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COURIER'S CURRENT CINEMA COMMENTS

By JOHN SPRINGER

Editor's Note: Listed on Class B, objectionable in part, by the National League of Decency, this week, is "Muggle Street." Objection: "suggestive scenes and remarks."

"Mrs. Miniver"—A-1

When Jan Struther wrote "Mrs. Miniver," she wrote no more than a series of brief, unrelated sketches having to do with the family life of a charming, intelligent and likable middle-class Englishwoman. And the book became a best-seller, simply because Mrs. Miniver herself—as Jan Struther wrote her—was such a very human and real person. No problems of the world were settled by Mrs. Miniver—few of them worried her. Her problems, her worries were the domestic problems and worries of any similar British housewife.

Since the slender Struther volume was published, however, the problems of a British housewife have become very much the problems of the world. And so, for the screen version, screenwriters Arthur Wimperis, George Froeschel, James Hilton and Claudine West, have built a new story around the Miniver family—a story which shows them about their normal pursuits and then showing their life when war comes.

There's a delightfully frivolous beginning in which Mrs. Miniver buys an extravagant new hat and Mr. Miniver buys an extravagant new car. Young Vin comes home from Oxford, sure that he is very wise and very mature. There is talk of war in the air, but nobody worries about it. It doesn't retard the development of Vin's romance with pretty Carol Beldon, granddaughter of the aristocratic grand-dame of the town. The topic of conversation is still the annual flower-show and the impudence of Mr. Ballard, the station master, at daring to enter a rose in competition with Lady Beldon, who has always won the prize for her roses. But then, suddenly, war comes and the life of the town—and of the Minivers—changes. Vin joins the RAF and marries Carol, years before they otherwise would have been married. Mr. Miniver is one of the civilians who aids in the evacuation of Dunkirk. Mrs. Miniver captures an enemy flier. Yet the normal activities—even the flower show—go on in the shadow of battle.

As you see, little of the Struther book remains—but the writers and William Wyler, one of the screen's top directors, have carefully preserved all of the things that made Mrs. Miniver such a delightful person in the book. Like the book, the screenplay is no more than a series of episodes from the life of a family. It is up to Wyler to make them run smoothly—keep the picture from being choppy.

In fact, a very important part of the success was "Mrs. Miniver" is the contribution of Wyler. Wyler's direction is always concerned with the family and with the effect of the war upon them. He never lets his incidents become melodramatic or sensational. He likes Mrs. Miniver and he likes her family and neighbors. His understanding direction sees to it that you like them, too, makes the drama all the more poignant and moving because you feel so very close to the people involved.

The actors also have plenty to say about that. Who could help liking Mrs. Miniver when Greer Garson gives such a warm, resourceful and completely beguiling performance? Walter Pidgeon is very well cast as Mr. Miniver and Teresa Wright lives up to the vast promise she offered in "Little Foxes" with a glowing and sensitive characterization of the young bride. There is something very young and very awkward, but very likable about Richard Ney who has his first important screen role.

(Continued on Page 16)



City Council has to deal on early vote to call the bonded bond, with the vote of 1942-43 and 1943-44. It is in the line of... (Detailed text is illegible)

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