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shaping his destiny remain vague. The great copper interests are out of the picture. All we see is the straw boss, a kindly fellow Cornishman whom the miners instinctively mistrust, then come to like. Jim shows not the least consciousness of the bitter need for unionism. Yet, actually, Cornish miners and Upper Michigan generally have a labor tradition of which they may be proud. If the author—a former Cornish miner, now for many years a university professor—had approached his story in less nostalgic mood, he would have produced a novel of more lasting value. Nevertheless, *The Long Winter Ends* gives a memorable though limited picture of stalwart Jim and his fellow Cornishmen who have done their part in making America. MYRA PAGE.

Brief Review

AMERICA'S LAST KING by Manfred S. Guttmacher.
Chas. Scribner's Sons. \$3.50.

This biography of George III is written by an outstanding psychiatrist. It is fitting that a specialist in mental diseases should attempt to delineate the character of the insane grandson of a neurotic man (George II). Though the work does consider the social and political forces which helped precipitate the king's mental crisis, chief emphasis is laid on the psychogenic aspects of his behavior. It is well that Dr. Guttmacher concentrated upon that field in which he is expert, for when he does plunge into the maelstrom of eighteenth and nineteenth century British politics, the result is not especially illuminating, but is rather shallow and oversimplified. Thus, one finds the observation seriously offered that had the conventional grand tour of England's aristocrats included America as well as Europe in the eighteenth century, there might well have been no Revolution. Moreover, one is asked to believe that "... fanaticism breeds fanaticism, and without it great popular movements are rarely born," a remark that is supposed to help "explain" the course of world history from the American through the French Revolutions. One is reminded of the profound comment of Thaddeus Stevens that, "in the cause of liberty there are no fanatics."

The publisher's blurb asserts that this book is "one of the most significant and illuminating biographies in recent years." Hardly. The medical data offered by Dr. Guttmacher are important for an understanding of George III, yet these will be but a fraction of the material from which the scholar who will write the mad monarch's definitive history will draw his complete portrait.



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HORROR WITH SUBTLETY

Joy Davidman finds "*Ladies in Retirement*" a blood-curdling character study. The extraordinary acting of Ida Lupino. . . . Noel Coward and the apotheosis of piffle.

THIS reviewer loves nothing better than having her blood curdled. A really good vampire will make her wiggle her toes with delight; and *Ladies in Retirement* affected her like a champagne cocktail. The film is not only horrifying, but horrifying with subtlety. It does not need blood or secret passages or monsters. It prickles your skin with little things like a sealed-up bake oven, a lighted candle, a scrap of Gilbert and Sullivan's "Tit-Willow" played on an old piano. Nor is it merely a thriller, for its character study is brilliant, and its story of a desperate young woman protecting her lunatic sisters is sensitive and profoundly tragic.

The situation on which *Ladies in Retirement* is founded might easily have degenerated into melodramatic absurdity. But adroit writing and consummate acting have prevented that. An aging light-of-love, supported by old admirers in a house on the edge of the marshes, allows her young companion to bring the companion's two sisters for a visit. The sisters turn out to be hysterical lunatics, and the visit stretches into weeks, until the old woman, tired beyond endurance, decides to rid herself of all three. At this point the sane sister resorts to a very nasty expedient, and remains in possession of the house until Nemesis, in the person of a criminal lout of a nephew, turns up. The progression by which the film reaches its inevitable end is remorselessly logical, and carefully understated scenes intensify the horror.

The extraordinary acting of Ida Lupino, as the companion, and Louis Hayward, as her nephew, gives the film much of its distinction. Deliberately unglamorous, Miss Lupino creates an effect of pain and despair to which the swaggering coarseness of the man makes an admirable contrast. Mr. Hayward presents a young man very conscious of his charm, and using it to ingratiate himself until he becomes actually revolting. It is a beautiful piece of work. The lunatic sisters are cleverly played by Elsa Lanchester and Edith Barrett, especially the latter; Isobel Elsom is convincing as the old woman. A girl named Evelyn Keyes, of whom we should see more, makes the simpering housemaid come alive.

With all this, it is a pity that *Ladies in Retirement* should be marred by the imbecile presentation of its screen credits. Here is a film directed with subtle economy; not a single camera shot is out of place, not an effect is overstressed. And yet it must begin with three minutes of producers', authors', and actors' names displayed on moldering sign-

boards in a Hollywood marsh. Is this to create atmosphere? If so, it is quite unnecessary; the film itself has atmosphere to spare. Plain black and white print is the cleverest and quickest way of getting screen credits stated, and the film industry should be sufficiently grown up to realize it.

IN EVERY HUMAN BEING there is something of the masochist; else why should I, knowing so well what to expect, deliberately expose myself to *The Chocolate Soldier*? The simplest method of reviewing it would be to reach for a thesaurus and amass a stock of nasty adjectives. Thus: tedious, soporific, abominable, Boeotian, lousy.

But let me state that once George Bernard Shaw wrote a comedy called *Arms and the Man*. Not one of his masterpieces, it was watered down to make an operetta called *The Chocolate Soldier*, by Lehar. This, even in its denatured condition, probably seemed to the producers too much for the acting powers of Nelson Eddy and Rise Stevens; so, retaining the title, they substituted another play—Molnar's *The Guardsman*, which depends entirely on brilliant acting for its effectiveness and of which an older film version already exists. This version had the Lunts and Roland Young; it is more than ten years old, its technique is outmoded, and it remains ninety-nine times more worth seeing than the lavish *Chocolate Soldier* with benefit of Mr. Eddy.

This gentleman's blank blue stare and careful corseting may not make him a chocolate soldier, but they achieve a fairly handsome wooden Indian, and the recording is kind to the tender nasality of his baritone. As for Rise Stevens, she doesn't look bad, if you remember how Jeanette MacDonald used to look. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, as usual, has invested a lot of money and no brains in the production. But why should I go on like this? Tedious; soporific . . . lousy. . . .

WITH *Never Give a Sucker an Even Break*



I was luckier. This film, which we will call *Sucker*, affectionately, from now on, is the first thing out of Hollywood which doesn't make sense—and doesn't pretend to. The deliberate imbecility of its story was devised cunningly by W. C. Fields to display his curious talents and his resplendent nose at their best. *Sucker* deals with Mr. Fields' heroic attempt to sell a script to a movie producer, so that he can support his little niece, Gloria Jean. The action shifts rapidly back and forth from the movie studio to the extremely imaginary world of Mr. Fields' script, and if you can tell fact from fancy you're Superman. To illustrate, in the real world Mr. Fields tries to drink an ice-cream soda; it is only in the imaginary one that he resorts to Scotch.

The movie studio scenes, to this reviewer, seemed a little tame; they fell so far short of some of her recollections. But the unreal world, in which Mrs. Hemoglobin lives on top of a mountain with her pet gorilla, is the place we should send all our appeasers. People fall 10,000 feet out of aeroplanes, without parachutes. People are pushed off 1,000-foot cliffs, with noise of breakage from below. Mrs. Hemoglobin, with a face like an elderly kohl-rabi, walks serenely around her ivory tower—an escapist to end all escapists.

The film has its dull moments; there are times when the camera shifts away from Mr. Fields. He pops up again before it's too late, however, and none of the musical numbers is allowed to keep him from you very long. From irrelevancy to irrelevancy he wobbles, in his inimitable manner, which, if you like that sort of thing, is the sort of thing you like. We did. Not the least successful irrelevancy is the film's title, which refers to nothing at all, unless Mr. Fields was thinking lovingly of his audience.

THE REVOLTING SPECTACLE of Ronald Colman being cute will haunt us the rest of our lives. Anna Lee, in *My Life with Caroline*, has yellow curls, round blue eyes, and idiotic giggles; but Mr. Colman, with nothing but his mustache, can give her lessons in coyness. The story of a husband's maneuvers to keep a wife who is obviously not worth keeping, this film goes so far as to let Ronald pop out from behind a pillar, leer demurely at the audience, and whisper, "Don't worry; I'll explain all this to you later!" Some of the audience didn't wait for the explanation, but passed out right away. We, being a reviewer, were perforce of sterner stuff.

Antics which might be amusing from