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**COURIER'S CURRENT CINEMA COMMENTS**

By JOHN SPRINGER

(Editor's Note: Listed, this week, as Class B by the National Legion of Decency are the motion pictures "The Hard Way," objection: "Suggestive lines, suicide in plot solution," and "36,000 Horsemen," objection: "Suggestive dance and sequence."

Two of the most likable and least affected stars who have ever appeared in Rochester were in town this week. They were, of course, Irene Dunne and Conrad Nagel—the former being Hollywood's representative in the "Salute to Heroes" activities the latter here for the presentation of "The Moon Is Down" at the Auditorium and also arriving early in order to lend his considerable talents to the bond programs involving Miss Dunne.

I had occasion during their stay to spend quite a bit of time with both of them. They had an exhausting schedule but the only time I saw either of them display a sign of losing their composure was at a war bond rally at one of the defense plants. Nagel and Miss Dunne had both spoken but, despite the public address system, they could not be heard because of the commotion created by the employees. When Lieutenant Bartolomeo Passanante, who lost his leg in action in the Philippines, was presented and proceeded to give the employees a tongue-lashing for their lack of courtesy. The only trouble was that they couldn't hear him. They were all making too much noise themselves.

Then Miss Dunne stepped on a chair, faced the crowd and glared at them for a moment. "You all make me so mad," she blurted out and sat down, blushing and embarrassed at her outburst, but still seething at their rudeness.

Outside of that incident, however, the activities were handled smoothly and successfully. I had several "off-the-record" conversations with the charming Miss Dunne—off the record, because in her position as Treasury Representative, she is unable to discuss anything with the press that will result in personal publicity or publicity for the screen.

I do know that she is very unhappy because she is not to play "Lady in the Dark" on the screen, but her disappointment was somewhat soothed last week when she was signed for one of the year's strongest roles in the screen version of a play soon to be presented at the Auditorium. I suppose it would be violating a confidence to say what the picture will be but I promise you it will be notable.

Nagel, of course, was bound by no such restriction. Playing the strong role of Colonel Lanier in "The Moon Is Down" and what a job he did he was present for the War Bond activities only as a gesture to the people involved in its promotion. Nagel, who was one of the most famous silent screen actors, and the first male star of the talkies, has been deserting the screen for the stage and radio for the last several years. He started a new radio program "Reader's Digest of the Air" last Sunday.

**"The Big Street"—A-2**

One of Damon Runyon's best-known short stories is his Broadway fable about Little Pinka, the bus-boy, and the beautiful and grasping Broadway queen who is crippled and cared for by the Little Pinka. Now, in Runyon's first stint as a screen producer he has taken this story "The Little Pinka," and turned it into a delightfully charming little picture that retains the full Runyon flavor.

"The Big Street"—(for some reason or other the distinctive title of the original was changed) has a great deal of typical Runyon humor. It's a quaint sort of humor—without slapstick or rowdy farce, but somehow always gentle and appealing. It is frankly sentimental, but never approaches the drippy or tear-jerking.

And it has been beautifully acted. Henry Fonda, as the Little Pinka, manages to be believably naive and simple, without ever being just a silly dope. He's at his best throughout. Lucille Ball is excellent in the most difficult role she has had to play—that of the hard-shelled night club queen, out for all she can get, who refuses to drop her pose even when she has become a hopeless cripple. Agnes Moorehead, Ray Collins, Sam Levene, Eugene Pallette and Barton MacLane head the supporting cast.

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