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The Courier Covers THE NEW MOVIES

By John Springer

"How Green Was My Valley"—A-2

"How Green Was My Valley" is a picture of rare emotional appeal. It is a picture that is rich and warm and human. It will find instant response from everyone who sees it. "How Green Was My Valley," in short, is a magnificent motion picture.

Since seeing it, we have seen several other movies. But all of the excitement of "Johnny Eager," all the slapstick of "Skylark," can't erase the memory of one moment in "How Green Was My Valley." For it is the type of picture that will live for years in your memory.

Richard Llewellyn's book was a best-seller a fragmentary story of reminiscence in which memory high-lighted certain events of the life of a boy. Like the book, the picture is episodic, telling its story in the same first person singular, with Huw Morgan remembering joys and sorrows—not in sequence or continuity but as they occur to him.

With the picture, John Ford proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that he is Hollywood's foremost director—as if "Grapes of Wrath," "Long Voyage Home," "The Informer," "Stagecoach," "Lost Patrol" and "Young Mr. Lincoln" hadn't already conclusively demonstrated that. Ford directs authoritatively never allowing his story to be lost in a flow of words. Whole sequences are played with the minimum of dialogue in some cases, with none at all. Ford knows the value of silence. He also knows the value of effective musical scoring.

The casting could not have been better. Sara Allgood and Donald Crisp give unforgettable characterizations as the father and mother. There is excellent work by Walter Pidgeon, as Mr. Griffith, the minister, by Anna Lee, as the deeply sympathetic Bronwen; by Maureen O'Hara, in the somewhat thankless role of Angharad; by John Loder, Patric Knowles, Barry Fitzgerald and Rhy Williams. Roddy McDowall, a fine and sensitive child actor, tears out your heart as Huw. It's a tender and moving and beautiful picture—a rare screen achievement.

"Johnny Eager"—A-2

Mervyn LeRoy, in "Johnny Eager," has brought to the screen a picture reminiscent of early LeRoy movies ("Little Caesar," "Public Enemy," etc.). This time, Robert Taylor is the cold and merciless criminal and although he isn't any Cagney, he sometimes almost overcomes the handicap of being Robert Taylor. Not the most believable choice for the part (Dan Dailey, Jr. would have been our's). Taylor manages to be convincingly tough and has gone away from the pretty-boy stage of his career. Lana Turner is improving, too, and Patricia Dane, Robert Sterling, Paul Stewart, Robin Raymond, Glenda Farrell and others add some good moments. But the outstanding performance of the picture is that of Van Heflin, as the whiskey-soaked "Boswell," who hates himself and his life.

"Skylark"—A-2

Samson Raphaelson's book, "Streamlined Heart," and the play version, "Skylark," told the story of a wife who is neglected for business—but who finally wins her husband back from his advertising accounts. The movie version finishes with this phase of the plot about half way through and then proceeds to have the wife divorce the husband, go off with another man to get married but finds herself still in love with her husband.

This part of the picture is somewhat on the order of another Raphaelson play, "Accent on Youth." We never thought "Skylark" was much of a play—the story was paper-thin and the talk sometimes seemed interminable, although, on occasion, it was witty talk. We don't think it's much of a picture either, even with added slapstick, but it has some amusing moments and is very well acted by Claudette Colbert, Ray Milland, Binnie Barnes and others. Brian Aherne's role suffers from an overdose of whimsy, but he plays it as well as possible. Walter Abel is delightful in a minor comedy bit.

"Confirm or Deny"—A-2

Towards the end of "Confirm or Deny," a bomb, which is believed to be a dud, figures in the action when it is discovered that it is alive. That's the reverse of the picture. It starts out in a lively enough manner, but before it's gone very far it turns into very much of a dud. Interesting scenes in subway air-raid shelters, blackouts and among ruined buildings seem to have an air of authenticity, but they only stress the odor of "phony baloney" that hangs about the melodramatic story.

About This and That

Yes, Miss Landi would love some breakfast before she started out to Pittsford where she was to be the guest of Edward Hungerford. Miss Landi had orange juice and coffee. Mr. Springer had coffee. Mr. Springer picked up the check. A frantic search produced one penny. Miss Landi laughed—and paid. If the mail service is all it should be, the check is now repaid—battered and apologetically.

Despite the fact that it was 7:30 in the morning—hardly the time when a movie actress likes to be up and around—and despite the fact that she had to do a Sadie Hawkins on the breakfast check, Elissa Landi was charming and pleasant. She chatted about the movies which she doesn't miss a bit—gave up voluntarily, in fact. She'll make some more if a role she particularly wants to play comes along. A well-known novelist, she has just written a play in which she wants to appear.

Currently she is very enthusiastic about her lecture tour. It was Mrs. Roosevelt who got her started on that. Incidentally, a national magazine reported this week that Miss Landi is the granddaughter of Empress Elizabeth of Austria. It's a good thing we didn't know that. It's bad enough to invite a glamorous actress and novelist to breakfast—"you pay the check"—but to put the bite on royalty!!!

Other celebrities of the week—Miss Cornelia Otis Skinner, stately and attractive in mink, with whom we drove around town and to whom we delivered Elissa Landi's message that she'd like to repeat an enjoyable luncheon the two actresses had together in the fall.

Bob Wilcox, the movie actor home on vacation and our radio guest last Monday, developing a set of sideburns, in addition to his new mustache, for his role in an old-time comedy ... Dorothy Lafour, whipping in and out of town in a hurry, to sell some defense bonds.

Something pretty special coming up in the theater is the appearance at the Auditorium Monday of Helen Hayes in Maxwell Anderson's new play, "Candle in the Wind." The name, Helen Hayes, always signifies distinguished theater and they say her new play gives her a strong role. Some-

(Continued on Page 20)

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Dress Shop, Forman's Second Floor

Movie Guide

NEW FILMS REVIEWED

Broadway Big Shot, A-1
Cowboy Serenade, A-1
North of the Klondike, A-1
Haystack, A-1
The Remarkable Andrew, A-1
Night in the Heart, A-1
Thunder River Feud, A-1
West of Tombstone, A-1
I Killed That Man, A-2
Jean of Paris, A-2
Niagara Falls, A-2
Woman of the Year, A-2

LOEW'S ROCHESTER

Bugle Sounds, A-1
Dr. Kildare's Victory, A-2

CENTURY

Skylark, A-2
Confirm or Deny, A-2

REGENT

How Green Was My Valley, A-2
Mexican Spitfire at Sea, A-2

TEMPLE

Among the Living, B
Hot Squad, A-1

LITTLE

Kukan (Not classified)

AT THE THEATRES

PALACE

The Man Who Came to Dinner, B
Bombay Clipper, A-1