

# The Courier Covers THE NEW MOVIES

By John Springer

## "Crossroads"—A-2

William Powell has amnesia again! The last time that happened (in "I Love You Again") his loss of memory was responsible for some hilarious comedy. In "Crossroads," it makes for absorbing melodrama, smoothly acted and directed to build its complicated plot with steady suspense.

The locale is France in 1935 and Powell plays David Talbot, a respected diplomat. Talbot is accused of having been a thief prior to a train accident in which he suffered a fractured skull and amnesia. Not remembering anything about his past, he has a blackmailer arrested and at the trial the blackmailer alleges that Talbot, before the train wreck, was a criminal known by another name. However, a last-minute witness, named Henri Sarrou, proves that the criminal had actually died in Africa and that Talbot can not be anyone else. But after the trial, Sarrou comes to Talbot, says that he perjured himself and that Talbot is actually the criminal. Furthermore, Sarrou claims, he has been not only a thief but a murderer.

You can see the possibilities of the plot and Director Jack Conway, with his able cast, makes the most of all of them. This is Powell's first dramatic role in years but he handles it with finesse. Hedy Lamarr is as beautiful as ever and actually indicates that she is making headway as an actress. She's no competition for Hayes, Cornell or Fontanne, of course, but she is growing easier and less self-conscious before the camera. Claire Trevor and Basil Rathbone are excellent in typical roles. Felix Bressart and Margaret Wycherly have notable bits and Philip Merivale, James Reenie, Vladimir Sokoloff, Frank Conroy, H. B. Warner and Guy Bates Post form an impressive group of supporting players.

## "The Great Man's Lady"—A-2

When "The Great Man's Lady" begins, the citizens of a Western city are gathered to honor the memory of the founder of the city. Taking as part in the celebration is a 100-year-old woman whose life has always been a mystery to the people of the town. They have reason to suspect that she has been very close to the great man—perhaps even married to him—but none of them can persuade her to reveal the truth. Finally, however, she tells her story to a young girl. Unfortunately the question is a great deal more intriguing than the answer. So for the next hour or so, we get a long, tired tale which harks back to "Cimarron" and all of the "Cimarron" carbon-copies that followed.

This gives Miss Barbara Stanwyck a chance to be a coy young Southern coquette, a rugged pioneer woman, a gambling queen and a sweet young thing of seventy or so, before she finally ends up as the old girl who tells the story. Miss Stanwyck is a good actress and therefore seems to enjoy her part as any actress would.

But watching her is the only reason I could give you for seeing "Great Man's Lady." Surely a stiffer, more awkward performance than Joel McCrea's has not been seen for a long time. McCrea is not entirely to blame. It's a thankless role and, although the picture tells us that he is a great man, it's not very explicit about how he got that way. McCrea is frequently reported as refusing this role and that, but he must have been sleeping when this one was passed off on him. Brian Donlevy is a noble gambler with a heart of gold—a sort of good old Charley who hangs around in the background waiting for the lady to have done with her great man.

The picture, jerky and episodic, covers a lot of territory but moves hardly as fast as the hundred-year-old heroine on her way upstairs.

## How Come, Hollywood?

Sara Allgood recently gave an unforgettable performance in "How Green Was My Valley." Since then she has had parts in "Roxie Hart" and "This Above All"—both unimportant bits. Jane Darwell won the Academy Award for her notable work as Ma Joad in "Grapes of Wrath" a year ago. Since then she has been given one stupid minor role after another. The Mimes Allgood and Darwell both appear in "It Happened in Flinhuak"—neither with more than a few minutes on the screen. In "Pacific Rendezvous," you will

catch a few glimpses of Blanche Yurka, the distinguished stage star who came to the screen to give an outstanding performance in "Take of Two Cities." Reward for her excellence has been a succession of weak roles in bad pictures. Judith Anderson, Leslie Robinson, Laura Hope Crews, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Dorothy Connington, Marcia Mae Jones, Janet Beecher, Hattie McDaniel, Butterfly McQueen, Alice MacMahon, Jean Muir, Anne Shirley, Julie Haydon, Dorothy Peterson, Barbara O'Neil and Gale Sondergaard—just to mention a few others who come readily to mind—are others who have similar reasons to be angry with their treatment by Hollywood. And I haven't even attempted to list the men. Hollywood has stopped wanting film. Why doesn't it stop wanting superior acting talent?

## The Man Who Came to Rochester

I had written the preceding note about wasted talent before I talked to Monty Woolley last week. But Woolley had some news that ties up with it. He was telling me about the picture he is to make on his return to Hollywood. It is to be a screen version of the play, "Light of Heart" (on Broadway under the title, "Yesterday's Magic"), with Ida Lupino as leading woman. And Woolley was enthusiastic over the casting of the third principal role. One of the top actresses is playing the part, he said. Her name? Sara Allgood.

As for Mr. Woolley himself—I'm not going to give you that routine about how amiable he is and how surprising that is after "The Man Who Came to Dinner." He is amiable—gracious and very likable, but I shouldn't be surprised that, if the necessity arose, he wouldn't be able to pour a little vinegar into his speech in true Sheridan Whiteside style. He was quite impressed with the wondrous work—of publicity on a world premiere junket. It was his first trip of the nature and the round of affairs had him gasping but game.

The other visiting stars—Anne Baxter and Otto Preminger—also seemed to be having quite a time on their first world premiere trip. Although I met the stars on several occasions during their visit to town, I never did get to talk for very long to Mr. Preminger. Every time we got started on such subjects as Mr. Preminger's next picture ("They've Got Me Covered" with Bob Hope), the play which Preminger is to produce and direct (a drama by Louis Weitzenkorn), or the state of the theater in New York, somebody would come rushing up to get Mr. Preminger's reactions to playing nasty Nazis in all of his pictures and plays. His reactions are favorable—the nastier, the better.

I did get to talk with Miss Anne Baxter for quite awhile however—and that was a very pleasant way to spend the time. Miss Baxter has been playing a number of drab and dirty wenches on the screen, nor is she exactly a glamour girl in "Pied Piper"—just a sincere and charming actress. In person, that's still true—but, in person, her "rags" are very chic and smart. She isn't eager to be a movie glamour girl however. Right now, she's proud of her "Magnificent Ambersons" performance, and well she may be, according to the word I hear. And she's honestly excited over the possibility that she may play the lead in "Song of Bernadette." She's crossing her fingers and tapping on wood every time she mentions that part.

(John Springer reminisces about the starchy screen classic, "Wuthering Heights," on "Your Movie Memory" over WSAX, Monday morning at 10.)



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## 'Prayer' Composed For Catholic Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Catholic editors and publishers who attended the thirty-second annual meeting of the Catholic Press Association of the United States, held here, took back with them to various parts of the United States, copies of a "Prayer for the Catholic Press" composed by the Rt. Rev. Messrs. Peter M. H. Wymolomon of New Orleans, Editor-in-Chief of Catholic Action of the South, who retired as President of the C. P. A. after serving two terms.

The text of the prayer follows: "DEAR Lord, we daily pray, Thy Kingdom come." May we constantly realize that the printed word in advocacy of Thy claims is one of the surest and most dependable harbingers of Thy soul-saving principles and promises.

"MANY souls, adrift on the sea of life, behold not the gleams in Thy Sanctuaries nor the guiding star of Christian truth. They wander without eternal aim or the assurance of a port of safety.

"SWEET Savior, who didst say, 'I came to call not the just but the sinners.' All our souls with the yearning of Thy Sacred Heart. Make us zealously spread through Catholic literature Thy eternal message in homes and circles where love for Thee is neglected or Thy doctrines opposed.

"CONVINCE the leading faithful that they cannot be true and effective champions of Thy cause without being correctly enlightened and properly enthused by constant and intelligent reading. "STRENGTHEN and fructify the efforts of our prelates and priests so as to increase a hundredfold the beneficial effects of the Catholic Press.

"INSPIRE our editors with the encouraging thought of Thy divine trust reposed in them and make them duly aware that unless they are men of prayer and piety, alive and strong with the fine qualities of erudition, prudence and intellectual honesty, their guidance may be in vain or harmful.

"WITH the battle cry of the Crusaders of old, 'God wills it!' let the fulfillment of our daily supplication be hastened to realization by our honest and sincere determination to see a Catholic paper in every home.

"KIND Jesus, we implore Thee to give us the grace to be ever true, earnest and loyal in Thy holy service.

"Holy Mary, Blessed Mother of God, pray for us.

"St. Francis de Sales, patron of the Catholic Press, pray for us.

"St. John Bosco, practical journalist of our own times, pray for us."

What a beautiful holy name is Mary! Mary, our Mother—let us repeat it often.

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