The COURIER'S COMMENTS on the CURRENT CINEMA

By JOHN SPRINGER

The Screen Year in Review

A summary of a screen year is always a difficult thing to attempt. The critic may weigh and balance the merits of one picture, one performer against another and finally come out with a list of "bests" which is perfectly satisfactory to him. Then a reader will say, "But what about so-and-so? I thought he was marvelous and you don't even mention him."

Well, the critic may have thought that so-and-so was "marvelous," too, but out of the hundreds of performances of a single screen year, there were very likely a few others that he considered a little more so. If space permitted, I would be glad to mention all the reasons which enter into my choosing one picture or performance above another. As it is, I'll simply have to give you my lists—the ten best pictures and their runner-ups, the ten best performances in each classification, and the ten worst pictures of the year. I'll be able to make few comments on my reasons for selections. The best thing I can do is to assure you that all of the lists have been thought out carefully and if any of my selections puzzle you, I'll be glad to more fully explain my reasons if you send me a card telling me of the objection.

And now for the selections themselves—all rated in order of excellence. First, here are my choices for the ten best pictures of the year:

"Wuthering Heights," a strange, compelling picture, superbly adapted from Emily Bronte's grim old classic. Magnificent in every phase of acting and direction it was a striking picture in every way.

"Pygmalion," which transplanted the biting wit and brilliant dialogue of George Bernard Shaw to the screen, acted and directed with finesse and intelligence.

"Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," which covered the political scene from an adult and serious standpoint, but was highly enjoyable entertainment as well.

"Goodbye Mr. Chips" one of the most touching and tenderly sentimental little stories to come to the screen.

"Love Affair," an unforgettable combination of comedy and pathos in a thoroughly delightful and appealing love story.

"The Lady Vanishes," an intense and thrilling melodrama in which unbelievable suspense was generated by Alfred Hitchcock master of sustained screen suspense.

"Stagecoach," which had all the action necessary to a good Western, with colorful drama which made it very much more than that.

"Bachelor Mother," a gay sparkling comedy adroitly acted and directed.

"Dark Victory," a field day for Bette Davis in the emotionally powerful study of a girl who knows that death awaits her. Slightly theatrical but splendidly handled.

"Ninotchka," in which Ernst Lubitsch tossed pointed barbs of satire at the communistic system in a sophisticated and knowing picture with Greta Garbo showing an unrealized flair for high comedy.

So there they are, the ten best pictures of the year. They were a difficult ten to pick with so many other notable films crowding them for attention. So here again in order of excellence are the fifteen films which receive very honorable mention.

"We Are Not Alone," "Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex," "Jesse James," "Beachcomber," "Drums Along the Mohawk," "Made for Each Other," "On Borrowed Time," "Young Mr. Lincoln," "Gunga Din," "The Women," "Nurse Edith Cavell," "Story of Vernon and Irene Castle," "Sweethearts," "Juarez," "Confessions of a Nazi Spy."

As the best foreign language picture of the year I would select the grim, powerful anti-war preachment, **"Grand Illusion,"** which was sent over from France.

And now for the best performance of the year. As far as I am concerned, Robert Donat's inspired portrayal of the shy, sensitive schoolmaster who mellowed into the beloved Mr. Chips is number one performance by a masculine star this year. I am inclined to favor Wendy Hiller's unforgettable characterization of the "draggle-tailed guttersnipe" of "Pygmalion" for first place among women stars, but immediately following must come Bette Davis—both for the tortured heroine of "Dark Victory" and for her robust portrayal of the queen in "Elizabeth and Essex." Best supporting performance by a woman was given by Geraldine Fitzgerald, as the fresh young girl who is prematurely aged and embittered in "Wuthering Heights." Best supporting masculine performance I believe to be Henry Fonda's as the cool, laconic outlaw of "Jesse James."

But here is a more complete list—the ten best in each classification, listed in order of excellence:

Ten Best Masculine Performances (Lead)

Robert Donat in "Goodbye Mr. Chips"; Laurence Olivier in "Wuthering Heights"; Henry Fonda in "Young Mr. Lincoln"; James Stewart in "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington"; Charles Laughton in "Beachcomber"; Paul Muni in "We Are Not Alone"; Charles Boyer in "Love Affair"; Charles Laughton in "Jamaica Inn"; Brian Aherne in "Juarez"; Cary Grant in "Gunga Din."

Ten Best Feminine Performances (Lead)

Wendy Hiller in "Pygmalion"; Bette Davis in "Dark Victory"; Bette Davis in "Elizabeth and Essex"; Jane Bryan in "We Are Not Alone"; Irene Dunne in "Love Affair"; Elsa Lanchester in "Beachcomber"; Rosalind Russell in "Women"; Anna Neagle in "Nurse Edith Cavell"; Merle Oberon in "Wuthering Heights"; Bette Davis in "Old Maid."

Ten Best Masculine Supporting Performances

Henry Fonda in "Jesse James"; Gene Lockhart in "Blackmail"; Will Fyffe in "Rulers of the Sea"; Walter Brennan in "Kentucky"; Thomas Mitchell in "Stagecoach"; Harry Carey in "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington"; Claud Rains in the same picture; David Niven in "Dawn Patrol"; John Barrymore in "Midnight"; Francis Lederer in "Confessions of a Nazi Spy."

Ten Best Feminine Supporting Performances

Geraldine Fitzgerald in "Wuthering Heights"; Maria Ouspenskaya in "Love Affair"; Flora Robson in "We Are Not Alone"; Geraldine Fitzgerald in "Dark Victory"; Beulah Bondi in "On Borrowed Time"; Maria Ouspenskaya in "The Rains Came"; Alice Brady in "Young Mr. Lincoln"; Edna May Oliver in "Nurse Edith Cavell"; Una O'Connor in "We Are Not Alone"; Marsha Hunt in "These Glamour Girls."

The directors who work to my mind has been most notable this year are, in alphabetical order: Frank Capra ("Mr. Smith"), John Ford ("Stagecoach"), Alfred Hitchcock ("Lady Vanishes"), Garson Kanin ("Bachelor Mother"), Ernst Lubitsch ("Ninotchka"), Leo McCarey ("Love Affair"). Most prolific hitmaker with four successes was Edmund Goulding ("Dawn Patrol," "Dark Victory," "Old Maid," "We Are Not Alone").

And now give a thought to the ten worst pictures of the year. They are ten pictures produced as important films rather than strictly minor pictures. In alphabetical order they are: **"Disputed Passage,"** preposterous piffle about love

(Continued on Page 10)

Weekly Movie Guide

NEW FILMS REVIEWED

Days of Jesse James, A-1
High School, A-1
Irish Luck, A-1
Money to Burn, A-1
Pioneers of the Frontier, A-1
Two Fisted Rangers, A-1
Married and in Love, A-2
Remember the Night, A-2
Thou Shalt Not Kill, A-2
The Light that Failed, B

AT THE THEATERS

PALACE

Hunchback of Notre Dame (Not classified)

LOEW'S ROCHESTER

Balalaika, A-2
Nick Carter, Master Detective, A-1

CENTURY

Destry Rides Again, A-2
Laugh It Off, A-1

TEMPLE

Kid Nightingale, A-1
Man from Montreal (Not classified)

REGENT

Gulliver's Travels, A-1

CAPITOL

That's Right, You're Wrong, A-1
On Dress Parade, A-2

LITTLE

Mr Smith Goes to Washington, A-2

Society for Propagation of the Faith

The REV. JOHN S. RANDALL, Director

50 Chestnut St. — Home — Foreign Catholic Missions — Stone 4013

THE OLD AND THE NEW YEAR

Once more we come to a turn in the journey of life—a turn which faces two doorways—one the exit from our yesterdays; the other the entrance to our tomorrows. Toward the former shuffles the gray-bearded tired old figure of 1939. His step is slow and faltering, his garments soiled and red-stained while his trembling hands clasp tightly the hourglass whose sands have almost run their course. And what a peculiar conglomeration of sands they are! Some dark with the blackness of despair marking the horrible progress of might over right, some blood-red where the bleeding hopes and bodies of nations lie mangled, some diamond-clear with the brilliancy of zealous faith, enduring hope, burning charity. All these are reflected in the glass of 1939.

Behind the other door stands the young and hopeful 1940, untired but eager for life, untutored but anxious to learn. In him lie our hopes for this year about to dawn.

It might be an encouraging thought to picture that coming 1940 as embodied in the newborn Redeemer the feast of Whose Circumcision is celebrated on New Year's Day. Safe in His sustaining hands, we need have no fear for the future about to dawn for we realize that time, while being so precious, is the most fleeting of God's gifts. It is ours to use or misuse but only as a preparation for eternity.

OUR WISHES FOR 1940

To the members of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith therefore, we extend our most sincere wishes for their peace and happiness during 1940. Despite the unrest of the world, may their gift of faith be daily increased, may their hope transcend the distrust of broken pledges, may their charity spread like calming oil upon the hate-churned waters of the world restoring peace and justice in the Name of Him "Whose Name was called Jesus."

Heroism Sublime

Ralph Waldo Emerson tells us that "The characteristic of genuine heroism is its persistency." In the light of this definition, where shall we find heroism so genuine, where shall we behold personal sacrifice and self-abnegation so persistent and so generous, as in the daily lives of the missionary priests, brothers and sisters of the Catholic Church, heroic saintly men and women who have everlastingly consecrated themselves to the alleviation of suffering mankind, whose very lives are a real human holocaust voluntarily and courageously placed upon the altar of afflicted humanity. And greater love than this hath no man than that a man lay down his life for his friend. Truly then if persistency is the characteristic of genuine heroism, then in the life of every Catholic missionary is to be found heroism sublime.

When we endeavor to appraise genuine Christian courage our thoughts unconsciously revert to those Apostolic men and women who have taken up their abode in the leper colonies of the world, courageous soldiers of Christ, true heroes of charity, who have sacrificed their all, who have themselves willingly assumed the care of these pitifully distressed people.

Yours To Share

Skeptics may sneer and materialists laugh at the generosity of these brave souls. However, in reality they know the measure of real greatness, for in giving all, they win all. St. Hugh of Lincoln has said, "The lepers are the flowers of paradise, pearls in the coronet of the Eternal King." What then must that King feel towards those who love and care for these gems of great price? It is possible for you to share in this most heroic of all mission activities by your contribution to the Lepers' Christmas Fund. Will you allow this opportunity to pass, or will you, with true Christian charity, motivated by a kindly thought for mankind, aid God's heroes in their great work?

Westward Ho!

Through India and Ceylon the rays next penetrate, thence on to Afghanistan, Persia, Iraw, Arabia and Turkey wrested from the message of "good will" by the crescent and sword of the followers of the ex-camel driver. But to the south and west "Old Sol's" rays seem to take on a brighter gleam as they lighten the shores of Madagascar, and the vast African continent, now entering upon its second spring of Christianity. To the north lie Greece, where Paul brought the doctrines of the Christ Child, the Balkan States, Europe's powder-box of the 20th Century, with Poland and Finland bleeding and torn, still listening for the echo of the seraphic message, "peace on earth."

On to the Scandinavian peninsula into Germany where militarism has not yet been able to hush the strains of "Silent Night." The gleaming pinnacle of St Peter's is now lighted to reveal the beauty of Christmas morning in the Eternal City. At last the low countries, the British Isles, France, Spain and Portugal are roused to the glory of the feast by the light of the Christmas sun, thence across the great Atlantic finally arriving at our own American shores, which would seem to terminate our trip with the sun.

We have travelled far in fancy during this imaginary journey, but one conviction remains the "glad tidings" of "the multitude of the heavenly army" are still to be heard above the turmoil and strife of the world, provided God's praise and glory are acknowledged by "men of good will."

Notre Dame Regrets Going Of President

NOTRE DAME, IND.—Appointment of the Very Rev. John F. O'Hara, C.S.C., president of the University of Notre Dame, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Army and Navy Diocese has caused both joy and sorrow here.

His associates at Notre Dame, where he has been stationed since his ordination to the priesthood in 1916, were delighted at the honor conferred on Father O'Hara but all realized that his necessary resignation as president will leave a vacancy difficult to fill.

The Rev. J. Hugh O'Donnell, C.S.C., university vice-president, issued the following statement:

"The Congregation of Holy Cross and the University of Notre Dame are honored in the appointment by His Holiness Pope Pius XII of its distinguished president, Father John F. O'Hara, as Bishop of the titular See of Mylasa and Auxiliary to Archbishop Spellman, of New York, as Bishop of the Army and Navy Diocese.

"Under Father O'Hara's leadership, the University has made progress in all departments. Ever mindful of the sacred trust left him by Father Sorin, the founder, and his noble successors in the office of the presidency, he very modestly accepted his responsibility, and by the inspiration of his priestly life sought to carry out a balanced program at Notre Dame.

"We leave to history an evaluation of his work, but it will be generally accepted, I believe, that he has left the impress of his personality on the religious program of the University."

It is reported on the Notre Dame campus that Father O'Hara will leave about the middle of January to assume his new duties in New York. The date of his Consecration as Bishop has not yet been set and probably no successor to the presidency of Notre Dame will be named until after the consecration ceremonies. It is more than likely that no action will be taken by Congregation of Holy Cross leaders until the Provincial Chapter of the Order meets next July for selection of new Superiors.

BL. MARTIN IS DECLARED PATRON OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

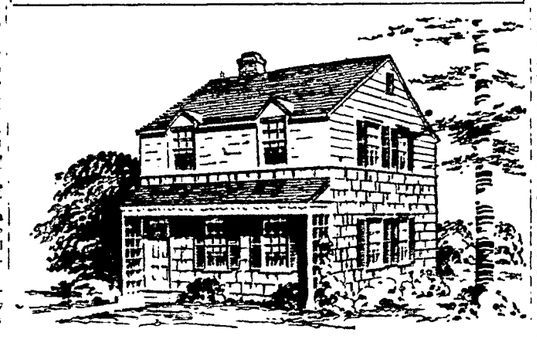
NEW YORK.—The President of Peru has declared Blessed Martin de Porres, Dominican colored lay Brother, as Patron of Social Justice and Social Relief in Peru, according to a letter just received by the Blessed Martin Guild, here from the official Promotor of the Apostolate of Blessed Martin in Peru, the Most Rev. Juan Domingo Vargas, Titular Bishop of Gerara.

It is further learned that the officials of the City of Lima have taken care to preserve the memory of Blessed Martin's birthplace by marking it with a bronze plaque.

These honors came as a climax of a great religious-social celebration of the Third Centennial of Blessed Martin's death.

Better Housing Suggestion

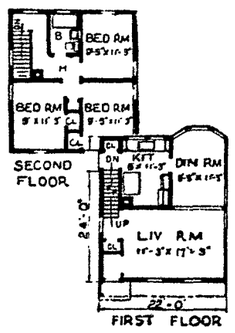
A TWO STORY COLONIAL



THIS house is probably one of the least expensive of a six-room design home. It is quite an accomplishment to be able to enclose in a space 22' x 24' complete six-room accommodations as has been done here. One of the contributing reasons to the low-cost of the house is the absence of the fireplace which is not a necessity.

There is a separate entry, so that visitors do not come directly into the living room; there is a large first-floor closet; the kitchen is ample, and there is a broom closet at the rear entry-way. All in all the house, while restricted as to bedroom size, will accommodate an average family at very low cost.

The division of materials between shingles and the siding above, helps the exterior appearance of the house in that it breaks the height.



Catholic Near East Welfare Association

Most Rev. Francis J. Spellman, D. D., President
Rt. Rev. Msgr. James E. O'Reilly, Ph.D., National Secretary
Rev. John J. Corrigan, Assistant Secretary

A Happy New Year

To all our members and friends, we wish a Happy New Year. We unite our prayers with those of the missionaries begging God to grant you and your family every blessing during the coming year.

OUR FIRST APPEAL

We end the old year and begin the new by making an appeal for the young men in our seminaries. One day these students will be missionaries in the Near East. We must prepare for the future. These young men must replace those who are now in the field.

After finishing high school and at least two years of college, the Student is admitted to the Major Seminary. After six years, he is ordained a priest.

It costs One Hundred Dollars a year for each student. He remains in the seminary six years. Therefore, we need Six Hundred Dollars to provide for the course in the Seminary. Can you help? Remember every single Dollar means something. Ten Dollars will support a student for a month. One Hundred Dollars will take care of him for a year—Six Hundred Dollars will see him through.

We ask you to help us. Share with the Church the honor of preparing young men for the Priesthood. Your student will return one day to say Mass for his own people, to preach to them in their own language. Please help him.

MASS FOR FAMILY

The New Year is about to open. Ask the missionary to offer Mass for the spiritual and temporal welfare of your family and yourself.

SUPPORT A MISSIONARY

Five Dollars will support a missionary for one week. It will help him to do the ordinary work around his mission.

A MISSION CHAPEL

Without a Chapel, the missionary is almost helpless. He must offer Mass in a private house and cannot reserve the Blessed Sacrament. When a Chapel is built, he then has a place where all can hear Mass. He is able to preach and invite the Catholics and non-Catholics to attend instructions.

A Chapel can be built in the Near East for Five Hundred Dollars. The donor can select the name, the Holy Father will select the site.

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

Every year the missionaries offer Fifteen Thousand Masses for our members. These Masses are for living and the deceased. Why not enroll your family? You and all the members will share in these Masses.

By family, we mean—yourself, your parents, brothers and sisters—or yourself, your husband or wife and children. The deceased are included in both groups.

The offering for Family Membership is Five Dollars a year—One Hundred Dollars for Perpetual Family Membership.

FOR THE NEEDIEST

We all know the many expenses that must be met in running a house or an apartment. The same is true only in a larger way in running a church or a chapel. There is always something to be done. Some repairs to make, some bills to pay. Send us a gift, and tell us to use it where it is most needed. It will help some missionary.

THE LITTLE ONES

During the Christmas Season, our minds are turned to Christ the Divine Infant. In His Name, we ask you to think of the little ones in our mission centers. Help us to give these children a Catholic education. Send us five Dollars. This will take care of one child for six months in a mission day school.

STATUE OF OUR LADY

We suggest that you start the New Year by making a gift to the missions in honor of Our Lady. Fifteen Dollars will purchase a large Statue of Our Lady for a mission Chapel.

GREGORIAN MASSES

We invite you to read our pamphlet on Gregorian Masses. It explains the old custom of offering a Mass every day for thirty days for one who is deceased. Write for a copy. It is free.

ALL WE ASK

All we ask from our members is One Dollar a year. There are no other appeals. Why not enroll?

Send all communications to

Catholic Near East Welfare Association

480 Lexington Ave. at 46th St. New York, N. Y.

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☐ Sun room
☐ Open or closed porch
☐ Sheet metal work
☐ Painting
☐ Screens—flower boxes—trellis
☐ Garage
☐ New garage doors
☐ Driveway—curbing
☐ Landscaping

Modernizing Interior

☐ New floors
☐ Stairway
☐ Interior woodwork
☐ Plumbing fixtures
☐ Electrical work
☐ Electrical refrigerator
☐ Fireplace
☐ Tile work
☐ Modernizing kitchen
☐ Plastering
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