

►► The New Movies ◄◄



►► Palmy Days

MASTER EDDIE CANTOR returns to the gags in this one and does so with great success. I cannot tell you whether or not it is as good as "Whoopie," providing "Whoopie" was good, because I did not see it. In fact one of the sights of the city was my staying away from it. Eddie Cantor has always left me colder than a Japanese reception to aerial photographers. But this time, so help me, I found the gentleman funny and his film fine entertainment. Take a look.

I suspect that "Palmy Days" is a triumph of filming over material because it is pretty much the old stuff that has been bandied threadbare by musical comedies. You know how it is. The hero gets into trouble. You can see it coming, and so could he, but nevertheless into it he goes. Then he is wistful and finally vindicated. A heroine and some sap she had thrust at her by the author make feeble goo-goo at each other, and a villain lays villainy about him until he is confounded. Interspersed are songs and sayings. The old formula as grandfather knew it.

Now "Palmy Days" has all the above, and the songs are mediocre and the sayings about what you would expect. The story—don't go, I won't get too detailed about it—tells of Cantor being precipitated into a job as efficiency man for a musical comedy doughnut factory. He makes good and gets in bad, but love and happiness reward him. Numerous girls go through didoes in the rhythms of the dance, and a lot of acting is thrown into the ramifications of the plot.

However, it is good fun, mostly clean. My undercurrent is not a sour one, and perhaps you should pay no attention to the above. With this the movie producers have broken away from the stage manner of presenting song and dance shows that they used so much when talkies first came in. The routines are adapted to the camera with goodish ingenuity and the actions are hither and thither and not

confined to one spot. There is a diffusion of sets that keeps the eye amused. "Palmy Days" has the tempo a film should have.

I don't know where I have been all my life that I did not like Cantor. This picture shows him good natured, ready



Worth Seeing

BAD GIRL: A simple story of a couple's marriage and baby, effective because of its honesty.

MIRACLE WOMAN: Cash and carry evangelism dispensed by sexy Barbara Stanwyck.

THE DREYFUS CASE: Surprisingly dramatic film account of the famous French treason trial. Not to be missed.

STAR WITNESS: An ordinary American family becomes involved in a gang murder. Different.

STREET SCENE: Elmer Rice's stage play brought to the screen with fine effect by King Vidor and Sylvia Sydney. Life in a New York tenement.

TRANSATLANTIC: Cleverly photographed mystery melodrama aboard a big ocean liner.

WOMEN GO ON FOREVER: Clara Kimball Young returns as the referee in a swarming boarding house. Heavily dramatic.

NOT SO GOOD, THE AMERICAN TRAGEDY, and **ALEXANDER HAMILTON** with George Arliss, are interesting, but not up to expectations.



for a tumble, and most pleasant when warbling a song or two. Somewhat whimsical, he wanders through the plot without letting it touch him much, and sends everybody home feeling that he is just what is needed to make a good film better.

My informants, whom you can trust as much as I can, spring the information that music will be revived by the gents in the Hollywood. If you remember, sound came in with a great burst of tinnabulation. No movie complete, so to speak, without at least a theme song. Then came silence from the orchestras as people got tired of musical shows and Sadie Whoosis warbling out of a window for no good reason. "Palmy Days" has shown that musical comedy can be treated correctly in a studio, and signs here and there have shown the immense value of incidental music in non-musical films. The fact that previously when a character kerplunked across a room the sound apparatus made it possible to re-

produce the kerplunking justified doing so, no longer holds. The better produced films will accompany the action with violins, tubas and such, which is as it should be. The painful heavings of a tormented heroine will not embarrass a whole theatre as formerly. They will be timed to coincide with some sad melody.

►► Riders of the Purple Sage

Well, well, the old favorite is back again. You know the story, all Westerns are alike, and this one has been done before. What goes on, and how, makes little difference in these. The men are He, the women are innocence itself, and the villains are tough, so tough. Myself, I never pay any attention to what happens and have a good time watching the scenery and the riding. There is a healthy avalanche tossed into this for good measure.

►► East of Borneo

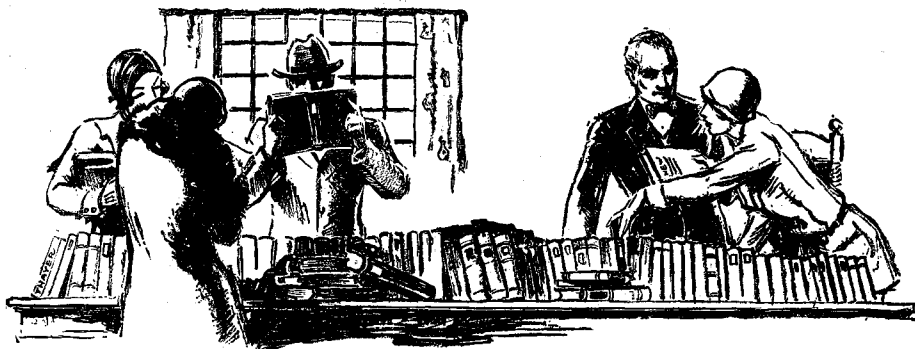
Here is the old Hollywood hokum, the lay-it-on-thick-and-make-em-like-it spirit that used to be rife when you and I were pantalooning into the nickel-odeons. You don't believe it and you never get any farther east of Borneo than Broadway and 44th Street. The whole thing is so obviously and completely faked, and makes no claims otherwise, that you do not worry about it and just take it as is.

The story concerns a lady who went into the jungle, that creeping, crawling jungle of the Hollywood imagination, and mine too, as a matter of fact, to reclaim her husband. This gent, a doctor, has gone drunken in the home of a polished Maharajah or whatever they have in Borneo. When the lady arrives the royal bum gets a feeling for her and causes all kinds of trouble to the couple. In the end a kindly volcano lets go and rescues them while lava flows and cities crumble.

The whole effect is a cross between "Trader Horn" and "The Green Goddess" gone ga-ga. The dialogue is distressing in its simplicity. Animals crawl, creep, fly and leap all over the thing. Death rears its ugly head and cruelty is evident on every reel. It has all the quality of a five- and ten-cent store emerald. Grant all that, then go take it at its face value and you will be diverted in a small way. If the junk is spread smoothly enough I for one don't mind it for a change. Rose Hobart is almost believable as the heroine and Charles Bickford struggles as the hero.

OLIVER CLAXTON.

▷▷ The New Books ◁◁



The Week's Reading

**Benedict Arnold:
Patriot and Traitor**
By Oscar Sherwin
The Century Company, \$4.00

Much harm has come from the unchecked belief that Washington fought the Revolutionary War without a breath of opposition, personal or political, and that Benedict Arnold was never anything but a traitor. This study, while it can hardly lay claim to the originality that derives from unearthing new source material, should do much by way of correcting the above beliefs. Had Arnold died October 7, 1777, there would now be a monument to him on virtually every courthouse square and school children would salute at the mention of his name. For Ticonderoga, Maine, Stanwix and Saratoga were his victories, won by what seems to have been matchless strategy and through the shedding of his own blood. Why then did he become a traitor? This book is dedicated to the memory of his wife, Peggy Shippen Arnold, and everything that can be said in Arnold's favor is said. There is not, however, one page of the 395 that can be set down as "pro-Arnold." The fact is this: There is not a shadow of reason to believe that Arnold would ever have become a traitor had he received the recognition that Washington all along claimed he should have had. But Congress slighted him, Pennsylvania bullied him, the Board of War humiliated him, Gates insulted him, the Colonies even delayed paying him what they actually owed him. And he went over to the other side; and he did so at a time when he badly needed money. In truth he always needed money. So did his wife, of whom Mr. Sherwin has drawn a picture of great charm. We must remember, however, in thinking on this saddest of all stories in American history, that when Benedict Arnold did what he did the lines were not so sharply drawn between the Colonial rebels and the British royalists. Every schoolboy should read the book to the end that he may see the difference between unquestioned greatness and near or would-be greatness. Wash-

ington himself had abundant reason to sulk in his own tent, but Washington knew that comrades don't come rushing up to us with expressions of gratitude when we have led where others only followed. Arnold, expecting this same gratitude and failing to get it, lost first himself and then everything he had once been, and became the only thing that school children know he ever was, a traitor. There are a number of admirable illustrations, a thorough index, a most voluminous bibliography. Though there is negligible evidence that the actual writing of the book was done hastily, it remains, due to its great mass of correlated information, a superior study to the one on the same subject by Jared Sparks, or Charles Todd, or Gamaliel Bradford, or anybody else.

ALLEN W. PORTERFIELD.

Perhaps Women
By Sherwood Anderson
Horace Liveright, \$2.00

"This little book," the author tells us, "is a record of thoughts, of feeling in the presence of something amazing in modern life—the machine." In Carolina cotton mills and in Michigan automobile factories Mr. Anderson saw men subjugated by machinery and rendered impotent by it. The poet in this book marveled more at the beauty and the precision with which the machines did their work than he bewailed the fact that the spirit should have gone out of men in obeisance to the iron masters. This little work is strangely lacking in the poeticized diatribes that poetically minded litterateurs, among others, hurl against the indifferent flanks of that composite thing known as The Machine. To the extent that "Perhaps Women" has a philosophy it is that men should not serve the machine except in such short shifts that it shall not be able to impose its will too harshly on them, rendering them frustrate; and that clause in its philosophy which explains the title may be compressed in the phrase that perhaps women, not having allowed themselves to become spiritually subservient to the machine, as have men, will guide men back to spiritual self-

reliance, the backbone quality of the machineless American pioneer. Man has already drained out of himself all the power he had in the service of the machine. "I think it is time now for women to come into power in the western world, to take over the power, the control of life." Perhaps they already have, he thinks, and men do not know it.

Mr. Anderson does not presume to be an economist and he brushes over lightly the overshadowing fact of unemployment and the related economic facts deriving from the overshadowing fact. His book is a wistful expression of concern over what the machine has done to the souls of men. And in the loose form which the expression of his feeling on this subject has taken, he allows himself a rather acute expression of his own place in American life, an expression which every biographer and commentator will want to quote some time: "As for myself, all of my success as a writer has been in telling the story of failure." Until a true perspective has been gained, we hesitate to add to Mr. Anderson's remark the postscript: perhaps his own.

HARRY SALPETER.

Sister Aimee
By Nancy Barr Mavity
Doubleday, Doran, \$2.50

Some significance probably lies in the fact that between the printing and the release of this book Aimee Elizabeth Kennedy Semple McPherson took unto herself a third husband. From this do not infer that Sister Aimee is the marrying kind. She isn't and never was. An adventurer from the start, she took her first husband—lowly Pentecostal preacher and iron worker that he was—in the hope of going to China—and her second, a grocery salesman, in utter desperation. Until cleared



Fiction Worth Reading

The Corn King and the Spring Queen, by Naomi Mitchison: Harcourt, Brace. A highly readable historical novel which vividly recreates Grecian civilization in the third century B. C.

Pan's Parish, by Louise Redfield Peattie: Century. A charming and exotic tale of the strange happenings in the little Provencal village of Fantosque.

Shadows On the Rock, by Willa Cather: Knopf. A charming, sensitive picture of life in Quebec in the days of Frontenac.

The Story of Julian, by Susan Ertz: Appleton. Young love and its problems in an English village, by the author of *Madame Claire* and *The Galaxy*.

All Passion Spent, by V. Sackville-West: Doubleday, Doran. A witty and lovely fantasy of old age.

NON-FICTION

Coconut Oil, by Corey Ford: Brewer, Warren & Putnam. June Triplett's latest adventures told in the manner of the best known African explorers.

The Tragic Queen, by Andrewakers: Houghton Mifflin. Lovers of English history will enjoy this excellent biography of Mary, Queen of Scots.

Washington Merry-Go-Round, Anonymous: Liveright. Official Washington irreverently and entertainingly exposed. The Congressional Library's present most popular book.

Living Philosophies, A Symposium: Simon & Schuster. The personal credos of some of the world's foremost thinkers.

Will America Become Catholic? by John F. Moore: Harper. The sanest discussion of the actual position of the Catholic Church in the United States which has yet appeared.