

COURIER'S CURRENT CINEMA COMMENTS

By JOHN SPRINGER

"Kukan"—A-2
"Inspiring" "Enthralling" "Amazing" Every adjective that has been bestowed on "Kukan" by the New York and Chicago critics is merited. The picture is the camera record, in color, of a long Chinese journey by Rey Scott, the cameraman and foreign correspondent.

Scott and his camera traveled from modern Chinese cities into austere, mysterious Tibet, from the Burma Road, that miracle of engineering feat, to bleak Mongolia. And through the camera's eye, the audience sees what he saw, all the places, the fields, the streams, the roads, the streets and always the people. There are the faces of child warriors and of ancient holy men of woman guerrilla fighters and of tiny almond-eyed children; of the "Shy People," terrified of the camera, and of Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, one of the great women of our time. The camera shows us these faces and thereby shows us the indomitable spirit of China—the China that will never be broken.

Late in the picture comes the destruction of Chungking actual bombing pictures the more terrifying because of the photographed reaction of the people. There is no hysteria there is no screaming and crying. There is only resignation and rebuilding by people too busy to pause to shed tears over catastrophe. The color photography is often crude, faded, out-of-focus taken on the run. Rey Scott is no Gregg Toland with the camera. But his camera has shown us much more than a beautifully photographed travelogue. It has recorded the heroic struggle of a people.

"The Man Who Came to Dinner"—B

Substantially the same as its stage predecessor even to the point of repeating a couple of objectionably off-color scenes and lines from the original "The Man Who Came to Dinner" is a well made screen version of the famous George S. Kaufmann-Moss Hart play. The play was frank takeoff on the great Mr. Alexander Woollcott and on Coward and Harpo Marx were among the others immediately recognizable to the knowing. And of course it is to the knowing that the picture has its greatest appeal. Others, unaware of the real-life prototype, may well find the character of Sheridan Whiteside a trifle fantastic.

Woollcott, it is reported, was a little peeved at first, but after seeing the play became so enchanted with this version of himself that he even took over the role in a stage tour. But the movie version makes use of Monty Woolley, who created the role on Broadway.

The bearded Woolley has been stumbling on the ice and staying to dinner for a couple of years now, but time hasn't dulled the rapier edge of his invective. Those who feared that, because Bette Davis was cast in the secretary role, the play would become a "Bette Davis picture" can put their fears aside. Miss Davis is excellent within the limitations of her role and she never tries to overstep the bounds. Ann Sheridan is the harpist actress and Reginald Gardiner plays the British actor for all it is worth without attempting a Noel Coward impersonation. Jimmy Durante seems miscast in the Harpo Marx part. Richard Travis, the leading man, is a good looking newcomer but he's lost in the more experienced company, which also includes Billie Burke, Grant Mitchell, George Barbier and Mary Wickes, who repeats her stage role of the nurse.

Laura Hope Crews told us this fall that she had played a role that had been written into the movie. Her name is also on the cast sheet, but the role itself has apparently been left on the cutting-room floor.

"Among the Living"—A-2

Although there are sequences in "Among the Living" that are reminiscent of pictures like "M" and "Fury" the director is no Fritz Lang and the unusual sequences are overbalanced by some trite melodramatic stuff which keeps the picture from being more than just a better than average horror yarn. Undoubtedly some of the more lurid sequences have been cut (the Legion of Decency originally ranked the picture as "B" because of "unnecessary gruesome scenes" but later revised the rating to A-2). What remains is good, exciting melodrama, with certain scenes (the pursuit of the café girl by the mad killer; the revelry of the café as seen through the eyes of a drunken madman),

Movie Guide

NEW FILMS REVIEWED

Torpedo Boat, A-1
Billy the Kid Trapped, A-1
Bullets for Bandits, A-1
Frisco Lil, A-1
Mississippi Gambler, A-1
Yank on the Burma Road, A-1
Fly by Night, A-2
Man Who Returned to Life, A-2
Strange Case of Dr. X, A-2
The Lady Has Plans, B

AT THE THEATERS

PALACE
Son of Fury (Not classified)
Gentleman at Heart, A-2

LOEW'S ROCHESTER

Bedtime Story, B
Confessions of Boston Blackie, A-2

CENTURY

All Through the Night, A-2
Four Jacks and a Jill, A-2

TEMPLE

How Green Was My Valley, A-2
North to the Klondike, A-1

REGENT

Man Who Came to Dinner, B
Romney Clipper, A-1

LITTLE

Kukan, A-1

RIVIERA

They Died With Their Boots On, A-1
Sing for Your Supper, A-1

DIXIE

Sundown, A-2
Illac and Shine, A-2

LIBERTY and STATE

Navy Blues, B
Design for Scandal, A-2

MADISON and MONROE

Navy Blues, B
Design for Scandal, A-2

standing out for artistry of direction and camera work. But the story is theatrically tricked out and the acting is no better than adequate.

Albert Dekker plays a dual role twin brothers, one a solid and respected citizen the other a madman, played by Dekker in the "Lennie" manner. Susan Hayward and Harry Carey are present and so is Frances Farmer, wasted in a role much too small. Although "Among the Living" doesn't realize its potentialities, it is a superior thriller.

"The Bugle Sounds"—A-1

In the current cycle of service films "The Bugle Sounds" is a serviceable vehicle for Wallace Beery. The story of a horse-loving old cavalry sergeant who represents the coming of the mechanized cavalry, it gives Beery a chance to do all the things he has been doing for years which is quite enough for the still-enthusiastic Beery fans. Marjorie Main

once more, acts as feminine foil to Beery, while Lewis Stone heads the supporting cast.

"Dr. Kildare's Victory" (A-2), is another of the popular series with one of Hollywood's top directors, Major W. S. Van Dyke, II, taking over the directorial reins in an effort to raise it out of the secondary feature level. He doesn't accomplish that, but he does manage to make the picture one of the better items of the series. Lew Ayres and Lionel Barrymore play in accustomed acceptable style. Robert Sterling continues to show promise and Ann Ayers is a newcomer destined for a buildup as a glamour girl.

(Continued on Page 17)

Urges Catholics To Carry Identification

SEATTLE Attention is called to the advisability of carrying identification as a Catholic in a statement issued by the Chancery Office at the direction of the Most Rev. Gerald Shaughnessy, S.M., Bishop of Seattle.

"Pastors and other preachers," the statement says, "are requested to call to the attention of the faithful from time to time as opportunity suggests, the advisability of always carrying on one's person signs or marks of Catholic identification so that in any emergency, such as sudden seizure away from home, or traffic accident, or air raid, or similar exigency, the ministrations of a priest may be better insured."

'Variety Show' Billed At Aquinas

When the curtain goes up for the first act of the Aquinas Institute "Variety Show" on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 9 and 10, the audience will be able to see a type of show that never before has been put on at Aquinas. Everything from magicians to swordswallows will be billed on the two-hour program.

In a setting of majestic music furnished by the school swing band, the show will feature in its entirety talented students from the school. The entire show was written by two seniors of the school and is under the direction of Father Whelan, Father Murphy, and Mr. Hasenauer.

No two acts will be the same, and so the entire audience will be treated to something new and novel every time the curtain rises. Although the show is to be mainly showing off talented students, mixed throughout the entire program will be many bits of humor.

All students of Aquinas have been invited to come to the "Variety Show" and bring with them their mothers and fathers and friends. If this first "Variety Show" is a hit, then many more will be put on throughout the year.

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"A Catholic newspaper is a perpetual mission in the home"—Leo XIII.

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