cast is exceptionally able. Settings are lavish and beautiful and the direction distinguished. The production should have wide appeal.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12
Good  
Very exciting

ON BORROWED TIME  

"We tell you a tale of everyday people in a little town of present day America. It is an absurd, charming and stupendous story—but it is not a new one. Gossip of a similar amazing occurrence was whispered in the days when old Chaucer was writing his 'Canterbury Tales.'

"Mr. Chaucer liked the story and believed it—and so do we. If, perchance, you don't believe it we respectfully insist that we (and Mr. Chaucer) must be right. Because faith still performs miracles and a good deed does find its just reward."

The foreword to "On Borrowed Time" thrown on the screen gives the essence of this beautiful production, an unusual and sincere venture into the supernatural. It is the story of an old man and a small boy whose love and need for each other transcend death. It is an emotional story but balanced by exquisitely human reactions and delicate humor. Gramps (Lionel Barrymore) is wonderful in his role, and Bobs Watson, as Pud, equally remarkable. His performance places him in the first rank. Mr. Brink, the role of Death, is played by Sir Cedric Hardwick. It is a difficult part and some may wish that it might have been pictured in a more ethereal manner. However, Sir Cedric is amazingly impressive. The supporting cast give superlative assistance.

While the theme concerns the fact that the world would be a tragic place if death were taken away, it is not in the least morbid or depressing. On the contrary; and the delicate and tasteful direction of Sidney Franklin makes it exceptionally beautiful, while the natural humor, the amusing and earthy philosophy of Gramps, the spontaneous fun of Pud and the amazing situations give the picture unusual interest.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Children, 8 to 12
Yes  
Too mature under 10

THE SAINT IN LONDON  

This is another chapter in the exciting adventures of Simon Templar, better known
as "The Saint," the glorified detective and former safe cracker. In London, he befriends another American ex-convict, and the two attempt to outwit crooks who plot to clear a fortune on printing government currency. After the usual number of harrowing experiences and providential escapes, they bag their game. Meanwhile a charming lady has joined forces with them and has fallen in love with Templar. The attractive cast and good production values make the film sufficiently entertaining for detective story fans.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Questionable

SECOND FIDDLER

This is possibly Sonja Henie's best picture. It has a new and different plot, humorously satirizing publicity methods in Hollywood, and it gives her an opportunity to act as well as dance and skate. She is delightful. A rural school teacher is catapulted into movies when her photograph, sent in by an admirer, gives her the chance to make a screen test for the lead in a picture based on a best seller. She makes good, but finds herself bewildered by Hollywood and hurt by the manufactured romance publicized by the studio. The skating scenes are logically interpolated into the plot and are charming. Tyrone Power is perfectly cast as the nonchalant press agent who finds the love affair he originated a boomerang. Edna May Oliver is delightfully amusing and Rudy Vallee good in his role, while Irving Berlin's tuneful music will undoubtedly score on the "Hit Parade." It is all light and diverting and well worth one's attention.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Excellent

STRONGER THAN DESIRE

When an ambitious criminal lawyer neglects his pretty wife for his work, inevitably she looks elsewhere for admiration and writes letters which involve her in a murder case, from the toils of which she has to be extricated by her own husband. At least that is the way it happens in motion pictures. What makes "Stronger Than Desire" better than most formula pictures is the keen imagination of the director who focuses attention on the less obvious phases of the story and highlights certain scenes and people to give reality to the whole. The actors are capable: Virginia Bruce alert and pretty, Walter Pidgeon dignified without being stodgy, Ann Todd a nice natural little girl. Ann Dvorak is effective, although she "emotes" more than is usual in the present era. The remainder of the cast is commendable.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
If interested

SUSANNAH OF THE MOUNTIES

Although this latest vehicle for Shirley Temple is apparently designed for children, the producers obviously reckoned without an insight into child psychology. Muriel Denison's book has so large a following among young readers that its plot is perfectly familiar, but the picture, while accepting the well known characters, has presented action which bears practically no resemblance to the original. The human, amusing and dramatic incidents of the book are replaced by implausible melodrama which intelligent children recognize for what it is, with the result that the picture has limited audience appeal.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Too sophisticated

THEY ALL COME OUT

This is a prison film which is set aside from others by its rational and judicial attitude towards offenders. The first part, dealing with two bank robberies and subsequent escapes, is necessarily noisy, melodramatic, and blood-chilling, but from the moment members of the Federal Bureau of Prisons take over the procedure, the film becomes a fascinating though perhaps overoptimistic study in criminology. The prison staff, including case investigators, doctors, psychiatrists, endeavors to find something in each man's life or character which may be used to build him into a normal, law-abiding citizen. They send to Alcatraz only the most
obdurate criminals, beyond hope of reclamation. There is a simple, sincere love story woven into the plot with Rita Johnson and Tom Neal as two first offenders who help each other in the struggle upwards.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Interesting but brutal at times

THEY SHALL HAVE MUSIC ♦ ♦

It is a splendid accomplishment to present Jascha Heifetz in a cinema which combines human and artistic interest. The story is simple but dramatic, concerning an underprivileged boy from a New York tenement district who, more alert and original than his fellows, becomes the leader of a neighborhood gang. Their activities tend toward the beginning of lawlessness, and the attitude of an unsympathetic step-father, who cordially dislikes him and believes him incorrigible, makes home intolerable. He runs away at the threat of reform school and wanders by chance into an East Side Settlement music school, where the understanding director offers him a haven. His inherited love of music and undeveloped talent are discovered, and the stimulus brings out his latent fineness. Through his enthusiasm and unselfish courage the school is aided too.

This is the slender but very entertaining plot which is used to introduce, logically and dramatically, exquisite number by Jascha Heifetz and the young students of the music school. Mr. Heifetz's personality is charming and he is natural and pleasing. Walter Brennan gives another of his inimitable characterizations. Gene Reynolds and the other boys are fine, as are others in the supporting cast. The plot has much humor. One scene where the mothers of the young penniless prodigies hold off the sheriff is particularly hilarious. An enchanting mongrel pup deserves a special word of comment.

The great artist presents "Rondo Capriccioso," Saint Saens; "Hora Staccato," Dibidu-Heifetz; "Estrellita," Ponce-Heifetz; Tschai-kowsky's "Melody;" and Mendelssohn's "Con certo," the last movement, accompanied by the children's orchestra. The children are heard in solos and orchestra ensembles. Since schools today offer rare opportunities in musical appreciation and interpretation, modern children as well as adults will applaud enthusiastically the skill of the children's performance. But above all this superb screen presentation of the art of Mr. Heifetz is an accomplishment for which we may be deeply grateful.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Recommended

TIMBER STAMPEDE ♦ ♦

In the routine, outdoor action melodrama, George O'Brien plays the part of Scott, an honest sure-shot cattleman, who saves the citizens of Wagon Wheel from eastern interlopers and their mob of hired ruffians. The Easterners pretend to be building a railroad, but actually are plotting by faked homestead claims to seize the surrounding land for its rich timber. The climax of the film is a violent free-for-all at the local newspaper office where rival mobs battle for possession of evidence that would prove the trickery of the villains. The picture runs true to type with action, humor, and romance mixed according to the usual formula and a hero who is more than a match for any number of armed thugs.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
If they like the type
No—too violent

UNDERCOVER DOCTOR ♦ ♦

Interesting both in its factual content and in its dramatic action, this film depicts the methods of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in tracking down criminals. The trail in this case takes them to the office of a prominent doctor who has become rich through tending fugitives from the law without reporting them. The character of the doctor, the incidents which started him in his undercover practice, and his unsuccessful efforts to free himself from his criminal associations are vividly portrayed. The picture is commendable for the restraint and good taste with which it is handled.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Questionable type of entertainment
No
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, 1939
FEATURE FILMS

Andy Hardy Gets Spring Fever
Bad Lands
Beau Geste
Bulldog Drummond's Bride
Career
Challenge, The
Each Dawn I Die
Elsa Maxwell's Hotel for Women
Four Feathers
Frontier Marshal
In Name Only
I Stole a Million
Lady of the Tropics
Magnificent Fraud, The
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ANDY HARDY GETS SPRING FEVER ♦ ♦
Lewis Stone, Mickey Rooney, Cecilia Parker, Fay Holden, Ann Rutherford, Sara Haden, Helen Gilbert, Terry Kilburn. Screen play by Kay Van Riper, based upon characters created by Aurania Rouverol. Direction by W. S. Van Dyke II. M.-G.-M.

It cannot be that we are tired of Andy and his adolescent problems, for boys are always entertaining, even to parents, at least to those who have the vision to appreciate boyhood as a transient phase. But although Andy meets a new experience in a spring fever epidemic, those who have followed the series may feel that otherwise the plot has a familiar pattern, and that the picture lacks the original and hilarious touches of earlier productions. However, we do not wish to disparage the entertainment values of this picture. Andy writes a school play and acts the leading role under circumstances which might easily discourage even a better man. He also meets a new emotional upheaval, sanely and normally. It is all good fun and nicely handled.

Adolescent, 12 to 16
Good

BAD LANDS ♦ ♦
Robert Barrat, Noah Beery, Jr., Guinn Williams, Andy Clyde. Story and play by Clarence Upson Young. Direction by Lew Landers. R. K. O.

This is an anomaly, a “western” without sufficient action. An attempt has been made to emphasize character but interest is divided among so many people that it trickles very thin. Eight men in a sheriff’s posse in pursuit of an Indian murderer, find the tables turned when they are besieged in a desolate canyon by a band of Apaches who snipe them off one by one. The film is too slow-moving to maintain suspense, while dirge-like music, giving no impression of danger, serves only for added retardation.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Dull

BEAU GESTE ♦ ♦

Here is an excellent vehicle for Mr. Wellman’s genius for depicting a man’s world. It drips blood and sweat. Brutality and no-
bility strike an even balance in a quite fantastic tale of three brothers whose ideals are such, that, like Dumas' three musketeers, they are "one for all and all for one." When the last asset of a prominent English family, a huge sapphire called "The Blue Water," is stolen, Beau Geste claims to be guilty of the theft and leaves to join the Foreign Legion. Quite in the dark as to his motive but thoroughly loyal, his two brothers, Digby and John, follow him. Beau and Digby die bravely. John returns home and ultimately learns the true story of the stolen jewel when his aunt reads Beau's last message. Together they conclude that he was aptly named, Beau Geste, Beautiful Gesture. "Beau Geste" is a gripping tale even though the flash-back method is used in the telling. The fact that at the beginning one is apprised of certain concluding scenes does not rob it of interest. However, in skipping from a dramatic scene of an isolated fort in the Sahara to one of relative calm in the English countryside, there is something of a let-down. The early part of the picture does not compare favorably with the last half but is necessary for explaining the succeeding action.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Too exciting No

BULLDOG DRUMMOND'S BRIDE  


This latest episode in the "Bulldog Drummond" series is also the poorest. Drummond is about to be married when a bank robbery occurs and he delays his wedding to go sleuthing. In Paris he is put in jail as a joke on the part of his London office, and while there he manages to learn the details of the robbery. Slapstick action and humor are derived from such old time stand-bys as a pursuit over roofs, upset buckets of paint, and broken furniture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Too Poor Worthless

CAREER  


Phil Stong, author of "State Fair," gives us another of his detailed studies of the middle western scene. This time he draws attention to life in a small Iowa town by delineating the problems of some of its citizens. As a cross-section of life in a community, it is undoubtedly good, but a plot which follows the divergent courses of a half dozen people is apt to lack unity. In spite of this obvious fault, it is an interesting picture after the manner of many of the family pictures which are currently popular, and it could easily be carried into a series. It features the initial screen appearance of Alice Eden and John Archer, winners of the Lasky "Gateway to Hollywood Talent Search." Their performance is good but the other members of the cast, particularly Edward Ellis, should be credited with a valiant "assist." The story concerns a boy who tries to place a career before marriage. When he does decide to marry, he finds that he has lost the girl to someone else. There is some consolation for him when he learns that his father did not allow a similar experience to be tragic for him but found an enduring happiness with another.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Entertaining Mature

CHALLENGE, THE  


The scenario of this film is founded upon the historic feat of climbing the perilous Matterhorn, accomplished in the year 1865 by an intrepid young English explorer, Edward Whymper, whose four companions lost their lives in the descent. The story revolves around the ambitious rivalry of the Swiss and Italians to be the first to reach the top. This rivalry causes bitter feeling, and treachery is employed to prevent the Italian guide, Carrel, from accompanying Whymper. A romance of the innkeeper's daughter and the Italian guide lightens the seriousness and tenseness of the drama. For lovers of deeds and adventure this film will have much interest on account of the overpowering realism of the perilous mountain-climbing scenes. One has the feeling of being with the climbers facing momentary death. The Alps are shown in all their magnificent and treacherous grandeur.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Very harrowing No
EACH DAWN I DIE

It is difficult to find a justification for this picture outside of the fact that James Cagney and George Raft are given an opportunity to play he-man, human-nature-in-the raw parts in which they both excell. It is full of unbridled brutality and distorted social values. A young newspaper man, "framed" by a candidate for high office, is sent to the penitentiary for a long term. Since the prison is in a State which does not permit capital punishment, obviously it should be one of the most enlightened institutions. However, it is manned by a depraved staff and is as degrading and vicious as the worst prisons of the deep South some years ago. The only people who possess a shred of honor are a few of the convicts. Full of action, the picture ends with a battle which would do credit to a World War film and a confession which would be thrown out of any court in the land. It is bad material, well acted and well produced.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Bad stuff
Impossible

ELSA MAXWELL'S HOTEL FOR WOMEN

Assuming that Elsa Maxwell knows whereof she speaks, this film provides a splendid opportunity to become acquainted with the conversation and habits of the more successful models, show girls, and professional gold diggers of Manhattan. The story gives a rather hackneyed account of the adventures of Marcia Bromley of Syracuse who came to New York to rekindle the affections of a cast-off suitor and remained to ornament night clubs with her dazzling presence until she attracted the attention of a roue, got mixed up in a shooting, and was rescued by her Syracuse sweetheart. While the plot is stereotyped, the incidents of life in the hotel for women are rich in humor, the dialogue is clever, and the various types of girls are entertainingly portrayed. Though Miss Maxwell delivers kindly homilies on courage and straight shooting and keeping your chin up, the impression persists that New York is a happy hunting ground where wily huntresses snare rich "boy-friends" and live glamorously ever after.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Too brutal
Decidedly not

FOUR FEATHERS

A man's picture and particularly a Britisher's, "Four Feathers" might be dedicated to the valor of war and the glory of the Empire. It is very fine in its way, a huge spectacle with gorgeous color photography of Egypt's deserts and the Nile, and of native hoards and bright-uniformed British soldiers, with thrilling and bloody battles fought in the historically famous campaign which ended in the capture of Khartum. The central figure of the story is Harry Faversham, last descendant of a line of military heroes, who uses the excuse of civilian interests to cloak physical cowardice. He is sent four white feathers by his friends, and can be exonerated only by military prowess, which in the end he achieves through great sacrifice and heroism. The attitude towards war will be displeasing to many thinking people who believe that cool sanity should be preserved at a time when all the world is seeing red, but if it can be taken as straight military adventure, and if one is not too squeamish about details of torture, it is well worth seeing. Acting and direction are commendable.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Too exciting

FRONTIER MARSHAL

Although this story follows the main outlines of the usual "western," it is done in a manner which makes it convincing. The characters act like real people, and there is actually more emphasis on saving human lives than on taking them. A new marshal, self-appointed, determines to run the disreputable, gun-toting element out of Tombstone and in his progress is brought in contact with a doctor and a dance hall girl who in spite of checkered pasts, have retained elements of good in their characters. Photography is beautiful in many scenes.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Good "Western"

Five
IN NAME ONLY  ♦ ♦  

This is an absorbing problem-play portraying hatred, bitterness, selfishness, and thwarted love. Kay Francis plays the part of a wife who, having married her husband for money, refuses to relinquish her legal hold upon him to a woman who loves him, and much of the film is taken up with a portrayal of the subtle ways by which she attempts to torment him and the woman he wishes to marry. Carole Lombard is cast as the unfortunate victim of her hatred. It seems improbable that many would enjoy the theme, although it is handled interestingly enough. Carole Lombard and Cary Grant are at ease in their roles and Kay Francis for once has a chance to be something more than a dress model and takes advantage of her opportunity.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  
Altogether bad  No

I STOLE A MILLION  ♦ ♦  

This film belongs to the case history type and will appeal only to those who are interested in studying a depressing record of a misdirected life. It deals with a typical case of a mal-adjusted youth who becomes a criminal because of his quarseloms disposal and unwillingness to adapt himself to existing conditions. Unfortunately, there is no way of gauging the effect of this sort of picture upon the thousands of impressionable young people who will see it, for while it does not attempt to excuse the acts of its hero, neither does it present any constructive solution for his problems, and the emotional appeal of his love for a fine young girl may make it difficult to remember that his punishment is just a one.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  
Unsuitable  Impossible

LADY OF THE TROPICS  ♦ ♦  

Important to fashion experts is the news that Miss Hedy Lamarr, in numerous carefully posed close-ups, introduces twenty costumes designed by Adrian featuring the new Oriental influence. The rest of the picture is important to no one, though possibly entertaining for Taylor or Lamarr fans. The scene is laid in Saigon, "Paris of the East." Thither by yacht comes Bill Carey, 300 per cent American, playboy, perennial guest, and loafer. The moment he catches sight of Manon de Fargnes the course of his life is changed, and he knows it. But in spite of his American chivalry and the comfortable awareness of Uncle Sam's protection, he is no match for suave, sinister, immensely influential Pierre de Laroch, a half breed who wishes to claim Manon, also a half breed, for his own very. De Laroch adopts cat-and-mouse antics to prevent Manon from getting a passport to leave Indo China, till at last Manon murders him and perishes by her own hand, but one feels that it is all for the best. Joseph Schildkraut as de Laroch reaches the peak of villainy, and Miss Lamarr looks extraordinarily beautiful.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  
Poor standards  No

MAGNIFICENT FRAUD, THE   ♦ ♦  

The picture is interesting chiefly for the acting of Akim Tamiroff in a double role. He takes the part of the president of a nameless Central American country and the actor-imposter who fills his office during the negotiations for a ten million dollar loan from the United States. Lloyd Nolan is a soldier of fortune, finding romance in the maze of political intrigue. It is a fairly exciting melodrama, in which trickery and deception are made attractive until the next to the last scene.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  
Unsuitable  Impossible

MILLION DOLLAR LEGS   ♦ ♦  

"Million Dollar Legs" may be a piquant title, but the picture is just another movie version of what keeps students entertained at a co-educational college, the principal objective of this particular student body is to raise money to support crew racing. By the simple expedient of betting on a winning horse they succeed in financing the new sport and capturing the rowing honors for dear old Middleton.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  
Fair  Passable
MIRACLES FOR SALE ○ ○
Robert Young, Florence Rice, Henry Hull, Lee Bowman, Astrid Allwyn, Frank Craven.
Based on the novel, "Death from a Top Hat," by Clayton Dawson. Direction by Tod Browning. M-G-M.

Selling miracles is a strange business, but that is what Mike Morgan did. He sold equipment to magicians—all that "hand-is-quicker-than-the-eye" sort of thing. Quite innocently he stumbled on two murders which for weird magic had him puzzled. By a desperate ruse, he solved them and saved the life of a third person. With the material at hand, Miracles for Sale could have been a thriller or a brisk farce. Handled as a straight murder mystery, it is neither dramatic nor amusing enough to be interesting except as an expose of magician's tricks.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Too exciting

NEWS IS MADE AT NIGHT ○ ○

Fast action and a steady stream of new complications make this newspaper-detective yarn lively enough for anyone, but the piling on of absurdities robs it of all but the most superficial interest. The foundation for the story is familiar in design: newspaper editor is trying to exonerate man condemned to die for murder, girl reporter is determined to get a job, turns up at all critical moments and finally obtains conclusive evidence. The picture alternates between the most sinister realism and outright slapstick comedy. None of the characters is really admirable and most of them are villainous.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
No

OLD MAID, THE ○ ○

Edith Wharton's stories of old New York depict a rigidly correct society of the days of the Civil War and the decades which immediately followed. In them the age old emotions of desire and jealousy and mother love seethe beneath the surface, grow stronger because of repression and are sometimes diverted into strange channels. So it happens that a lovely, too generous girl, Charlotte Lovell, injured by the double ignominy of being an "old maid" and mother of a child born out of wedlock, is transformed into a punctiliously conventional em-

bittered woman, and the calculating cousin, Delia, whose jilted lover Charlotte had consoled, grows more human and gracious through devotion both to her own children and the chance-born girl in whom both of them see again the man they have loved. Delia's revenge in depriving Charlotte of a suitable marriage is something which seems like a subtle poison through the latter's whole life. The cast is unusually competent, including Bette Davis, Miriam Hopkins, Donald Crisp, Jane Bryan and others. The most difficult role is that of Charlotte, played by Bette Davis with fine character shading and deep feeling; her change in appearance as well as in temperament is practically flawless. Miriam Hopkins is splendid as Delia and will be remembered as one of the most exquisite brides of all times. The picture is replete with weddings, there being no less than four, with lovely groups of bridesmaids and all the panoply of the day. Settings are carried out in great detail to give an authentic background, and the music adds greatly to the atmosphere, although those who listen closely will be a little surprised at the use Max Steiner makes of an old ditty which has almost become an American folk song.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Too mature

OUR LEADING CITIZEN ○ ○

This film can claim attention on three counts: it is one of the few to use Capital vs. Labor as its theme; it casts Bob Burns in a straight role; it administers a huge dose of Americanism. Otherwise it is not a notable achievement. The characters, like those in the old morality plays, seem to represent abstractions rather than individuals. Practically all the virtues are combined in the Leading Citizen, and the duty of resolving economic difficulties is placed squarely upon his shoulders. Evil qualities are somewhat unequally divided between Capital and Labor, for although Labor is discovered to have been misguided by the insidious influence of a foreign power, Capital has no excuse for his wickedness and is roundly punished for his greed. The scenes of clashes between pickets and hired strike-breakers keep the picture from becoming monotonous. Though the cast is capable and well-chosen for the various roles, the picture is a bit too obvious to be inspiring.
## SPELLBINDER, THE

**Lee Tracy, Barbara Read, Patric Knowles, Allan Lane, Linda Hayes, Morgan Conway.**


No methods were too reprehensible to be employed by attorney *Marlow* in obtaining the acquittal of his underworld clients, but when his school-girl daughter was tricked into marriage by one of them who was an avowed murderer, his love for her led him to shoot the villain and take the consequences. There is little that can be said in favor of the picture except that Lee Tracy as *Marlow* gives a convincing performance.

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<tr>
<th>Adolescents, 12 to 16</th>
<th>Children, 8 to 12</th>
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## UNEXPECTED FATHER

Sandy Lee, Shirley Ross, Dennis O'Keefe, Mischa Auer, Leo Murphy, Paul Gilfoyle, Mayo Methot. Original play by Leonard Spigelgass and Charles Grayson. Direction by Charles Lamont. Universal.

If the story built around little Sandy Lee is not particularly original or stimulating, it really does not matter a great deal, for that enchanting baby could make almost any picture entertaining. She—or he as the script insists—has an amazing stage presence and a personality which covers all deficiencies. *Jimmy* (Dennis O'Keefe) learns that his former dancing partner and his husband have been killed in an accident, leaving a baby boy. He locates the child's only relatives, but finds them unwilling and unsuitable guardians. There follow amusing experiences as *Jimmy* and a fellow trouper try to care for the child, and an entire theatre cast assume responsibility and give assistance after their fashion. An unrehearsed appearance of *Sandy* on the stage causes publicity which inspires the relatives to lay claim to him, but he settles all problems in his own entirely capable way. It is light and amusing and Sandy gives an unexcelled exhibition of what it takes to be a star performer.

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<tr>
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## WAY DOWN SOUTH

Bobby Breen, Alan Mowbray, Ralph Morgan, Clarence Muse, Seffy Duna. Story and screen play by Clarence Muse and Langston Hughes. Direction by Barnard Vorhaus. Principal-R. K. O.

This is simple, rather pleasing fare, probably a good choice for Bobby Breen. The story concerns a sly, cunning, dishonest executor who plans to sell the faithful plantation slaves but is finally thwarted. The plot is interesting because of minor episodes and variations. There is a delightful, humorous inn-keeper in New Orleans (Alan Mowbray), a rare old gouty judge with Epicurean tastes (Robert Creif), a funny negro who masquerades as little *Tim's* maiden aunt (Clarence Muse), and through it all the Hall Johnson choir whose songs vary from choruses of thanksgiving to doleful chants of despair. While we all know that modern "swing" came from the negroes, one wonders if it were quite as "hot" as shown in one sequence in the pre-Civil War days.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adolescents, 12 to 16</th>
<th>Children, 8 to 12</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Would probably enjoy it</td>
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## WHEN TOMORROW COMES


Since a poignant love story is the *sine qua non* of a successful Boyer-Dunne picture, Universal must have had quite a problem to solve in finding a new vehicle which would be sufficiently different from "Love Affair" and at the same time give the screen's most popular lovers a chance to exercise their talent for depicting tender romance. "When Tomorrow Comes" meets the specifications very nicely and will not disappoint the waiting public. For variety, it commences with a scene in a crowded restaurant where the waitresses are about to go on strike and where Miss Dunne, as *Helen*, one of the waitresses, meets Mr. Boyer, as *Philip Char- gal*, whom she mistakes for a spy employed by the management, but who turns out to be a famous pianist with a swanky house on Long Island. Of course they fall in love, but an insurmountable obstacle forces them to part. Surprisingly, interest in the love story temporarily gives way to a tremendously realistic sequence which re-creates the hurricane on Long Island, and it is the thrilling suspense of these scenes which makes the picture distinctive. In a supporting role Barbara O'Neil gives a surpassingly fine performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adolescents, 12 to 16</th>
<th>Children, 8 to 12</th>
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<tr>
<td>Too mature in theme</td>
<td>No</td>
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WINTER CARNIVAL


In the shadow of "oomph" poor old Dartmouth makes her screen debut. Her loyal sons may thrill to the sight of their snow-decked Alma Mater, but they will certainly squirm in their seats if they stay to watch a glamorous divorcée steal the spotlight in a film which overlooks the entertainment values of Dartmouth traditions and college life for the less interesting details of a romance between a young faculty member and a notorious glamor girl, the divorced wife of a Count. In the latter role Ann Sheridan displays an elaborate wardrobe, but scarcely justifies the intriguing promises of her publicity agents. Besides the leading characters there are numerous other young men and girls whose romances and ambitions make the plot more confusing than interesting.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Possible
Children, 8 to 12 No interest
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Five Little Peppers and How They Grew
Golden Boy
Hawaiian Nights
Island of Lost Men
My Fifth Avenue Girl
Night Work
Nurse Edith Cavell
Range War
Stanley and Livingston
The Star Maker
Stop, Look and Love
These Glamour Girls
The Underpup
The Wizard of Oz
The Women

Short Subject
March of Time
ABUS DE CONFIDENCE ♦ ♦

French pictures frequently treat life from an angle unusual in American films and present strange problems that are none the less fascinating. This is the story of a penniless little Parisienne who inspires only the predatory instinct in men, and to escape their loathsome attentions, conceives the idea of foisting herself upon a distinguished man as his daughter by a long dead mistress. Danielle Darrieux's countenance is too often like a lovely, carven mask, although she speaks with great feeling and conviction in the court-room scene towards the end. Charles Vanel, as the older man, is reasonable and human, evoking deep sympathy. The music sustains the mood, photography is good, and there are fine touches of symbolism typical of the best foreign films.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
No. Very mature
Unsuitable

THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES ♦ ♦
Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce, Ida Lupino, Alan Marshal, Terry Kilburn, George Zucco. Screen play by Edwin Blum and William Drake, based on the play "Sherlock Holmes" by William Gillette, with the permission of the executors of the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Direction by Alfred Werker. 20th Century-Fox.

The generation to whom William Gillette in "Sherlock Holmes" is a vivid and delightful memory may not find the current screen version of Gillette's play altogether satisfactory, but when Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created the omniscient sleuth and his faithful assistant and evolved a new school of crime detection by deductive reasoning, he presented the world with some exceptionally hardy perennials. Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce are as good a team as could have been chosen to play the parts of Holmes and Watson, and the story of how they saved the British crown-jewels from the diabolical Professor Moriarty is still an absorbing thriller.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Too much crime detail
Harrowing
BLACKMAIL  ♡ ♡

For audience entertainment an innocent man is again sent to the chain gang, escapes, and after nine years is caught to endure again unbelievable treatment. Once more he escapes, and this time he succeeds in bringing to justice the man responsible for the injustice. There may be those who will enjoy the violent scenes unfolded on the screen, but it is scarcely women's fare, and we question its social value. If movie patrons were moved to investigate the truth of situations such as those pictured, such films have some excuse. Otherwise, what purpose? Certainly not entertainment. As violent melodrama, it succeeds pictorially. The cast is adequate, with Gene Lockhart giving an outstanding impression of a sinister and evil man. But in our opinion it is not worth seeing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Bad  Impossible

BLONDIE TAKES A VACATION  ♡ ♡

Babies seem to be walking away with stellar honors in pictures these days. Certainly little Larry Simms and his dog Daisy provide the laughters in this diverting comedy adapted from the characters in Chic Young's comic strip. Blondie, Dagwood, Baby Dumpling and Daisy start off on a long deferred vacation, although Baby Dumpling and Daisy have secret misgivings that all will not be smooth sailing. Sure enough, they antagonize the manager of the hotel where they wish to stay and are forced to go to another inn, where they have amazing adventures but manage to give help to an elderly couple. It's all good fun to which Donald Meek as an elderly pyromaniac contributes. Baby Dumpling offers the opinion that while he loves his mother and daddy, he sometimes finds them hard to live with, and judging from his experiences we sympathize. He is probably not unique among children in this opinion.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Good  Yes

CHARLIE CHAN AT TREASURE ISLAND

Like most of the Chan stories, this is a good mystery film with interesting characters and high-pitched suspense. It is a clever idea to use as a setting the San Francisco Exposition, first seen from the air as the China Clipper circles over the landing field, bringing to earth a dead man whose connection with a certain mystic, Zodiac, sends Charlie Chan on another crime hunt. Explanation of spiritualistic trickery is intriguing, although the final solution is accomplished by mind-reading far more difficult to accept. Sidney Toler carries on the personality of Charlie Chan very capably, Sen Yung is laugh-provoking as the "honorable sprout," his second son, Cesar Romero is colorful, and other parts are well cast.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Good mystery film  Too tense

CHICKEN WAGON FAMILY  ♡ ♡
Jane Withers, Leo Carillo, Marjorie Weaver, Spring Byington, Kane Richmond, Hobart Cavanaugh. Based on the novel by Barry Benfield. Screen play by Viola Brothers Shore. Direction by Herbert I. Leeds. 20th Century-Fox.

In this humble picture Jane Withers is Addie Fippany, the energetic younger daughter of a creole family who live in a housewagon and travel about the South trading various supplies and knickknacks for chickens. The father, played by Leo Carillo, loves this carefree existence, but the women long for the opportunities of city life. The latter half of the play relates their adventures in New York City. It is a suitable film for Jane Withers, whose pranks are less harmful than usual. Spring Byington and Leo Carillo have good character parts, and there is a pleasant romance.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Yes  Yes

DEATH OF A CHAMPION  ♡ ♡

There have been films depicting murder in almost every conceivable locale, but here is a new one—murder at a dog show. First a champion dog is poisoned and afterwards several people are killed. The murders are solved by a small boy and a man who runs one of the concessions. The picture is second rate and is only partially redeemed by the scenes at the dog show.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Questionable  No
DUST BE MY DESTINY  ✔   ✔

Technically superior and expertly acted, this film nevertheless adds nothing to the already overcrowded gallery of portraits of unfortunate youths who emerge from unjust imprisonment hating and fearing organized society, and always more sinned against than sinning. The crusading purpose of the author is evident in the court-room plea of the defense attorney. In a speech obviously directed to the theater audience, he pleads for Joe Bell and others like him who are the helpless victims of an unfeeling and uninformed society. But like most other films in the same category, this one offers no practical solution for the problem and is perhaps more likely to be effective as a justification for young criminals than as an incentive to provide a better environment for underprivileged youth. John Garfield is a convincing Joe Bell. Priscilla Lane handles her emotional scenes effectively, but in dress and demeanor she gives no impression of being the neglected step-daughter of the drunken superintendent of a work camp.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Needs adult evaluation  ✔
Children, 8 to 12  ✔

EVERYTHING'S ON ICE  ✔   ✔

In a picture built to exploit her talent as an ice skater, six-year-old Irene Dare is given plenty of opportunity to perform. The story is rather feeble but serves its purpose. A shiftless, four-flushing family capitalizes on the ability of a little girl and moves to Florida where the child has a skating contract at a fashionable resort. The family problems are satisfactorily settled when big sister marries a millionaire. The picture is sufficiently entertaining because of the comedy scenes and the expert skating. It will be less pleasing to audiences who dislike seeing a child in an environment of adult sophistication.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Passable
Children, 8 to 12  Passable

FIVE LITTLE PEPPERS AND HOW THEY GREW  ✔   ✔

Here is a picture made for children, girls especially. The Five Little Peppers, with Polly taking Mother's place, run the household, struggle with the faulty stove, plan birthday surprises, and catch the measles. A fairy godfather, in modern guise, lends assistance at the proper moment. It is simple, kindly melodrama, catching the psychology of the original story which has been popular with little girls for fifty years. The cast is good, and little Dorothy Anne Seese is particularly delightful in the role of Phronsie.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Amusing
Children, 8 to 12  Good

GOLDEN BOY  ✔   ✔

"Golden Boy," on film as on the stage, is strictly for adult audiences, although much of the rough dialogue of the original play has been omitted. The writing of a "happy ending" will be an objection to some, although the picture flows with powerful smoothness throughout. It is a psychological problem drama of a sensitive, emotional young boy with a great musical talent and the physical equipment of a prize fighter. The action takes him through his career in the prize ring, and back to his music and normal living after the unforgettable fight in which he kills his opponent, a young negro boy. William Holden as the "Boy" is effective, both with his violin and as a fighter; the emotional struggle is well handled and is credible throughout. The other characters are convincing and have as much interest as individuals as in their relationship to the boy. Particularly good is Lee Cobb as the father.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  ✔
Children, 8 to 12  ✔

HAWAIIAN NIGHTS  ✔   ✔

"Hawaiian Nights" is one of those mediocre films which people seldom remember for long. It might serve to create a certain nostalgia if one had been in the Islands, for the scenes of palm groves and moonlit shores and the lovely dancing of the luau seem
authentic. The story is an old one, of a young man who wants to be an orchestra leader and is opposed by a stern, time-clock-punching parent. As a matter of fact, the best parts are performed by the older men, Thurston Hall, Samuel S. Hinds and Etienne Girardot. Some of the dialogue is poor, some of the music pleasing.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**  
**Children, 8 to 12**  
Fair

**ISLAND OF LOST MEN**  

A gangster picture with an Oriental setting tells of an Eurasian, *Gregory Prin*, ruling over a jungle river country in Indo China with henchmen who are fugitives from justice. To this unsavory region comes a young Chinese girl in search of her father, a general, last seen with $300,000 in his possession. It is a tense, gruesome picture which serves to raise goose-flesh in spite of the fact that actors behave like automatons; even such seasoned performers as Anna May Wong and Eric Blore fail to be convincing.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**  
**Children, 8 to 12**  
No  
Impossible

**MY FIFTH AVENUE GIRL**  

Here is a light comedy of manners, a modern fairy tale, which amusingly ridicules both the capitalistic and the socialist viewpoints, and, by exaggeration rather than by realism, presents a certain pattern of human behavior. Walter Connolly appears as the typical business man, victimized by the responsibilities of his tremendous wealth. Both he and his deluded, unsocial family are brought to a saner appreciation of life's possibilities by a young woman who comes from a completely different social stratum. The production is adequately acted and amusing, and with all its fun it offers a really constructive suggestion that most lines of thought may be reconciled through the application of tolerance and sympathy.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**  
**Children, 8 to 12**  
Requires adult interpretation

**NIGHT WORK**  

An inappropriate title sets off a picture which has just enough entertainment value to keep a tolerant audience in their seats. Charlie Ruggles and Mary Boland are far from their best. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that a farce is based on a theme which is not at all farcical: the struggle of two people to keep an adopted boy they have come to love. The picture of little Billy Lee dangling from a rope fourteen stories above the pavement will strike terror into many a mother's heart.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**  
**Children, 8 to 12**  
Yes  
No. Might frighten

**NURSE EDITH CAVELL**  
Anna Neagle, Edna May Oliver, George Sanders, Mary Robson, Zasu Pitts, H. B. Warner, Sophie Stewart, Mary Howard. Screen play by Michael Hogan from the story "Dawn" by Capt. Reginald Berkeley. Direction Herbert Wilcox. Imperia

The tragic story of Edith Cavell which moved the world to horror and indignation at the time of the World War is revived on the screen at the moment when it quite possibly might be regarded as anti-German propaganda. Those who see it, however, will be impressed by the fact that every effort is made to keep the treatment sincerely objective, unclouded by sentimentality and emotionalism, and free from malice. *Edith Cavell*, as Anna Neagle presents her, might be an heroic woman of any nation at any period of history who, having dedicated herself to the saving of human life, falls victim to the warped psychology of war. The story opens at the outbreak of the World War and progresses with restrained but powerful emotion to a tragic conclusion that is known from the first to be inevitable. The setting is Brussels during the German occupation. The plot traces Nurse Cavell's activities in restoring wounded soldiers to health and in helping them to escape, the gradual apprehension of her activities by German military officials, and her arrest, court martial, death sentence and execution. The acting of the entire cast is remarkably fine, and Miss Neagle creates an unforgettable Edith Cavell.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**  
**Children, 8 to 12**  
Depressing  
No

**RANGE WAR**  
This is a good, exciting “western” of the
Hopalong Cassidy series. The story is based as usual on the efforts of wicked men of the West to hamper industrious pioneers who, with Hopalong’s help, are triumphant in a good fight. While the dialogue is only fair, the photography of the High Sierras is extremely beautiful and the musical background adds to the effectiveness of the picture by unobstrusively building up the mood of the story. William Boyd continues as the likeable hero, and Pedro de Cordoba is dignified and impressive as the Padre of the mission where the final battle takes place.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Yes

THE STAR MAKER


Gus Edwards, the song writer who composed “School Days,” “In My Merry Oldsmobile,” “I Can’t Tell Why I Love You But I Do,” and many other favorite songs, also was a discoverer of child talent. Among those to whom he gave their first jobs are such famous entertainers as Eddie Cantor, the Duncan Sisters, Walter Winchell, Helen Menken, and others too numerous to list. “The Star Maker” is inspired by his career, and though not actually biographical, it more or less parallels his experience as a children’s impresario. The cast is made up of a horde of precocious youngsters with Bing Crosby as the showman. Music and dancing are offered in generous quantity, and Linda Ware, fourteen-year-old soprano, makes her screen debut along with Dr. Walter Damrosch and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. Her voice is truly remarkable for her age, although she is not yet adequately prepared for the demands of either Tschaikowsky’s “Valse des Fleurs” or “Parla Valse” by Arditi, both of which she sings in the film. While a large public will undoubtedly enjoy the juvenile performers, an equally large number of theater-goers who dislike seeing children ape adults, will earnestly hope that not too many mothers will be inspired to make tap-dancers and blues-singers of their offspring.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Yes if interested in musical entertainment

STOP, LOOK AND LOVE


This is an unimportant light comedy in which a tactless matchmaking mother all but ruins her daughter’s chances of marrying the right man. The plot and the humor are both rather obvious, and the acting is only fair.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Fair

STANLEY AND LIVINGSTON


This is a notable contribution to the list of historical films, for it brings to the present generation an unforgettable picture of the Stanley expedition into the unexplored heart of Africa. In 1869, James Gordon Bennett, dynamic publisher of the New York Herald, unconvinced that Dr. Livingstone was dead, financed a party under his fearless and resourceful reporter, Henry Morton Stanley, to find the missionary and bring him home. Traveling inland from Zanzibar, the expedition worked upward through African veldt and forest, attacked by native tribes, battered by storms and heat, and threatened by wild animals. Toward the end, almost exhausted by the ravages of fever, Stanley, learning that there is a white man on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, presses on to find the lost missionary, who after all does not care to return to civilization. Spencer Tracy as Stanley does a superb piece of acting throughout the picture. His most dramatic scene is his appeal for recognition before the English Geographical Society, which refuses to believe he has reached his objective. Sir Cedric Hardwicke gives a finished performance, and there are fine portrayals by Henry Travers, Charles Coburn, Henry Hull and others. Some of the episodes and minor characters are fictional, added for romantic and comedy relief, but they do not detract from the historical atmosphere of the film. Direction and photography are expert. At the finish one feels that one has been with Stanley on a glorious and perilous expedition into the heart of Africa.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Very fine

Too exciting for some
**THESE GLAMOUR GIRLS**


This is almost like a party to present the younger actors of M.-G.-M., and fine-looking youngsters they are: girls with good looks and charm and the ability to wear clothes, and attractive, clean-cut youths. It is a play about a week-end of house parties given at an eastern men’s college known as Kingsford, with a more realistic atmosphere than is usually palmed off on the public in such pictures. It shows a good deal of the unpleasant side of modern young people. They are selfish, scheming, contemptuous of those who have less wealth and social position. To one fraternity house come snobbish daughters of the “four-hundred” and also a taxi-dancer, invited by one of the boys on a recent “binge,” who, believe it or not, has a sweeter manner and a smoother “line” than any of the socialites. The plot is fair to middling and is not enhanced by the suicide of the five-star prom girl, which is decidedly off-key in a production ninety per cent light college romance.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**

**Children, 8 to 12**

*Only passable*

**THE UNDERPUP**


In the constant flow of new releases, unless there is much fanfare of trumpets, critical fans may easily overlook good pictures. Possibly the “Underpup” has already attracted favorable notice, but in any event it deserves attention. It has an excellent cast and an appealing story, skillfully and sympathetically directed by Richard Wallace, and above all it offers a philosophy of living which adds real worth to its entertainment values. It is the simple story of a child from the slums of New York, who is placed in a summer camp among girls from the privileged, wealthy class. She wins their respect and love through the inspiring force of her character and her charming personality. Without preachment the situation has been admirably handled. Her spiritual wealth is contrasted with the spiritual poverty of her companions who strive to find compensation by a display of material belongings. “Pip-Emma” (Gloria Jean) wins them all, and the “Penguins” take her in to their group and capitulate to new and higher values. It is delightful entertainment, rich in fun and heart-warming in interpretation, a picture with appeal for all ages. Gloria Jean is a lovely child and she sings beautifully. C. Aubrey Smith adds another endearing character portrayal to his long list of achievements.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**

**Children, 8 to 12**

*Excellent*

**THE WIZARD OF OZ**


Most of the qualities of ideal entertainment are combined in this picture. It is irresistibly gay, and it carries you as far from everyday life as the cyclone carried Dorothy. To readers of the Baum books it is like a happy reunion with old friends. The whole cast is so good that it is hard to say which actors excel, but Bert Lehr as The Cowardly Lion has undoubtedly the choice role, and he never misses a trick, while Judy Garland’s unaffected charm and spontaneity help us to accept her absurd companions as the lovable playmates she seems to imagine them. The humor, the music, the color, and the fairy-tale atmosphere combine to make a fantasy that points an enticing way to new and delightful possibilities for screen entertainment.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**

**Children, 8 to 12**

*Delightful*
THE WOMEN ◇ ◇

Norma Shearer, Joan Crawford, Rosalind Russell, Mary Boland, Paulette Goddard, Phyllis Povah, Joan Fontaine, Virginia Weidler, Lucile Watson, Marjorie Main, Virginia Grey, Ruth Hussey, Muriel Hutchison, Hedda Hopper, Florence Nash, Cora Witherspoon, Ann Morris, Dennie Moore, Mary Cecil, Mary Beth Hughes. From the play by Clare Boothe, by arrangement with Max Gordon Plays and Picture Corporation. Screen play by Anita Loos and Jane Murfin. Direction by George Cukor. Produced by Hunt Stromberg. M.-G.-M.

Given wide publicity as a venomous satire on unscrupulous, gossipping women, the play from which this film is adapted was also noted for its risqué lines. Toned down to conform to the motion picture code, it is less startling, but equally venomous. Norma Shearer, cast as Mary Haines, the epitome of devoted motherhood and a paragon of wifely virtues, inexplicably surrounds herself with a coterie of rich parasites whose gleeful tattling about her husband's affair with a gold-digger induces her to seek a Reno divorce. Although the problems of Mary and her sensitive little daughter are almost too poignant to be coupled with the raucous and exaggerated comedy of the other characters, the production is exceedingly clever and brilliantly acted. It is, however, too sardonic to provoke much light-hearted amusement.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Most unsuitable

SHORT SUBJECT

MARCH OF TIME NO. 13 ◇ ◇


An intensely interesting short feature shows New York City in its component parts. One sees it from the air and from the waterfront and looks upon its people from Park Avenue to Harlem, its transportation, industry and finance. The last part of the film is devoted to the part played by the police force, and shows the transformation of a gangster-cursed, graft-ridden city into one with an honest administration under Mayor La Guardia and Chief of Police Valentine. The accompanying narrative is adequate without being too wordy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Interesting and instructive

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These programs were very popular last year, the attendance being from 400 to 1,600.

The pictures are preceded by one-half hour organ music by Mr. Harry Q. Mills. The musical selections are particularly chosen from the best composers with regard to their interest for a young audience.

We understand that Occidental College is beginning a similar series this year.

**FEATURE FILMS**

**CALL A MESSENGER**


Here is another film exploiting the "Dead End" gang and dealing with the problem of making good citizens out of boys who have already become petty thieves and East Side toughs. Billy Halop, as Jimmy Hogan, is reformed when a kindly man puts him to work as a messenger boy. The main idea is a laudable one upon which to build a motion picture, but this particular film strikes too many false notes in its handling of the material and the result is unpleasant rather than constructive.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Children, 8 to 12

No

**A CHUMP AT OXFORD**


As in former Laurel and Hardy films, the plot of this ironical farce-comedy is incon-
sequential. Two street sweepers unwittingly capture a thief and are given scholarships to Oxford by their grateful benefactor. They accept with the optimistic hope that education will make them "smart." Upon their arrival they are put through an initiation which gets them into trouble with faculty and students alike. Laurel is hit on the head and discovers a dual personality which adds to the hilarity. The settings are novel and the musical score adds materially in placing the mood. Enjoyment of this type of entertainment is largely a matter of taste, but Laurel and Hardy fans will welcome their return to the screen in a vehicle which offers opportunity for spontaneous fun.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  Yes

DANCING CO-ED  ♦ ♦


Campus comedies seem to be improving, and this one is unusually entertaining. A motion picture studio conducts a nation-wide contest throughout the colleges of the U. S. in order to obtain the lead in the studio's forthcoming million dollar epic, "Dancing Co-Ed." The studio press agent plants a dancer, Patty Marlowe, played by Lana Turner, on Midwestern University Campus, and of course she is to win the contest. When the editor of the college newspaper suspects the whole contest of being a hoax and sets forth to uncover it, Patty, to divert suspicion, becomes a cub reporter and pretends to help him in his task. The film makes clever use of the comic aspects of student life, and all of the young cast play their parts with infectious good spirits. This is the kind of picture that really "drives dull care away."

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  Good

THE DAY THE BOOKIES WEPT  ♦ ♦

Joe Penner, Betty Grable, Richard Lane, Tom Kennedy, Thurston Hall, Bernadene Hayes, Carol Hughes, Jack Arnold. Screen play by Bert Granet and George Jeske from a story by Daniel Fuchs. Direction by Leslie Goodwins. RKO-Radio.

Entertainment of the lightest kind is provided for Joe Penner fans in this absurd farce. Ernest, a well-meaning but none too bright cab driver, wants to train pigeons, but his fellow cabbies feel he is the man to buy a race horse for them. To silence his protests, they arrange to have him discharged, and he eventually arrives in Kentucky to buy the race horse. The Colonel, amusingly played by Thurston Hall, is a sharper who soon sells Ernest, by a tricky device, a horse named Hiccup which can run only when it is drunk. The unsuspecting cabbies, none of whom knows a good horse from a poor one, put their savings on the horse and lose. Just as they are about to give up the whole project as a failure, the horse finds a barrel of beer, and wins the big race in an 80 to 1 long shot. Fortunately, the sweetheart of Ernest has learned of the horse's eccentricities, and has placed all the money of the cabbies on their own horse; and the picture ends with her distributing a basket of money to the happy owners.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  Passable

ESPIONAGE AGENT  ♦ ♦


A young man in the United States Foreign Office marries a girl whose past catches up with her and ruins his career. However, their love for each other and their feeling of loyalty toward their country take them on a dangerous mission of espionage, and by their daring and brilliance, they acquire enough information concerning spies and saboteurs to influence Congress to pass legislation establishing a system of counter-espionage in this country. The subject matter is so timely that it seems to have leapt out of newsprint into film, and, as in most news of today, the apocryphal is hard to distinguish from the real. It is laden, too, with pro-isolation propaganda. The plot is typical of most stories of espionage in that the sympathetic characters come through unscathed and the others are eliminated. Of note are the steps in the training of junior officers for the Department of State. Of note, also, is a fresh new type in the person of Brenda Marshall, whose experience on the stage reaches back several years.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12  Too tense
his artistry again by making this character subtly different from the earlier one, although McGinnis is another dull-witted, quarrelsome Irishman who commits murder. The problem involved is whether a priest may betray a guilty man's confession, even to save an innocent person. Joseph Calleia is a splendidly sincere and convincing Father Loma, and the story of how he found a way out of his dilemma makes an absorbing though grim drama.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**
**Children, 8 to 12**

**HERE I AM A STRANGER**


The reform of a drunkard through his love for his son is not a new theme in pictures, but it is somewhat differently presented in this film. In the beginning Clara leaves her good-for-nothing husband, ex-football star and journalist, and takes their two-year-old son, David, with her. Twenty years later David is in college, where he meets a professor who had taught his father and who shows him some of his father's writings. Inspired by these articles, David decides to find his father. Thus father and son are brought together. The father is given the incentive to reform and David learns, through several unexpected happenings, to value his father's integrity. With less restrained direction the film might have been melodramatic, possibly mawkish. However, Mr. del Ruth and the excellent cast have succeeded in making it both interesting and worthwhile.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**
**Children, 8 to 12**

**HONEYMOON IN BALI**


The choice between a husband and career no longer seems to be the tragic conflict for American women which it once was. However, there are exceptions, and not every Gail's decision is auspicious enough to insure her a honeymoon in Bali. In this entertaining social comedy Madeline Carroll is the lovely heroine, dressed to perfection to display her beauty. Helen Strother is an excellent foil with her common-sense philos-
gangster story in costume. The gangsters are smugglers and murderers who wreck vessels on the rocky shores of the English coast and leave no survivors to tell the tale. Their hideout is Jamaica Inn, a lonely place usually avoided by respectable people. To this inn comes a young girl to make her home with an aunt, and she finds herself involved in a sinister and frightening experience. The brains of the gang, known to one man only, is Sir Humphrey Pengallon. Charles Laughton, who excels in diabolical characterizations, plays this role to the hilt, the chief gangster in another era, the forerunner of the present day man higher up. Any appearance of Mr. Laughton is an event. He is no disappointment in this, for he is very clever in the role of a seeming dandy and pop who is in reality the cruel, bestial leader of the cutthroats. The sympathetic character is played by lovely Maureen O'Hara, a newcomer to the screen, whose histrionic possibilities seem very great. She has a magnetic personality and shows restraint and sureness in her acting. There are numerous striking bits played by others in the cast who are unfamiliar on the American screen. It is a blood curdling tale, but unusual and very interesting. Some of the dialogue is lost by enunciation too rapid for ears attuned to English as Americans pronounce it, but the production is a striking one, handsomely set and photographed and splendidly directed by the man who guided "The Lady Vanishes" and "39 Steps."

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Children, 8 to 12

Exciting but well done

Inappropriate

MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON ◇ ◇

The following is a condensed report. A more complete review will appear next month.

"Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" deserves highest praise. The theme is significant, touching on social, political and patriotic values. It is superbly directed and offers thrilling entertainment which arouses intellectual as well as emotional response. Both young people and adults will find inspiration and encouragement in the belief in the ultimate power of practical idealism.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Children, 8 to 12

Extremely interesting and worth while, especially for high school age

THE PRIVATE LIVES OF ELIZABETH AND ESSEX ◇ ◇

Maxwell Anderson's stage play, "Elizabeth the Queen," has been adapted for the screen as "The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex." Possibly the original title is the better, for it is Bette Davis' interpretation of Elizabeth which makes the film significant. The story concerns the tragic passion of the Virgin Queen for the Earl of Essex, a man younger in years, handsome and fascinating, proud and overbearing, and consumed by an irrational ambition. Errol Flynn plays the role of Essex; and while, for the most part, he seems more the dashing hero of "Robin Hood" than a man torn between love for a woman and the desire for power, there are scenes, notably the last one, in which he reaches convincing heights. Miss Davis, on the other hand, is exceptionally fine. She has sacrificed beauty to give a faithful impression of the aging Elizabeth, but her personal magnetism is tremendously convincing. In the opening scenes she seems possibly too hysterical or a woman in the exalted position of Queen of England, but as the play progresses and the strain under which the character labor is understood, the depth
and sincerity of her interpretation is apparent. Elizabeth's passion for Essex is a consuming fire which embitter her life. She is distrustful of his disinterested love, fearful of his motives and of the motives of those around her. She understands his impulsive nature and his lack of balance and maturity. She is aware of his great popularity with the people of England and fears it, for she knows that he could easily ruin the country, and she therefore sacrifices him for the good of England. Thus the tragic ending for them both. The film gives an arresting interpretation of Elizabeth's motives, but as the plot is concerned entirely with the romance of the two characters, it is less a picture of an historical episode than a study of conflicting emotions against the background of an historical period. Others in the cast are uniformly good, but seem unimportant by contrast. The magnificent costumes and settings in technicolor are beautiful, and the musical background is outstanding, although at times distracting. The picture appeals to the mind more than to the emotions and will hold most interest for adult audiences.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**
Possibly interesting

**Children, 8 to 12**
Too long and tiring

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**THE RAINS CAME**


Even if it were possible to crowd all the interesting characters and scenes of Bromfield's long novel into a screen-sized drama, the result would certainly be tedious. As it is, the movie gives a comprehensive if somewhat disjointed resume of the book, retaining everything that is essential to the development of the theme and making up in violence of earthquake and flood scenes for the painstaking descriptiveness of the novel. Except for these colossal spectacles the film is concerned chiefly with the behavior of certain characters when a disaster in Ranchipur interrupts their ordinary mode of life, and particularly with the regeneration, through love and service, of a dissolve, selfish woman. With the exception of Mme. Maria Ouspenskaya, who gives a breathtaking characterization of the Maharani, the cast hangs up no new records. Technically the production is a tour-de-force and it has enough novelty in story and setting to make it of more than ordinary interest to the general public.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**
Unsuitable

**Children, 8 to 12**
No

---

**THE REAL GLORY**


With the Philippines replacing the Khyber Pass and Moro juramentados substituting for hostile East Indian tribes, "The Real Glory" lustily revives a popular formula for blood-curdling action pictures and proves that American soldiers are no less resourceful than British in dealing with fanatical savages in the outposts of civilization. A new idea, however, is contributed when Dr. Canavan, American Army surgeon, turns the tide by routing fear from the minds of the superstitious cowed Filipinos, and restoring the morale of the American Commanding Officer who is fast growing blind from a head wound. A spectacular escape across a broken bridge, the horrid sight of tortured, dismembered bodies, the cholera epidemic, and the ferocious battle with knife-throwing, arrow-shooting natives are only a few of the unforgettable thrills supplied by the picture. The mass action scenes are everything that might be expected from the man who directed "The Lives of a Bengal Lancer." The historical value of the production is debatable, but it does treat of a locale and events that are new to the screen and which should be of particular interest to Americans.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**
Very violent

**Children, 8 to 12**
Too violent

---

**RIO**


There is very little entertainment here for any but those who enjoy horrible prison scenes and brutality. Even the actors are not at their best and the plot, though exciting, is unwieldy and unconvincing. Basil Rathbone, cast as Paul Reynard, a dishonest French financier, is sent to a penal colony at Rio. His wife falls in love with another man, and when Reynard escapes from the colony he threatens to murder her lover, but is himself killed by the police. Elaborate scenes of night-club life and a carnival are introduced to give South American atmosphere.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**
No

**Children, 8 to 12**
No
RULES OF THE SEA  


Frank Lloyd excels in portraying the romance and drama of the sea. He has given the screen films which are long remembered for their etched beauty and epic quality. In this film he has chosen a new pioneering subject, steam versus sails on the Atlantic, and has succeeded in making the principal interest a sturdy little paddle steamer which struggles valiantly through storm and stress, loaded to the deck with coal, finally burning masts and spars when the coal is gone, to cross the ocean in fifteen days and thus make history in 1838. The accomplishment inspired Samuel Cunard to establish regular steam service two years later. It is a stirring narrative which has Will Fyffe in a dominating character role, as John Shaw, a doughty Scotchman who conceives the vision of steam replacing sails for transoceanic travel. He gives a remarkably sympathetic impression of the visionary inventor who strives in spite of repeated disappointments to bring fulfillment to his dream. Fyffe’s exquisite skill makes the character human and beloved. Margaret Lockwood plays Shaw’s daughter with great sincerity—a girl who is torn between love for her father and distrust in his dreams. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., is excellent in a part well-suited to him. Others in the cast give capable support. The dialogue is particularly fine, written with an artist’s appreciation of fitness and beauty. Mr. Hageman’s musical score is admirable. The subject has real significance, for the development of the steamship was an accomplishment which changed the picture of ocean travel, offering greater speed, a factor important to commerce, and greater safety to passengers and to seamen. This latter point motivates the character played by Mr. Fairbanks, for it is the unnecessary risk to sailors which causes him to give up his place as mate on a sailing vessel making a hazardous trip against time, and to join forces with Shaw in pushing the steam invention. It is enthralling entertainment, beautifully photographed and picturing in faithful detail the settings of a bygone age now increasingly difficult to reproduce.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  

Excellent

THUNDER AFLOAT  

Wallace Beery, Chester Morris, Virginia Grey, Douglas Dumbrille, Carl Esmond, Henry Victor. Based on story by Wells Root and Commander Harvey Haislip. Screen play by Ralph Wheelwright and Commander Harvey Haislip. Direction by George B. Seitz. M. G. M.

Events today parallel so vividly the action of “Thunder Afloat” that it seems almost incredible to learn that the story was written a year ago. True, it pictures the activities of German U boats in 1918 in an attempt to cripple U. S. shipping, but the World War of twenty years ago fades into the background and one feels the terror of today with an emotional reaction which is appalling in its intensity. For a nation determined to keep neutral, to see objectively the European struggle, this picture is difficult to evaluate. It is thrilling fare and almost impossible to view without partisanship. Wallace Beery plays an unsympathetic role as a man who is unable to conform to discipline or rules. After the scow he owns is sunk by a German submarine, he joins the navy actuated only by a desire for revenge. He still refuses to obey orders and is court martialed and demoted. His final valor is in entire conformity to the character, which is consistent throughout. The part is well-written and suited to Mr. Beery’s talents. Others in the cast are competent.

The actual scenes of sub-chaser activity and navy technique are very interesting, and while the film is uneven in spots and the ending is fantastic and unreal, it is still an interesting picture which will hold popular appeal. On the other hand, it may arouse adverse criticism among some spectators for its military atmosphere and for the fact that few can remain neutral in spirit, when a country which is the aggressor again today, is shown violating the so-called ethics of war.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  

Undoubtedly of interest but stimulating

TWO BRIGHT BOYS  


This picture provides a fairly entertaining vehicle for two of Hollywood’s problem children in the embarrassing stage of being too old for child parts and too young for romantic roles, and the cast gives them excellent support. The adventurous business of oil drilling has not been used frequently as screen material, but it is full of dramatic and photographic possibilities which, in this film,
compensate for the weak plot, — a story of crooks cheating crooks and thus saving an oil well for a widow and her son. The ethics are dubious, but in true movie style the likable ne'er-do-wells are supposedly reformed.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Requires mature evaluation

WHAT A LIFE


Life from an adolescent viewpoint, and what a life! Who reads Shakespeare for pleasure? Who is Marius? So what? Parents with a Phi Beta Kappa complex! Teachers all screwy, and a Principal like an ogre! Sixty cents a ticket for the school dance and no money! "What a Life!"

This is an adaptation of Clifford Goldsmith's Broadway play about the Aldrich family. Jackie Cooper plays the role of Henry, and if he does not seem quite the Henry we know on the radio, he is still a delightful, bungling, lovable boy struggling against his own feeling of inferiority. But Betty Field is amazing. She is the perfect adolescent with her uncurled hair, her shy beauty masked by braces on her teeth, her emotional upsets, her loyalty, and her straightforwardness.

The large cast is excellent, and if the adults for the most part seem out of focus, let us remember that we are viewing them through youthful eyes, perhaps more truthfully than we would care to admit. It's great fun for all.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Good

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ALLEGHENY UPRISING


Set in Pennsylvania in pre-Revolutionary War days, "Allegheny Uprising" has a story based on the attempt of the settlers to head off contraband liquor and guns being distributed to the Indians under the protection of unscrupulous or oblivious British army officers. The characters and the conflicts between the stalwart hero and the smugglers are in the manner of a western. The film is not important as an historical document but it is an entertaining action drama with a pleasing romance and some rousing fights.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT


This is a remake of the original film which was shown in the spring of 1930, and the main part of the picture is as vivid and as powerful now as it was then. It is especially impressive because it is told from the German point of view, and one realizes that youth of all nations is very much the same, brave, idealistic, fired by high-sounding patriotic phrases, rushing forth to horror and physical degradation and violent death. There is little glory on the modern battlefield, and there is a great deal of mud and hunger even when the air is not rent by shrieks of shells and the dying. The story tells of a group of boys from one classroom who join the army on the same day in 1914, and it carries them through their lives at the front till all are killed or hopelessly wounded. Lew Ayres is very fine in the part of young Paul, and the group of boys who are his comrades all seem very real; Louis Wolheim is outstanding as the burly, grotesque kind-at-heart corporal.

The picture, used at this time, is patently propaganda, although most of it is salutary in effect. The original film, heart-rending as it is, has a place as a strong indictment of war. To this have been added a series of news-reel shots at the beginning, a running commentary through the body of the film, and another collection of news-reel events at the end, rising to a crescendo of anti-Hitler propaganda. These additions detract both from
the artistic value of the production and from its effectiveness as a peace message. The end of the film should be the hand of the boy, grown careless for a moment, reaching out into the sunshine, then slowly crumbling up in death.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Too strong  No

ANOTHER THIN MAN  ☀️ ☀️

Mr. and Mrs. Nick Charles have acquired a "Nickie Junior" during their absence from the screen, and his presence complicates the menacing situation in which they find themselves. The plot is intricate, and gory and the usual number of underworld characters typical of Dashiel Hammett's books confuse the mystery but sinister events are lightened by the domestic bonhomie of Nick and Nora and by their amusing attitude towards each other and the world in general. It is an excellent detective story well acted and directed, although shortening would improve it.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Sophisticated  No

AT THE CIRCUS  ☀️ ☀️

The fun is a little slow in getting under way in this latest picture of the Marx Brothers, but when it gains momentum it is as silly, as uproarious and as hysterical as their admirers anticipate. After all, people either like the Marx Brothers or they don't. Groucho is the "legal eagle" called in to help the owner of a circus (Kenny Baker) who is about to lose his investment for lack of ten thousand dollars. Chico plays the piano; Harpo sneezes twice, plays the harp and ejects a bushel of feathers from his mouth in a bedlam scene on board a Pullman car. It all winds up with a surprise performance of the circus on the estate of a socialite, while the world-famous orchestra, engaged for the occasion to play on a stage built over the water, drifts symptomically out to sea. Many of the swiftly interpolated wise-cracks might be considered in connection with Groucho's remark, "How can I do that without getting into trouble with the Hays' office?" We wonder.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Questionable  Very funny

BABES IN ARMS  ☀️ ☀️

The versatility of Mickey Rooney and the charm of Judy Garland have never before been so apparent as in this musical film in which each has an excellent opportunity to earn more laurels. The cast contains a great many juveniles, since the story is all about how the offspring of vaudeville actors band together to become the support of parents whose specialties are no longer in demand. The picture is made up of a series of songs, dances, and impersonations by the talented younger generation and is exceedingly good entertainment of its kind.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Excellent  Yes

BAD LITTLE ANGEL  ☀️ ☀️

This is a departure in film subjects because it dares to have a spiritual motivation. A little orphan girl's religious education has been furnished by an elderly spinner who has been very kind to her. Left alone by the lady's death she turns to the Bible for messages which she interprets as her guide for all difficult occasions, and she brings light and happiness to those with whom she comes in contact. The cast is excellent. The screen play is sentimental and resorts to emotional melodrama as a climax, but Virginia Weidler carries conviction where a less gifted child might have failed. The theme is unique and there is humor, pathos and kindliness in its unfolding.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Yes  Emotional climax

BETRAYAL  ☀️ ☀️

"Betrayal" is the story of two ill-starred lovers. It is historical drama of the time of Catherine the Great treating of a plot against
her throne by a Polish nobleman, Prince Radziwill, who uses as his pawn a lovely young girl, daughter of the shoe-maker Tarakanova, and builds her up as Elizabeth the Second, true heir to the throne of Russia. Their temporary court is in a Venetian palace. There Catherine sends her favorite, Count Orloff, who is noted for his powers of fascination with women, to lure her on board his battleship and bring her back to prison and death. But the unpredictable happens. Count Orloff loses his heart to the fine-spirited, trusting girl. Both are betrayed, and Catherine, who gave short shrift to anyone who had designs on her throne or lovers, metes out punishment. While the film is not done in the grandiose style of many American costume pictures, it has a haunting beauty. Remarkable use is made of the light playing on various fabrics and surfaces, candlelight falling on velvets and diaphanous curtains, on symmetrical carvings and marble floors, the gleam of torches against dark prison stones. Annie Vernay has delicacy and grace; Pierre Richard Willm plays Orloff well; Suzy Prin is both strong and sinister as Catherine, Roger Karl interesting as Radziwill. Titles are in English, but the French is spoken so clearly that anyone with a fair knowledge of the language can understand it.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Mature

Children, 8 to 12
No

**BLONDIE BRINGS UP BABY ⭐⭐**  

The latest story in the "Blondie" Series is woven about Baby Dumpling's starting to school, with his subsequent emancipation from his mother's apron strings, and Dagwood's loss of his job through his visionary architectural ideas. Tragedy, in the shape of the disappearance of Baby Dumpling's dog Daisy, eventually leads to the rehabilitation of a crippled child and the solution of Dagwood's unemployment problem. It is excellent entertainment, comprising situations and experiences common to children and parents, and within the appreciation of all. The problems of the sheltered child, starting to school, and the solicitude of the parents for his welfare present a healthy universal appeal. Penny Singleton, as the solicitous mother, gives a true-to-type performance. Dagwood's impractical nature furnishes much of the comedy in so natural a way that one does not question the plausibility of the situations. The performance of Larry Simms, as Baby Dumpling, is particularly refreshing, since he does not act beyond his years.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Excellent

Children, 8 to 12
Excellent

**THE CAT AND THE CANARY ⭐⭐**  

Lovers of thrilling mystery melodrama should enjoy this version of a well known stage play. The story is carefully constructed, the people seem real, and the suggestions of the supernatural are adroitly offset by spontaneous humor. On the tenth anniversary of the death of an eccentric old man, his heirs as directed by his will, meet in the stately old home over which his housekeeper still presides, isolated in a Louisiana bayou, with her black cat and supernatural visitors for companionship. The will is read indicating Joyce Martin, an attractive girl, as the exclusive heir if she prove of sound mind. The name of the alternate heir is to be revealed only if she be judged insane. Thus are offered possibilities for eerie action during the night which follows before a settlement is made to the satisfaction of all concerned.

The settings establish an air of decay and mystery which persists throughout. Music is used effectively to establish varying moods, and while all the happenings cannot be scrutinized too critically, the production accomplishes its purpose of raising goose pimples and providing amusement for those who like this sort of thing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Depends on taste and nerves

Children, 8 to 12
No

**THE CITY ⭐⭐**  
Presented by American Institute of Planners through Civic Films, Inc. Filmed and directed by Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke. Original outline by Pare Lorentz. Scenario by Henwar Rodakiewicz. Commentary written by Lewis Mumford.

Following the progress made by John Greerson and Paul Rotha in England, several documentary films have been made in this country. They are done entirely from life with no stage settings or professional actors, by simply using the material at hand. "The City" is propaganda, but the message is one with which no one can disagree: the need of better housing for workers. The first part shows the industry of early days in America when people did craft work in the pleasant, clean surroundings of rural life; then as an appalling contrast are shown...
the slums of our great modern cities where the laboring class is forced to live. The final part is the picture of the model community which would be possible with the decentralization of industry. Photography is very good and the choice of material interesting. The only question which might arise is the practicability of constructing such elaborate dwellings and park systems with present-day wage scales. It is a goal, but it looks slightly Utopian.

**Disputed Passage**


Under the persuasive direction of Frank Borzage, Lloyd C. Douglas' latest best seller makes excellent cinema material. The main theme is the conflict between a humanized and a coldly scientific approach to healing, but there is also the theme, to which the title alludes, that only by overcoming opposition does a man achieve greatness. Dr. Forster, familiarly known to the interns as Tubby, is an expertly trained Viennese surgeon who has no personal interest in his patients except to give them the finest technical treatment. Opposed to him is Dr. Cunningham whose care includes a wider understanding of the individual's need for mental and spiritual adjustment. Between the two, stands the intern, John Bexan, whose admiration for Dr. Forster causes him to mistake fanaticism for the purely scientific spirit without taking into account the early frustration which has hardened the physician. The pressure brought by Dr. Forster to hold the young intern to uniter development of his own ability demands his complete withdrawal from life, and his insistance upon pure science precludes a belief in the soul. Finally Bexan's love for a woman patient precipitates a conflict with this unrelenting philosophy.

The picture is admirably written and beautifully directed. Some of the characters presented are startlingly realistic, especially the two doctors, played by Akim Tamiroff and John Howard, who are exceptionally fine. The hospital scenes are technically true and deserving of special commendation. Miss Lamour as the American girl reared in China is not convincing, but the character was none too realistic in the book. Dr. Cunningham's role is not so important as in the original although his philosophy supplies part of the motivation. The ending, with Dr. Douglas' consent, has been changed to China, and the modern war scenes are so perfect in their restraint that they are profoundly moving. It is a beautiful picture with a significant theme, important because it faithfully presents a trend in modern thought.

**Drums Along the Mohawk**


The Novel "Drums Along the Mohawk" is a thrilling story of the American Revolution as told through the experiences of a young married couple who settled in the Mohawk Valley at a time when the scattered settlers had to clear the ground, build their log cabins, farm their land and defend themselves periodically against savage Indian raids inspired by British leaders. The screen adaptation is exceedingly good, and though numerous characters and incidents are necessarily omitted it lacks none of the essential material of the novel and is perhaps all the more forceful because of its simplification. The sustained menace of the Indian raids runs throughout the film, and the plot reaches several sequences of intense drama when the terrific hardships and crushing disappointments of the young pioneers seem almost unbearable. Technicolor records here a new achievement. The settings seem to have been chosen with great care, not only for photographic composition but for color harmony as well. The resulting pictures are so beautiful, they remain long in the mind's eye yet are not so obtrusive that they obscure the story. Interiors are authentic copies of early Americana which should be a joy to historian, decorator and aesthete. As to casting, Henry Fonda as the lanky, drawling pioneer and Edna May Oliver as the sharp tongued but soft hearted widow are perfect, and Claudette Colbert gives a fine performance of the gentle young wife who meets the challenge of frontier life with courageous fortitude. The film is a sincere and honest portrayal of a significant chapter in our history and a timely reminder of our heritage.

**Adolescents, 12 to 16**

Inspiring but very tense and emotional

**Children, 8 to 12**

To mature
ETERNALLY YOURS ◆ ◆

The spell of this diverting social drama lies in the ability of an excellent cast, in the personal charm of Loretta Young and David Niven, and in smooth direction. It has a delightful musical score and interesting technical devices. The story itself is out of the ordinary in its characters but is, in the last analysis, the usual tawdry triangle. After recovering from the surprise of finding a bishop with a scatter-brained daughter and a granddaughter who elopes with a traveling magician on the eve of her wedding day, you expect the unusual. After the first exciting lure of adventure falls on the girl and she finds her life uncongenial, she divorces her husband and marries the first suitor. Returning from a brief honeymoon she meets her fascinating prestidigitator again and the divorce is conveniently found invalid. It is to be hoped that the title of the picture indicates a settled attitude for the heroine.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 ◆ Children, 8 to 12 No

FAST AND FURIOUS ◆ ◆

This might be a cousin, once-removed, of the "Thin Man" stories, containing as it does sophisticated comedy verging on slapstick and a murder mystery. It is an inferior relative, somewhat disconnected and burdened with superfluous scenes; the best part is the bright, swift-flowing dialogue. Ann Sothern and Franchot Tone are a happy combination. Beguiled by his wife into a vacation at a sea-side resort, Joel Sloane is soon established as a judge of a beauty contest, and because the scheme is well capitalized thieves sneak in by the side doors. Then follow several murders, with jealousy as a motivating factor in one of them, and the final clean-up when the villain is packed off to jail.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Unsuitable Children, 8 to 12 No

FIRST LOVE ◆ ◆

The Grimm Brothers themselves would delight in this modern tale of Cinderella. The evil characters are just as selfish and disagreeable as in the original version, and the good ones are as delightfully cooperative. The little outcast orphan even loses her slipper at the ball and runs away at the stroke of twelve. It is a light and glamorous fantasy of the romantic age and first love. Deanna is a sweet girl graduate who leaves school to make her home with her uncle, an amazing, hardboiled financier, absorbed in business. Her aunt and cousins are unbelievably silly and selfish. Her life would have been a grim affair had not the servants in the luxurious house, the policeman who ate in the kitchen, and an understanding spinster school teacher come to her rescue and made it possible for her to "live happily ever after" with her "Prince Charming."

Deanna Durbin is the delightful expression of unspoiled youth. Her lovely voice is heard in several selections which are naturally interpolated into the plot. Eugene Pallette presents a clever portrait of the harassed uncle, and Kathleen Howard is unusually distinguished in the role of school mistress. The entire cast, however, contributes to the success of the picture, and effective photographic touches enhance the spirit of fantasy. It is fresh and light and thoroughly entertaining. Joe Pasternak and Henry Koster are unique in their ability to catch the lively spirit of youth and, in this, to revive a delight in fairy tales.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12 Good: especially for girls Yes

HEAVEN WITH A BARBED WIRE FENCE ◆

The heaven referred to in the title is a shack on an Arizona desert where a young couple find happiness through love. She is a girl hobo, an immigrant illegally in the United States, and he is a gullible youth who gave up his job in New York to put all his savings into a so-called ranch in Arizona. They meet in a box car and become acquainted while sharing the sordid experiences of hobo life. Only in a movie potboiler
would we be asked to believe in such sentimental nonsense.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Poor
Children, 8 to 12  No

HOLLYWOOD CAVALCADE  ♦  ♦


The picture of the technical and artistic development in the field of motion pictures is presented in a romantic story in which a director pilots an actress through the different stages from the era of silent slapstick and drama to sound. It ranges in time from about 1914 to 1928, when “The Jazz Singer” with Al Jolson revolutionized the screen. The film is in Technicolor, and contrast is effectively made by showing sequences of silent films in black and white. No more startling method could have been chosen to give an impression of the technical progress the industry has made, and to those who remember early pictures, it brings a sort of nostalgia for other days.

Alice Faye photographs to great advantage in color and gives a performance which evinces sincerity. Don Ameche, too, shows maturity in his interpretation of the temperamental director who, after his leading lady marries, loses his grip on himself and fails to adjust himself to the changing demands of the picture business until he again is inspired to fall in line.

Many familiar faces are seen again in the silent episodes: Buster Keaton, Chester Conklin, Jed Prouty, Ben Turpin, Hank Mann, Snub Pollard, Mack Sennett, as well as stills of former stars and bathing beauties. In the silent episodes the music is the old piano accompaniment, very funny today. The reincarnation of the Keystone Cops is hilarious, the high light of the film. The production is interesting and entertaining, a blending of comedy and sentimental romance which should appeal to many audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Entertaining
Children, 8 to 12  Yes

THE HOUSEKEEPER’S DAUGHTER  ♦  ♦


“The Housekeeper’s Daughter” is the type of movie one might expect from the title, a bit heavy on melodrama. It is a satire on gangster-newspaper films, a mixture of comedy, slapstick, murder-mystery, villainy, and romance with some amusing moments and some effective acting, notably by Mr. Menjou, William Gargan and George Stone. It may pass an idle hour but will be forgotten soon.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Poor
Children, 8 to 12  No

LITTLE ACCIDENT  ♦  ♦


It is difficult to decide who deserves the most credit: the director who can guide a baby through scene after scene of a complicated comedy or Baby Sandy herself who is amazingly responsive, good-tempered and talented. At any rate Sandy is the center of attention from beginning to end. The story is one of those hilariously improbable things about an harassed columnist (Hugh Herbert) who is about to lose his job. A foundling is left on his desk, and to win sympathy he conceives the idea of claiming it for his grandchild, although his pretty daughter is unmarried; before the flurry is over a young millionaire has also stepped in as claimant for the child. There is a tumultuous sequence when Baby Sandy falls down a laundry chute and is almost thrown in the washing machine with the dirty clothes. The cast as a whole is good. By-play on the question of paternity tends to place the film in a mature classification.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Questionable
Children, 8 to 12  No

THE LLANO KID  ♦  ♦


A long missing heir to a great Mexican estate is impersonated by a young desperado at the instigation of two adventurers. Arrived at the hacienda he is charmed by the sweet old mother, falls in love with her ward, helps defeat the conspirators and is regenerated to the profit of his soul and pocket-book. Obviously the story is not of a high order, but the film has compensations. The old Spanish settings, the music, the costumes and the pageantry are all exceptional; the beauty of the Christmas festival stands out in retrospect. Alan Mowbray’s acting is effective, and Gale Sondergaard plays her part with color and vitality, but the remainder of the cast is lacking either in ability or in training. This is more interesting as a series of pictures than as a dramatic production.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Confused values
Children, 8 to 12  Too exciting
THE MARSHAL OF MESA CITY ◆ ◆

Again the beautiful school marm in a frontier town is annoyed by the unwelcome attentions of the sleek, dishonest sheriff; again she is saved by "our hero." This is a throw-back to an earlier type of Western. The brave marshal (George O'Brien) is boastful and so rash that he constantly poses as a target for gun-fire. The dialogue is carelessly written, and the fine scenery we have come to expect in Westerns is almost entirely missing. The one original character is Duke Allison (Henry Brandon) who is neither all good nor all bad and who has a dash and swagger all his own.

Adolescents, 12 to 16    Children, 8 to 12
Mediocre                Too much shooting
◆

MEET DR. CHRISTIAN ◆ ◆

Dr. Christian is a big-hearted if slightly muddle-headed small town practitioner who neglects serious industrial accident cases for routine matters of mumps and stomach aches. His main objective, however, is to arouse public opinion to the need of a hospital for the backward community, and for this goal he makes a sally into politics. His end is achieved not by the force of reason but by sheer luck when the mayor's small daughter is critically injured in an automobile collision. Jean Hersholt is always capable and convincing in such homespun characterizations, and whatever significance there is in the film is due to his ability. There are a number of minor characters whose foibles and romances round out the picture; sometimes they are amusing and sometimes a little dull. The small girl, Patsy Lee Parsons, shows promise, but as her part is written and directed, she is a good deal of a "brat." The best comedy occurs when the loud speaker at the picnic goes out of commission and voices are thrown upon the air in strange keys and timbres.

Adolescents, 12 to 16    Children, 8 to 12
Fairly Interesting        No value

MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON ◆

"Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" is an exceptional production and its greatness lies in the superb way in which Mr. Capra has satirized contemporary social and political trends, provoked serious thought, and offered encouragement toward practical idealism. The leading character, Jefferson Smith, is an idealist who sincerely believes that America is today the inspiring product of the guidance of the great men who helped to found the democracy—Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln. He is picked by the toss of a coin to replace a Senator who died in office: to be the unwitting tool of men who are using their political positions for graft. He is so unsophisticated that he enters Washington as he would a shrine, totally unaware of the forces against which he must contend. When he happens to oppose the plans of the machine, every method is used to defeat and dishonor him. The situations are exaggerated and theatrical, but underneath is more than a modicum of truth, for they portray the power of a controlled press, the governmental intricacies which delay and confuse issues, and the indifference and intolerance of men in high office. Smith, disillusioned and aroused, becomes a modern David fighting Goliath and because he has faith in the ideals of Lincoln and has truth and decency on his side, he wins over seemingly insurmountable handicaps.

It is superbly directed with the finesse characteristic of Mr. Capra's genius. The blending of reality and beauty, the shading of seemingly preposterous situations so that they appear genuinely possible, create exciting and emotional effects which inspire a psychologically sound audience reaction.

James Stewart gives his best performance of his career showing a dramatic ability not previously called upon. Miss Arthur is excellent although her role is very similar to that in "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town." The rest of the cast are splendid, with Harry Carey contributing an unforgettable bit.

The film is unique in that it deals with a vital, contemporary subject, offers criticism, and then encourages faith in the ultimate power of altruism, a belief which must be accepted and acted upon or civilization in its highest form of expression will founder.

Adolescents, 12 to 16    Children, 8 to 12
Unrecommended            Mature
NINOTCHKA ⊕ ⊕

If ever a Communist "comrade" laughs at himself it will be because he has seen a Lubitsch production called "Ninotchka," a film which is hereby recommended for all who are afflicted with loss of appetite for the movies. Directed in Mr. Lubitsch's most inspired manner, with a deliciously clever script, and with Miss Garbo proving herself a deft comedienne, the picture is the kind of entertainment we always hope for but seldom have the good luck to see. It is set in Paris at its gayest before the present war and concerns the piquant adventures of three ridiculous bewhiskered Soviet emissaries and an austere young woman who come to Paris to transact official business for Moscow and remain to savor the frivolous delights of capitalistic society. None of the humor inherent in the theme is lost and, thanks to the director's delicate touch, the comedy never gets out of hand. The film is a rarely expert piece of workmanship in which cast, director, and writers seem to have contributed equally to the perfection of the whole.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Sophisticated

$1,000 A TOUCHDOWN ⊕ ⊕

This is the poorest Joe E. Brown picture in many a moon. The story is labored and far-fetched and as artificial as the average comic strip. The goofy son of a famous Shakespearian actor assists a young lady owner of a mortgaged university to build up a football team and save the institution. Even for wild-eyed farce comedy, paying the opposing eleven $1,000 a touchdown for losing the game constitutes pretty bad ethics—and there are other questionable details. Joe E. Brown true to his usual form is hilarious. Martha Raye though slightly more subdued than in some of her former pictures still injects a more sophisticated type of humor into the film than seems appropriate in a Joe E. Brown picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Doubtful

PACK UP YOUR TROUBLES ⊕ ⊕
Jane Withers, the Ritz Brothers, Lynn Bari, Joseph Schildraut, Stanley Fields, Fritz Lieber, Lionel Royce, George Renavent, Adrienne d'Ambricourt. Original screen play by Lou Breslow and Owen Francis. Direction by H. Bruce Humberstone. 20th Century-Fox.

The three Ritz Brothers as soldiers overseas with the American army befriend a young girl whose father proves to be a French spy. She risks her life to get a message to him and both are rescued by the insane but effective efforts of the brothers. It is slapstick comedy, well photographed and amusing of its type.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Matter of taste

THE ROARING TWENTIES ⊕ ⊕

Whenever the stock of scenarios runs low or the subject matter seems anemic, there is always the great reservoir of gangster material to draw from, and whatever may be said of other values, certainly the product is not dull. The "Roaring Twenties" begins two years before the bootlegging decade with a long sequence of carnage in the front line trenches to introduce the three main characters and set the keynote for the violence which follows. George has no compunctions about leading a life of crime; Lloyd is naturally honest, but when Eddie finds it difficult to find a job on his return from France he follows the line of least resistance and engages in the lucrative, illicit liquor racket. Throughout most of the story he "carries the torch" for a charming, idealistic young singer who appreciates him for his better qualities but in the end gravitates to her own kind. Undoubtedly this is gangster cinema de luxe. Direction is skillful, and the actors are very well chosen, Humphrey Bogart, Gladge George, Jean Sherman, Jeffrey Lynn, and above all James Cagney, who unfortunately plays his underworld roles with more enthusiasm and real brilliance than anything else he does. The film is offered with the premise that all the evils of the twenties were due to prohibition. This is open to argument, but even if true, the picture has the fault common to most gangster tales: it makes heroes of vicious leaders of the underworld.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Emotionally unhealthy

Children, 8 to 12

Decidedly not
REMEMBER? ♦ ♦


Milton Bren, who with Norman McLeod, was responsible for the unique and amusing "Topper" films, offers in "Remember?" another sophisticated farce comedy with a fantastic touch. Because the motivating premise is not divulged until the middle of the picture drags a bit, but from then on it has hilarious moments.

Engaged to Sky Ames (Lew Ayers) Linda (Greer Garson) falls in love at first sight with Jeff Holland (Robert Taylor). They elope, are briefly happy, quarrel and are divorced. Then Sky administers a potion to the two which induces a form of amnesia. They meet under the impression that they do not know each other and the cycle begins all over again.

It is a beautifully mounted film in which photography and technical work are particularly fine and gloss over glaring defects in story structure. It is broad farce of the bedroom variety with a touch of slapstick and no attempt at character plausibility. After seeing Miss Garson as the lovely, poised and gracious Mrs. Chips, the role which introduced her to American audiences, it is a little difficult to accept her as a gay and flippant moderne although her charm modifies the role. Lew Ayers is good in a cheerful, sacrificing part and Billie Burke has some of the best moments of the film.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Not recommended No

SUED FOR LIBEL ♦ ♦


This is a saga of that modern swashbucker—a newspaper man—and his ubiquitous girl friend. The newspaper for which Steve works is sued for libel because of an inaccurate and slanderous dramatization of news over the radio. In order to quash the libel suit, Steve tries to unearth derogatory information concerning the man who is suing and finds two murders. As is customary with most escape literature of the type from which this scenario was adapted, all the evidence points to an innocent man, while the least likely person is guilty. As a mystery story, it is feeble because a whole series of events which clarify the mystery just happen without the need of deductive reasoning, but as a melodrama, it sacrifices few of the standard elements.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Perhaps
Children, 8 to 12
No, plot too involved and too mature

TELEVISION SPY ♦ ♦


The title is sufficient to describe this picture. A spy ring from a foreign company attempts to steal the specifications for a television invention but is thwarted by means of the invention itself. The film is sufficiently well acted but the story is rather far-fetched. On the whole it is a mediocre offering.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Passable but not recommended No

TOO BUSY TO WORK ♦ ♦


Apparently acting on the theory that if one comedy is funny two will be funnier, the screen playwrites have combined two well-known hits, "Torchbearers" and "Your Uncle Dudley" the result goes overboard on the slapstick side but contains many hilarious scenes and some healthy hints to people who are so busy outside home and business that they have no time for really important duties. It ends with Mr. Jones refusing a third term as mayor and Mrs. Jones giving up amateur theatricals.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Children, 8 to 12
Yes

20,000 MEN A YEAR ♦ ♦

Randolph Scott, Preston Foster, Margaret Lindsay, Mary Healy, Robert Shaw, George Ernest, Jane Darwell, Maxie Rosenbloom, Sen Yung. Screen play by Lou Breslow and Owen Francis from an original story by Frank Wead. Direction by Alfred Green. 20th Century-Fox.

If this is propaganda to arouse interest in the Government plan to train young college men in aviation it has unusual possibilities. The story is probable and thus convincing as well as informative and entertaining. It stresses the necessity for thorough training and implicit obedience to directions. The actors are well cast and the photography excellent. The plot is slight and is concerned
with the problems of two students of unequal ability. The one who has more natural aptitude cannot continue the course because of his sister's fear of the hazards until a thrilling experience removes her objections. It is a story which has fine ethical standards and should have special appeal for boys who are interested in flying.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Good

Children, 8 to 12
Rather noisy and exciting

U BOAT 29  
Conrad Veidt, Sebastian Shaw, Valerie Hobson. Columbia.

"U Boat 29" might be called just another international spy story did it not definitely label the two nations involved and unfold its plot in such a way that the audience sits in the British cheering section. However, Conrad Veidt, the dominant player on the opposing side, invests his role with a great deal of strength and dignity and receives a goodly share of audience sympathy. The story does not attempt to settle the issues of the present European conflict but concerns itself chiefly with the fortunes of a German submarine commander who is maneuvered into the fate of becoming the victim of a torpedo from his own U Boat. The involved plot is plausible enough for this type of picture, since the public is educated to believe that in the case of the International Secret Service truth is even more strange than fiction.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Passable

Children, 8 to 12
No

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER SPEAKS  

The only continuity in this film is that of a succession of news-reel and official pictures of the World War. The voice is supposedly that of The Unknown Soldier whose commentary attempts the impossible task of making the whole coherent. As anti-war propaganda it fails because the vivid and authentic scenes arouse excited interest which is not counteracted by the inconsistent and inadequate narration. It shows former kings, president and rulers in historic and stirring scenes; war lords and numberless marching soldiers; brilliant naval and air encounters, the panoply of war, and the lighter side of life behind the lines. But none of the horrors of war, the dead, the dying, the maimed, or the civilian sufferers. To those who knew the great war it can only be a heartbreaking reminder of futility. It will excite and be-

wilder rather than warn young people against war.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Very doubtful

Children, 8 to 12
Positively no

WE ARE NOT ALONE  

"We are not Alone" is an unusually interesting film, notable not only for a number of fine characterizations, but particularly for its thoughtfull presentation of a study in difficult human relationships. The problem which it treats is that of a doctor and his family who live in an English village at the beginning of the World War. The wife is a stern, uncompromising woman whose unwise handling of their sensitive little boy is a source of constant worry to the doctor and a menace to the child's emotional development. The conflict between the father's enlightened understanding of the child's vagaries and the mother's inability to put aside her bigoted ideas of discipline creates a situation which eventually ends in a tragedy involving also a young Austrian girl, a former patient of the doctor, who has become a member of the household. An attempt is made to lighten the final scenes by suggesting a promise of happiness in life after death, but in spite of this the poignancy of the ending is an emotional ordeal.

Paul Muni creates another of his remarkable characterizations in the "Little Doctor," the gentle, idealistic, selfless physician who understands and sympathizes with all humanity, who hates wrong but never condemns the wrong doer, and who goes to his death pitying the young soldiers on their way to France who, like him, are unjustly condemned to die. Flora Robson is outstanding as the wife, acting her role of a repellent character so expertly that she elicits both sympathy and understanding. Una O'Connor, always a finished actress, gives one of her most subtle performances. Raymond Seavern, the little boy, is remarkably natural and intelligent. Though plausibly motivated, the plot occasionally seems rather obviously designed to become the framework for certain philosophic theories. The film appeals both intellectually and emotionally and is worthwhile entertainment for audiences who enjoy serious drama.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No. Too emotional and tragic

Children, 8 to 12
Most unsuitable
SHORT SUBJECTS

ACRES OF PLENTY ◆ ◆
R. K. O.-Pathe Realism.
A short subject with good photography and interesting material depicts ideal labor conditions on one of the large corporation-type California ranches and also shows one of the best government migrant camps. Released at this time it cannot fail to have an anti-social effect by attracting more workers to California at a time when the farm labor market is deluged, and thousands are living in miserable conditions, while taxation to keep them alive has reached such proportions that in many rural communities the small owners are being reduced to poverty themselves. See reports of the California Legislature.

BE YOUR AGE ◆ ◆
An Edgar Kennedy Comedy. Produced by Bert Gilroy. Direction by Charles Roberts. R. K. O.
This comedy is based on one of the cruellest situations of modern life; the struggle of a middle-aged man to keep young enough to hold his job. Naturally it does not click. Most of the humor is broad, and while some bits are funny, on the whole it is a tiresome performance. Family, if at all.

INFORMATION PLEASE No. 1 ◆ ◆
R. K. O.-Pathe.
A cinematic presentation of the popular radio quiz has high entertainment value, because it induces the audience to participate in instruction as a game. The type of question is often abstruse and may add little to one's fundamental knowledge, but it is fascinating to watch the reactions of the men who are questioned. Rex Stout is the guest speaker in this one. Family.

INFORMATION PLEASE No. 2 ◆ ◆
R. K. O.-Pathe.
Gene Tunney joins Franklin P. Adams, John Kieran and Oscar Levant on this program. His awkward manner and winning smile add a very human note to the number. The questions are on Shakespearian quotations, musical instruments, animals and prize fight champions. Family.

SPORTSCOPE ◆ ◆
R. K. O.-Pathe.
The main part of this film on ice hockey is in slow motion, explaining the technique and the fine points of the game. Enthusiasts of the sport will enjoy it; others find it a bit dull. Family.

THE MARCH OF TIME, Issue 1. Vol. VI ◆ ◆
Producers: The Editors of Time.
Measuring up to March of Time standards of timeliness, dramatic interest and excellent production values, this is a survey of the flying forces of the United States. It shows the divisions of the Army and Navy air corps, their duties and the types of ships used with emphasis on training methods for pilots and mechanics. Shots of air raid drills in London and Paris, the World War battle fields and U. S. bombers in formation have sufficient emotional content to constitute propaganda, but for the most part presentation is objective.
Adolescents, 12 to 16  Educational  Children, 8 to 12  Yes

THE MARCH OF TIME, Issue 2. Vol. VI ◆ ◆
THE BATTLE FLEETS OF ENGLAND ◆ ◆
The importance of England's navy in protecting the people of their island nation as well as holding together the distant lands of the empire is shown in this film, which acquires a certain poignancy now that heavy losses have been suffered. It is a fine description of the many classes of ships from the largest battleships to the tiny units of the 'suicide fleet' used to sweep mines from strategic areas. Through it runs the deep tradition of the British navy for gallantry and high courage to serve king and country. Photography is outstanding, and the whole film is a contribution to the files of contemporary history.
Adolescents, 12 to 16  Splendid  Children, 8 to 12  Yes
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July through December, 1939
Because of its exceptional merit we are giving this short subject a place of honor.


M. G. M.

This is a Christmas offering which is so significant in subject matter and so beautifully executed that it should be shown throughout the world. In its short running time it presents concisely and more faithfully than longer films a realization of war's futility, its waste, and the possibility of utter oblivion for all that the world holds dear. It is done in a unique combination of realism and fantasy, in a flow of rhythmic action which with remarkable sound effects and exquisite musical score, produces an overwhelmingly emotional effect. It is not without endearing humor and it has charm and beauty, but above all, its message is one most needed to touch the hearts of mankind in a war mad world.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Splendid

Children, 8 to 12
Mature
ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS  

It is difficult for the present generation to visualize Abraham Lincoln, except as an idolized hero. This study presents him as a man with many faults but one who justly earned the reverence which we bestow upon him. It clarifies his character, humanizes him and gives an understanding of the real reluctance he felt towards accepting the great responsibility of the presidency of a nation torn by civil strife. The film tells the story of his life in Illinois, from the time he arrived in New Salem to do odd jobs and continue his elementary education, through the election which made him President, and ends with his departure for the White House. Lincoln, the simple, awkward young man with his endearing humor, his unfailing tact and his unswerving allegiance to honor, grows before our eyes in mental and spiritual stature into a man of destiny. The film interprets his unhappy romance with Ann Rutledge and his marriage with Mary Todd, which broadened his public life but brought him little personal happiness. Raymond Massey brings to the role a sympathetic understanding which is expressed in a masterful portrayal. Ruth Gordon is remarkable as Mary Todd, a woman who loved her husband deeply but whose burning ambition made any real companionship impossible. The film is a significant and valuable contribution to an understanding of the man who rose from poverty surrounded by ignorance, superstition, and brutality, to receive the highest honor possible for the American people to bestow upon him, who led the country through the darkest period of its history, and whose life is the ideal expression of the principles of American Democracy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  
Very fine

THE AMAZING MR. WILLIAMS  

This is a highly entertaining detective farce in which Melvyn Douglas plays the role of Mr. Williams, a policeman, who has a knack of solving crimes and apprehending criminals. His interest in his work causes his fiancé (Joan Blondell) to break their engagement and in order to win her back he re-
sorts to all sorts of absurd schemes which keep the audience in gales of laughter. The dialogue is flippant and pert and in keeping with the diverting situations.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Entertaining

THE BIG GUY ◊ ◊

Victor McLaglen adds another capable characterization to his record, and Jackie Cooper shows unusual development for a young actor just emerging from juvenile parts. Direction is good. Beyond that the film is one of a long line of morbid, depressing prison pictures, highlighted by sensational escapes and killings. An enterprising boy is tricked into a scheme for aiding the escape of two criminals, and the temporary warden of the penitentiary, torn by his ambition for official advancement and his greed for money, conceals important evidence and almost brings about the boy’s execution. All of this does little to engender confidence in public servants.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Undermines feeling of security

THE CISCO KID AND THE LADY ◊ ◊

The Cisco Kid is full of contradictions: sometimes he is the soul of generosity and elevated purpose and again he is the harbinger of death and a tormentor of the innocent. He is in his better mood when he rescues an orphaned baby from a covered wagon and devotes the ensuing months to the task of securing a gold mine for its lawful owner, the self-same baby. The background is filled with unsavory frontier characters, and much of the film is poorly done. Marjorie Weaver as a young school marm and the infant Gloria Ann seem an oasis of sweetness in a desert of iniquity. Romero’s Latin heritage and his talent for singing make the part of The Cisco Kid spirited and halfway plausible.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Confused standards

CITY IN DARKNESS ◊ ◊

Even if one has a predilection for newsreel shots in general, those at the beginning of this film set the wrong tempo and prepare one for the present European war and not the pre-Munich crisis with which the picture deals. The action takes place during a black-out which lends a certain degree of atmosphere. Espionage, murder, munitions-smuggling and passport-forging all have a part in this mystery of many characters and many complications to the end that the audience is baffled for at least two-thirds of the performance. Sidney Toler is satisfactory as Chan, although improvement is necessary before he reaches the proficiency of Warner Oland in the well-known part.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Passable
Children, 8 to 12
Too involved

DAY-TIME WIFE ◊ ◊

Introducing a new slant on the old wife-versus-secretary idea. “Day-Time Wife” tells its tale to the tune of a laugh a minute. When Jane, (Linda Darnell) discovers that her husband, Ken, (Tyrone Power) is philandering with his secretary, she secures an office job for herself, hoping to be able to determine what infallible charm secretaries have that wives apparently have not. The situation becomes embarrassing, but very funny, when Ken and his secretary come face to face with Jane and her employer, who is a business acquaintance of Ken’s. The film is exceedingly well cast. The story moves along swiftly and is the result of clever, carefully planned direction. Dealing with real, yet somewhat dubious situations, it is so presented as to offer lively, sophisticated entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
No
DESTRY RIDES AGAIN ○ ○

Anyone who likes a rip-roaring, gun-toting, undisguised Western will find "Destry Rides Again" as exhilarating as fireworks and more fun than a barrel of monkeys. The plot is the old one about an iron-nerved young sheriff who is called in to clean up a tough frontier town after the local bad men have instituted a reign of terror, but it is far from naively handled. Jimmy Stewart is something new in the way of a sheriff, and Marlene Dietrich is a dance hall queen with personality plus. Add to this setup the fact that, in the words of the preview program, the film was produced by the "renowned" Mr. Joe Pasternak and directed by the "eminent" Mr. George Marshall and you have the secret of its success. As Destry, Jimmy Stewart has a chance to step out of the kind of role in which he so often has been cast and to show more definitely than ever before his ability to assume a new personality. The cool, slow spoken, humorously philosophical Destry is a hero who bids fair to eclipse even such a beloved character as The Virginian. Miss Dietrich gives validity and new interest to a type of role which might have been tawdry in the hands of a less skilful artist. The cast is an extremely competent one and plays throughout with unusual zest.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Sophisticated

GERONIMO ○ ○

To all acquainted with the history of the Southwest the most blood-chilling name is that of the Apache, Geronimo, the cruelest and most diabolical of Indian chieftains. It is believed that his family was wiped out by white men and his sole desire in life was to take revenge for his loss. There has been an effort to make the historical background seem authentic. Indian warfare was horrible and the hardships of the pioneers almost unbearable, but when detail is heaped on detail as realistically as it is in this film the audience is left in a state of exhaustion and depression. The story revolves around General Steele, a stern disciplinarian, and his young son just out of West Point, who rebels against the unanticipated harshness of his father and precipitates a murderous raid by the Apaches. Preston Foster is very able as the General's most trusted officer, Gene Lockhart a particularly villainous scoundrel and Chief Thundercloud a remarkable figure of hatred and revenge. The only light note in the picture is supplied by the homely philosophy of the scout Sneezer played by Andy Devine. "Geronimo" is too blood-curdling for children, and while the action is thrilling, many adults will hesitate to subject themselves to the nerve-racking experience of this super-Western.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
No

THE FLYING DEUCES ○ ○
Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy, Jean Parker, Reginald Gardiner. Direction by A. Edward Sutherland. Boris Morros (R.K.O.)

Humorous continuity rather than a story describes this latest venture of Laurel and Hardy. It is mildly amusing to follow the pair from one predicament to another, each more impossible than the last. As two American fish merchants vacationing in Paris, they are spurned by two French girls; they join the Foreign Legion but refuse to work for a niggardly three cents a day. Hardy commits suicide and returns as a horse in his next reincarnation, and there the picture ends.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Probably enjoyable
Children, 8 to 12
Good fun

FOUR WIVES ○ ○

"Four Wives" sequel to "Four Daughters," combines various elements of entertainment which will undoubtedly win general approval for the picture as a whole. The humor, though not at all subtle, is the kind that never fails to get a laugh. For audiences who like serious problems, there is a medical theme combining obstetrics and psychiatry, and the music loving public will enjoy the symphonic composition adapted by Max Steiner from a theme by Max Rabinowitz which forms the dramatic climax of the film. People who like babies should be more than overjoyed with the final scene in which no less than four infants occupy the center of the stage. In spite of its many entertaining qualities the production does not rate unstinted praise. The humor is too exaggerated to combine
well with the seriousness of the theme, and the repeated conversations about approaching blessed events might well be scaled down in the interests of artistry as well as taste. The member of the cast who gives the outstanding performance of this production is Eddie Albert.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Mature
No interest

THE GREAT VICTOR HERBERT


Victor Herbert's well-loved music hath charms to soothe the breast of many a middle-aged movie patron who might otherwise be inclined to sigh for the good old days when artists like Fritz Schell, Emma Trentini and Alice Nielsen sang light opera with classical perfection. More up-to-date audiences, conditioned to the modern popular technique, will be no less charmed by the melodies, and will be pleased with the fresh voice and appealing personality of Mary Martin, with Allan Jones' smooth tones, and little Susanna Foster's clear B flat above high C. Since Paramount owned the rights to the music but not to the librettos, new sets had to be devised, as well as a scenario which would include a medley of Victor Herbert's music without using sequences from his operas as they were wont to be produced. The story is not a biography of Victor Herbert, as the title might lead one to believe, but a romance of two opera stars who were his proteges. Allan Jones gives a clever portrayal of a conceived matinee idol who rides roughshod over the feelings and rights of his leading lady to introduce a new prima donna with whom he has fallen in love. When the new star, who has become his wife, outshines him with her brilliance, he sulks in his tent and is coaxed out again only to come to the assistance of his fourteen-year-old daughter (Susanna Foster) when she essays to substitute for her mother in an operatic performance. Walter Connolly is an excellent Victor Herbert; his benign presence in many scenes gives the whole production a warm tone of humanness.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Entertaining
Mature in story

THE HONEYMOON'S OVER


Donald and Betty start married life auspiciously with a new home and constructive ideas, but the serpent enters in the guise of a high-pressure salesman who persuades them to purchase an expensive car and introduces them to a gay country club set with parasitical tendencies. They become shackled with debts, and when Betty is involved in an accident damage suit, there is no money to pay the claim. Up to this point the story is well-written and appealing. Stuart Erwin is realistic as the harassed husband, Russell Hicks equally good as the adamantine employer and Marjorie Weaver is very pleasing. The picture contains good dialogue and a high percentage of comedy. However, the final part of the film unfolds an escape from their difficulties which is far too simple and easy. The end would be more satisfying if they had been forced to pay for their mistakes in the coin of hard endeavor, and at least it would be true to life.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Too mature
No

JOE AND ETHEL TURP CALL ON THE PRESIDENT


When Joe and Ethel Turp, as representatives of the neighborhood served by Jim the mailman, fly to Jim's defense in his hour of need, they demonstrate the fact that, to Mr. and Mrs. Average American, the loyal and devoted public servant is something more than a mere cog in a great machine. Hastening to Washington, Joe and Ethel gain an interview with the President in a manner, not only amusing and unexpected, but also contrary to all accepted practices. This incident, and the Turp family's interpretation to the President of Jim's life, furnish the humor of the picture. During the interview, Joe is of real assistance to the sorely perplexed President who does not know what attitude to assume toward the remarks made by the leader of a foreign warring power. Although the picture shows the violation of postal regulations by Jim, a trusted employee, the reasons for the action more than offset the offense. One is returned a trifle too often to the amiable but heated arguments of Joe and Ethel as they relate the life of Jim the mailman. These discussions, however, afford
Lewis Stone an opportunity to portray an amused and tolerantly understanding President who steps down from his high position to walk hand in hand with the average citizen. Walter Brennan, as Jim, gives a convincing portrayal of idealistic and unselfish devotion to one great love.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Good  No

**LAW OF THE PAMPAS**


In this new adventure of the popular series the scene shifts to Chile, whither Hop-along and Lucky betake themselves to uncover the villainy which has resulted in the death of the daughter and son of fine old Senor Valdez. The mountain and range photography is beautiful as in most of the Cassidy pictures, and the riding is first-rate, but the story is obvious in its main course and devoid of original incidents. Steffi Duna adds a note of color by her dancing and flirtations.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Mature  Too much violence

**LEGION OF THE LAWLESS**


Out on the frontier a band of vigilantes, organized to maintain order, gets into the hands of an unscrupulous plotter who uses the organization to bully and defraud the honest citizens of the part of town lying across the river. A young lawyer rides down Main Street and immediately finds himself in the struggle and carries it through to a successful conclusion. This is an average Western with much melodrama, a little comedy, swaggering righteousness and unvarnished wickedness. George O'Brien is true to form as the hero.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Not recommended  Too much brutality and drinking

**THE NIGHT OF NIGHTS**


It is difficult to imagine how a competent writer, a successful director, and a cast of seasoned performers could have created such a completely dismal production as this one. The story commences with the pitiful sight of two actors, Dan O'Farrell and Barry Trimble, drinking themselves into such a state of irresponsibility that they arrive drunk at the theatre and ruin the opening of the play, of which Dan is author, and in which he and his wife are to play the leading roles. The next phase covers a period of twenty years, during which Dan, deserted by his wife, lives the broken-hearted, lonely existence of a down and out actor. When the audience is worn out with this mournful sequence and Dan has almost reached the end of his rope, light appears in the person of Dan's grown daughter. Though Olympe Bradna is a great relief to both Dan and the audience, the play soon returns to gloom with Dan dying from a heart attack, just when everybody is celebrating the success of his play with his daughter cast in her mother's part and himself in the role which he had originally intended to enact. The plot is pure hokum, using a variation of the "Laugh Clown Laugh" theme to moisten the eyes of susceptible audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
No  No

**OUR NEIGHBORS—THE CARTERS**


"Our Neighbors—The Carters" does not have a distinct plot but rather is a series of the problems and joys that a family of fine lively children can present to their parents. The small town setting provides atmosphere for these events, while the Carter's old friends Bill and Mary Hastings add the old, old slant that money cannot buy happiness. It is good wholesome entertainment, a bit inclined to drag in places, but good for a laugh here and a tear there. Although Gloria Carter was slated to steal the show, Mary Thomas as "Mattie" is the one you'll remember.

Adolescents, 12 to 16  Children, 8 to 12
Good  Good

**RENO**


The metamorphosis of Reno from a small mining town of the early nineteen hundreds to its present status as the center of the get-divorced-quick industry is encompassed in the life history of one man. John Shane gains success and honor as a lawyer by fighting the battles of independent miners against the ruthless corporations. When the silver lodes
peter out and he finds himself unable to provide luxuries for his beloved wife and daughter, he discovers a proviso in the Nevada residence laws which makes it possible to obtain divorces for his clients in six weeks' time. He never counts the cost in broken homes and shattered lives until his own wife and his daughter come under the malevolent influence of the system he has created. Stories of Reno are usually either sordid or unduly glamorous; this film is neither. It is a stirring drama of human lives with Richard Dix and Gail Patrick giving consistent and realistic interpretations of the two leading parts. If it is melodramatic and sentimental at times, it is still typical of the place and the period portrayed.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Too mature

THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'RE WRONG ◆ ◆

This is gay, tuneful entertainment perfectly suited to a holiday mood. Kay Kyser and his troupe of entertainers are invited to Hollywood to make a movie. In a screen test, Kay is given the role of a romantic gondolier who has to climb a trellis to bring his lady love down from a tower. Of course he is absurd, and he goes on being absurd throughout the entire picture, while May Robson, as his grandma, Edward Everett Horton, Adolphe Menjou and others add to the fun. If this cast were not enough, the music would insure the film's popularity. The production is one of the best in which radio favorites have starred.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Very entertaining

TOWER OF LONDON ◆ ◆

"Tower of London" is a somber horror film about the dark historic period of the 15th Century when Richard III ascended to the throne of England by means of murder and intrigue. It is a succession of torture scenes, assassinations, and battles. Photographed against the settings of medieval castles and dungeons, the sinister characters plot their horrible crimes while the shadow of Mord, the deformed executioner, spreads like a symbol of evil over much of the action. The fact that it gives a realistic impression of the worst characteristics of that unhappy age is hardly enough to recommend it as entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Probably entertaining

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
No interest

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
No

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Children, 8 to 12
Horrible
SHORT SUBJECT

MARCH OF TIME, Issue No. 3, Vol. VI.

UNCLE SAM, THE FARMER

Producers: The Editors of Time.

An excellent survey of agricultural conditions in the United States contrasts the mistakes of the war years 1914 to 1918 with the controlled methods now in use under the A. A. A. and warns the American farmer not to be misled by indications of quick profits from the present war in Europe. The film smacks slightly of propaganda, as only the favorable view of present day agriculture is given, but it is an intensely interesting picture, showing the importance of soil conservation, pest control, seed improvement, food storage and other kindred subjects with emphasis on the importance of participation in farm projects by each member of the farmer's family.

Adolescents, 12 to 16

Children, 8 to 12

Educational

dull for them

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"Documentary" is rapidly becoming a catch-word, but nevertheless, contributes to the motion picture vocabulary a useful designation for films on social themes, or films which use variations of the newsreel technique.

By stricter definition the good Documentaries are more than merely pictures with a purpose. Their essence is people—real people, not actors. In contrast to ordinary entertainment subjects, the Documentaries are concerned not with the romances, but with the everyday lives of individuals, their jobs, the public utilities which serve them, and the social forces which surround them.

To many of us the world of the manual worker exists only objectively; we have no personal comprehension of the skillfully trained hands, the accurate eyes, the slowly-gained experience of a good mail clerk, a competent fisherman or expert in the interlocking crafts necessary to the making of a book. But in three notable films English documentary producers have impressed upon their public: (a) the efficiency of their General Post Office ("Night Mail") revealing unexpected drama in the practical business of transporting mail; (b) have shown the importance to an island people of the fishing industries, ("North Sea"); (c) have given visual form to the romantic history of transferring human thought to paper, from prehistoric picture-writing days down to modern production of books, ("Cover to Cover").

Among Documentaries produced in the United States have been "The Plough that Broke the Plains," "The River" and "The City." Some of the "March of Time" releases and Hollywood studio short subjects are also documentary in feeling. Since adaptation of imported ideas is essential to vitality,
the Documentary in this country is being given an unmistakable "made in the U.S.A." treatment which changes it from the English models. So far, American films of this type have placed greater emphasis on natural forces than upon human relationships. "The Plough That Broke the Plains" shows how our mid-continent was turned into a dust bowl. "The River," with a hauntingly beautiful commentary, is a portrait of the Mississippi, its size, its terrifying power in flood and its usefulness when curbed and properly controlled.

As any selection from the appended bibliography will reveal, the Documentary movement has had unusually eloquent and literate apostles. Developed originally in England by an enthusiastic group of young people led by John Grierson and Paul Rotha some ten years ago, a growing number of producers and directors now contribute to its current wide importance. In the United States the outstanding name is that of Pare Lorentz, but there is every indication that he is but the first of many Americans who will use and expand this cinematic technique.

SOME DOCUMENTARY FILMS

And Their Directors


"Nanook of the North," 1920; a film of Eskimo life around a trading post in the Hudson Bay Territory. Director: Robert Flaherty. Production: For Reveillon Freres, N.Y.


"Cover to Cover," 1936; a film about books, their history,


"The Song of Ceylon," 1934-35; a dialectic film of old and new Ceylon showing the influence of Western civilization on native life. Director: Basil Wright. Production: John Grierson with the Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board.


Documentary films are seldom exhibited in commercial theaters in the United States, but information about prints for special showings may be secured from the following sources:


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Suggested Reference Material for Motion Picture Study in A.A.U.W. Program Planning
SUGGESTED REFERENCE MATERIAL FOR MOTION PICTURE STUDY IN A.A.U.W. PROGRAM PLANNING

In the last few months before the outbreak of the war more well-written books about the movies appeared than during the several previous years. This was to be expected from an apparent ten-year publication cycle. "The Great Train Robbery" in 1905 opened the screen to story-telling drama but it was 1915-1918 before the new medium became well enough established to develop a literature. After ten years the silent film had reached its height and a noteworthy collection of books analyzed its achievements and artistry. The coming of sound between 1929 and 1931 brought only technical treatises at first, but was followed by a flood of books re-evaluating motion picture art in the new terms. Publication continued at the rate of about half a dozen titles a year, until in 1939, ten years after sound, it became apparent that both the publishers and the public were receptive to another cyclic series based on the remarkable development of the talking screen.

From the resources of such specialized libraries as that of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Hollywood, the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the New York Public Library it is possible to compile extensive bibliographies. But for either general readers or A.A.U.W. study groups outside the largest cities such lists are only tantalizing. The average public library will have on its shelves several times the amount of reference material on the game of chess, for instance, that it will have on motion pictures which are a major entertainment and cultural interest of three-quarters of the American public.

Of the six interest fields for which national committees have been set up by the Association, motion pictures may be related to four -- Education, International Relations, Social Studies, and the Arts.
The California State Division is the first to initiate a Special Committee on Motion Pictures, largely as a result of the outstanding achievement of the Los Angeles Branch in its ten-year publication of "Motion Picture Reviews," which a year ago received state sponsorship and support. This little monthly magazine has won the respect of teachers and librarians throughout the country for the scholarship and integrity with which it is edited.

Along with study groups devoted to the member interests in Art, International Relations, Book Reviewing, Social Welfare, Education, and Drama, the modern Motion Picture would seem to have a logical and important place in A.A.U.W. program planning.

From the observations of the special committee on the subject during its introductory year in California, the potential study interests of A.A.U.W. film-goers would seem to come under the following headings:

1. GUIDANCE IN PERSONAL ENTERTAINMENT.
2. EVALUATION OF FILMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.
3. VISUAL EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOM.
4. SOCIAL AND MORAL INFLUENCE OF THE SCREEN.
5. THE MOTION PICTURE AS AN ART FORM.
6. BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL STUDY.
7. THE MECHANICS OF PICTURE MAKING.
8. THE SCREEN AS "PLATFORM AND PULPIT."
1. GUIDANCE IN PERSONAL ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment is too much an individual matter for absolutes in its definition, but a candid examination of the majority interests in any group may well serve as a starting point from which to undertake a study program. It is important, however, to make a clear distinction between one's personal preferences or enjoyment and the more objective values in any particular film.

"Motion Picture Reviews", our own A.A.U.W. magazine, heads the list of reliable evaluators of current releases. Other good reviews are found in "Time" magazine, "The New Yorker", the "Christian Science Monitor" and local dailies and columns available in every community.

Of decided help in personal choice is the 60-page pamphlet COURSE IN MOTION PICTURE APPRECIATION by Sterner and Bowden. Although originally intended for classroom use, its outline form and unit headings direct attention to such important elements as acting, direction, sets, photography, sound and music, and provide a handy yard-stick for general reference. AMERICA AT THE MOVIES by Thorp, a recent book which should be available in most libraries, is another help. Chapters on "What Movie Tonight?", "Glamour", and "Cinema Fashions" will furnish clues as to why you like one film better than another.

2. EVALUATION OF FILMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Again our "Motion Picture Reviews" heads the list, this time because of its careful distinctions as to age-suitability. Starting from the premise that no child under 8 years of age should be taken to any movie, the reviews are graded for "Children 8 to 12"
and for "Adolescents, 12 to 16". Specific comments point out which films require adult interpretation and which may be too exciting for small children. These welcome notations are in addition to the well-written critical summaries.

The most detailed analyses of the effects of films on young people are undoubtedly the ten books published as the "Payne Fund Studies" in 1933, the best-known being a journalistic popularization of the other nine under the title OUR MOVIE MADE CHILDREN by Foreman. The nearly 3,000 pages and distinguished list of authors responsible for these physical, psychological and sociological investigations would seem to give them major importance. However, it is well to remember that the studies are now more than seven years old and that charges of sensationalism and anti-motion picture bias have repeatedly been made against the entire project.

"Photoplay Appreciation Study Material for Schools, Clubs and Libraries", edited by Ryllis Hemington for the Public Relations Department of Fox West Coast Theatres, is a valuable source of information on current films. Frankly sponsored by the motion picture industry, these articles and reprints are intended as an aid to serious students and study groups of all ages. They include the work of such experts as Bruno Ussher on Film Music and Laura O. Vruwink on Films for Children. FILM AND SCHOOL by Rand and Lewis is another help. Written for older boys and girls as well as for their parents and teachers, it includes chapters on "How Moving Pictures Interpret Life", "Rating Scales and Reviews", and "Moving Pictures, a Social and Economic Force". The whole book is meticulously done and can be used as a guide to evaluation.

3. VISUAL EDUCATION IN THE CLASS ROOM

This field is of particular interest to teachers, since
it considers the film as a teaching tool for such subjects as science, history, social studies and the arts. It is important to remember that nearly all school film is of a different width than theatrical film. The film used in commercial theatres is 35mm, whereas nearly all school and amateur film is 16mm. As the two sizes require entirely different projection equipment, the regular studio-made releases are available to schools only when they have been especially reprinted in the smaller size.

In the last two years, however, the motion picture industry has responded to requests to release to schools the wealth of instructional material in its vaults. Two long-term projects have been supervised by educational authorities of the highest standing. Five hundred short subjects were selected by reviewing panels as most useful in connection with art and music, literature and biography, the sciences, the social studies, history, sociology, religion, health and sports, hygiene and the vocations. Through the cooperation of the studios these may now be leased by schools from Teaching Film Custodians, Inc., 25 West 43rd Street, New York City, on terms noted in a "Catalog of Films for Classroom Use." Also limited to school use, but of great significance is the "Human Relations Series of Films" on which data may be secured from the Commission on Human Relations of the Progressive Education Association, 45 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City. About 40 films are described, each being a self-sufficient excerpt from such features as "Captains Courageous", "Story of Louis Pasteur", "Men in White", "Black Legion", etc., dramatically presenting some human problem which calls for thought and discussion. Every teacher will find the pamphlets stimulating, whether or not her school is equipped to use the films.

Two books of obvious usefulness and scholarship in their fields are Harvard's THE SOUND MOTION PICTURE IN SCIENCE TEACHING, by Rulon, and Yale's MOTION
PICTURES AS AN AID IN TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY, by Wise. The University of Chicago press has published Brunsetter's HOW TO USE THE EDUCATIONAL SOUND FILM and Devereux' THE EDUCATIONAL TALKING PICTURE as manuals of general instruction. Dale, MOTION PICTURES IN EDUCATION (a source book for teachers and administrators) and Hoban, VISUALIZING THE CURRICULUM are also excellent.

4. SOCIAL AND MORAL INFLUENCE OF THE SCREEN

One of the best ways to begin a group study on the motion picture would be to write to the editor of one of the two Photoplay Study Guide series which have been such a valuable contribution to the screen's pamphlet literature. Harold Turney of the Drama Department of Los Angeles City College edits one of these series on the West Coast under the title "Film Guides". His pamphlet on "The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex", for instance, includes the complete cast and credits, an article on the manners and customs of the Elizabethan period, an article on the history of Elizabeth's reign, a discussion of the dramatic approach to the film, a review of the art, design and photographic problems, a detailed commentary on the music, notes on the make-ups used, production statistics, a discussion outline listing thirty analytical questions, a bibliography of books on the history, art and costumes of the period, and some 20 clearly reproduced illustrations. The similar series edited on the East Coast by William Lewin and Max Herzberg for the Department of Secondary Teachers of the National Education Association, includes "Photoplay Studies" on outstanding films and "Group Discussion Guides" from a more mature viewpoint. Both series have active cooperation from the studios, the articles being written by various teachers and coordinated by the editors.
THE MOVIES ON TRIAL by Perlman is a compilation of such essays as "Stories I'd Like to See Screened" by William Lyon Phelps, "The Movies and the Community" by John Haynes Holmes and "Chewing Gum Relaxation" by William Allen White. Margaret Throp's AMERICA AT THE MOVIES also belongs in this section as does THE RISE OF THE AMERICAN FILM. In this "critical history" Lewis Jacobs has related the changing content of America's films to the changing times of the nation. He begins with the "wonderfully real" motion pictures first shown at Koster and Bial's Music Hall in April 1896, and ends with a discussion of the significance to our public of such films as "Blockade" and "Confessions of a Nazi Spy". Davy's FOOTNOTES TO THE FILM will be useful here as in #7.

Vreeland's FOREMOST FILMS OF 1938, while intended only to be a collection of condensed scripts and a yearbook, contains much critical and analytical material about the films mentioned and deserves a place in any list of this kind.

Another current summary is included in the annual report of Will H. Hays under the title "The Motion Picture in a Changing World".

Hollywood's self-censorship is described in Martin's HOLLYWOOD'S MOVIE COMMANDMENTS and Quigley's DECENCY IN MOTION PICTURES. Magazine articles on this subject are also available in most public libraries.

Much writing on the social influence of the movies has centered around such national legislative proposals as the Brookhart Bill, 1928, the Pettingill Bill, 1936, and the Neely Bill, 1939-40, all intended to prohibit the block booking of motion picture product. Pamphlet material in support of the Neely Bill may be obtained from the A.A.U.W. National Headquarters and from the Motion Picture Research Council in San Francisco.
The opposing viewpoint of the motion picture industry may be secured from the Hollywood offices of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, or from Mr. C.C. Pettijohn, General Counsel for the M.P.P.D.A. in New York City. As so much of this argument has been printed in the Congressional Record, congressmen and senators are also another source of up-to-date printed material.

A new magazine called "Films" has undertaken to serve as a "quarterly of discussion and analysis". The first two issues indicate value in both the social and artistic fields.

5. THE MOTION PICTURE AS AN ART FORM

Sometimes referred to as "the only new art of the twentieth century" or less flatteringly as a "vampire art" taking whatever graces it may from painting, music and the legitimate stage, the film has steadily developed its own techniques and talents. Vachel Lindsay was an early champion of the movies, and his ART OF THE MOVING PICTURE, first published in 1915, boldly compares the flexibility of plays-on-film with the limitations of plays-on-the-stage, suggesting that sculpture-in-motion and painting-in-motion will help make the motion picture a truly great art. Gilbert Seldes has contributed many articles and three books--THE SEVEN LIVELY ARTS, 1924, with two sections devoted to the movies, including a chapter on Charlie Chaplin, AN HOUR WITH THE MOVIES AND THE TALKIES, 1929, and THE MOVIES COME FROM AMERICA, 1937, with an introduction by Mr. Chaplin.

Part four of Adler's ART AND PRUDENCE examines motion pictures as an art directly related to human behavior. Arnheim's FILM is entirely devoted to aesthetic conceptions of the cinema. Spottiswoode in
A GRAMMAR OF THE FILM analyzes the effective use of various techniques developed in England, France, Russia and Germany. Paul Rotha's THE FILM TILL NOW, A SURVEY OF THE CINEMA is usefully divided into two parts, "the actual" and "the theoretical", and consequently is an excellent basis for study. His MOVIE PARADE is a remarkable collection of illustrative "stills" with connecting text. Rotha's two other books, both called DOCUMENTARY FILM but published by different houses three years apart, should be mentioned in this section for their comments on general art in motion pictures as well as the more specialized documentary form. FILM AND THEATRE, by Allardyce Nicoll, Professor of the History of Drama, Yale University, is a good reference which may be found in many public libraries. Jacobs' THE RISE OF THE AMERICAN FILM, the Sterner and Bowden COURSE IN MOTION PICTURE APPRECIATION, and William Lewin's PHOTOPLAY APPRECIATION IN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOLS are useful also in a study of motion picture art.

Anderson's THE AMERICAN THEATRE includes Fulop-Miller's "The Motion Picture in America"—a pictorial history. FICTION AND THE SCREEN by Ortmann is a unique contribution to film literature in that the author contrasts "westerns" and "musicals" with Greek and Roman drama, showing that no matter how widely separated in time, the audience interests and many of the dramatic forms are analogous. Two books on writing for the screen, both by women active in Hollywood production, are HOW TO WRITE AND SELL FILM STORIES by Frances Marion and FOUR STAR SCRIPTS by Lorraine Noble. Much has been written about music in motion pictures, the best books being FILM MUSIC by Kurt London, MUSIC FOR THE FILMS by Sabaneev (a translation from the Russian) and the recent A SMATTERING OF IGNORANCE by Oscar Levant which includes an informal but informative account of how several well-known
musical scores for motion pictures were composed. Most of the books on cinematography are very technical, but THE CINEMA AS A GRAPHIC ART by Vladimir Nilsen is also interesting from the viewpoint of theory.

6. BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL STUDY

The standard and most comprehensive history of the movies continues to be Terry Ramsaye's two-volume MILLION AND ONE NIGHTS, published in 1926, and fortunately widely available in public libraries. Hampton's A HISTORY OF THE MOVIES is a single volume covering the same period. THE HISTORY OF MOTION PICTURES by Bardesche and Brasillach explains the early European developments, and carries the story of foreign films through the years covered for America by Mr. Ramsaye. The two can be used together to good advantage. Jacobs' RISE OF THE AMERICAN FILM, the most up-to-date history, and Rotha--THE FILM TILL NOW should also be featured in this list. Lewis--THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY is one of the best analyses of the industry from a commercial viewpoint. It was done for the Harvard School of Business Administration. Much historical material is to be found in biographies, among these being William C. deMille's recent HOLLYWOOD SAGA, Fowler's FATHER GOOSE, the story of Mack Sennett, Sinclair's WILLIAM FOX, Drinkwater's THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF CARL LIEBBMIL, Goldwyn's BEHIND THE SCREEN, Griffith's WHEN THE MOVIES WERE YOUNG, and Irwin's THE HOUSE THAT SHADOWS BUILT. THE AMERICAN FILM by Rideout reviews a wide selection of outstanding sound films, and Davy's FOOTNOTES TO THE FILM is one of the most inclusive surveys of the motion picture industry from the British viewpoint. Colorful accounts of motion picture history in Russia, Germany, France, India and Japan have been published in English but are ordinarily avail-
able only in the largest libraries and in such special collections as that of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

7. THE MECHANICS OF PICTURE MAKING

There is more readily accessible study material in this section than in any of the others. Kiesling's TALKING PICTURES, HOW THEY ARE MADE heads the list since the author is a studio authority and it is one of the most complete. Floherty's MOVIEMAKERS is a good picture-analysis of the various studio departments. Naumberg-WE MAKE THE MOVIES is made up of chapters written by leaders in studio creative branches. Pryor's LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES is also divided into chapter-sections on story, direction, players, costumes, etc. MOVIE WORKERS, edited by Alice V. Keliher (A Picture Fact Book) is particularly good for use with children but will be interesting to older students as well. It contains photographs of early projection machines and a diagram of a large studio set showing placement of lights, cameras, etc. Even children can be taught with a book like this one to be interested in more than just the story of the pictures they see. HOW THEY MAKE A MOTION PICTURE by Hoadley and Freulich is another good "how it is done" book, profusely illustrated. Davy's FOOTNOTES TO THE FILM has a section devoted to studio work. The only really good general explanation of cartoon production is the 1940 FILM GUIDE'S HANDBOOK, CARTOON PRODUCTION, edited by Harold Turney. MOTION PICTURE SOUND ENGINEERING edited by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences is the authoritative although highly technical reference in its field and Klein's COLOR CINEMATOGRAPHY is similarly the advanced manual for that subject.
FILM FACTS, 1940, compiled by the industry, is the most readily available and up-to-date collection of general statistics.

Many titles listed in this Bulletin are British publications, but they are finding their way into American libraries. Two particularly good titles are FILM TECHNIQUE by Pudovkin and THE ART OF FILM PRODUCTION by Buchanan. Their value lies in their discussion added to a description of motion picture mechanics.

8. THE SCREEN AS "PLATFORM AND PULPIT"

During the past few years the Hollywood studios have challenged public interest with so many productions of marked and often controversial social significance that a study program could be developed from films of this period. These would include such pictures as "Grapes of Wrath", "Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet", "Of Mice and Men", "Juarez", "Confessions of a Nazi Spy", "Blockade", "One Third of a Nation", "The Life of Emile Zola", "Nurse Edith Cavell", "Abe Lincoln in Illinois", "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" and the remarkable series of historical short subjects produced by Warner Bros. and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Mentioned under several previous classifications but equally valuable here are Jacobs--THE RISE OF THE AMERICAN FILM, Thorp--AMERICA AT THE MOVIES, Davy--FOOTNOTES TO THE FILM, Kiesling--TALKING PICTURES, Rotha--THE FILM TILL NOW, and Seldes--THE MOVIES COME FROM AMERICA.

The pattern of topical films, on the present war is yet to be established, but in this connection the pamphlet "Memo on the Movies, War Propaganda, 1914-1939" by Winifred Johnston is interesting if
argumentative reading. The April 17, 1940, issue of the theatrical weekly "Variety" featured a comparable review. The general subject of "Propaganda and Motion Pictures" was discussed in some detail in the November, 1939, issue of this Bulletin (No. 2).

Development of the documentary film movement has also been traced in a previous issue of this Bulletin—December, 1939 (No. 3). The two books by Paul Rotha titled DOCUMENTARY FILM are the basic texts in this field. Magazine articles are also available on the new American documentaries "The City" and "The Fight for Life" produced by Pare Lorentz who made "The River".

How far the screen will go toward becoming a "platform" for national debate will depend largely upon public reactions during the next few months. And the progress of this development may well provide a basis for a most stimulating group-study in the field of motion pictures.
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