

English Pictures Bring Demand for U. S. Historical Films

Colorfulness of Our Early Days Ignored

Colonial and Frontier Eras Rich in Dramatic Episodes, Titanic Men.

By Rosalind Shaffer.

HOLLYWOOD, Cal. — [Special.] — A perfect flood of American-made, English historical and semi-historical pictures, begun with George Arliss' "Disraeli" a couple of years ago and gaining momentum through the passage of time with "House of Rothschild," "British Agent," "Treasure Island," "Vanessa," "Berkeley Square," "Clive of India," "Lives of a Bengal Lancer," "Barretts of Wimpole Street," "Mutiny on the Bounty," "Becky Sharp" from "Vanity Fair," "The Crusades," "Story of Richard the Lion Hearted," and "Neil Gwynne" in the offing, cause one to wonder why a few American historical figures can't make the grade in Hollywood.

Marion Davies, with her highly romanticized "Operator 13," a story of a civil war feminine spy, is one of the few films that has dealt with the vast panorama of American history since King Vidor made "The Great Meadow" several years ago. Intent on remedying this defect, Frank Capra, well known director, is planning "Valley Forge," adapted from Maxwell Anderson's stage play.

American History Fascinates Europeans.

Strangely enough, in every other country our history, with stories of the early frontiers such as those done by James Fenimore Cooper and the later western border tales, is most enthralling. Joe May, German director, says he used to be thrilled to death with Indian stories when a child. Russians learn to read English, wetting their linguistic teeth on similar hearty fare.

Bela Lugosi on the plains of Hungary tried feats of horsemanship inspired by American dime novels and western stories. Early film audiences batted on the old 101 bison thrillers of the great west. Bill Hart made a market for western films that persists to this day in spite of the cheapness of these thrillers. He presented realistic characters and incidents with authentic western flavor.

Colonial history, too, has plenty of historical material. So far the recent stage and screen has chiefly concerned itself with the old fashioned courtship custom of bundling, as in "The Pursuit of Happiness." And Hollywood has entirely ignored historical characters of the size and flavor of Benjamin Franklin, Andrew Jackson, John Paul Jones, Thomas Jefferson, Aaron Burr, and others.

Ronald Colman recently expressed a wish to do a picture concerning an American historical figure, name withheld for business reasons. Whether all this devotion to English history doesn't smack of American self-consciousness is a question.

Rage for Dickens Pictures Now Enormous.

The rage for Dickens' pictures in films is enormous with "David Copperfield" and "Great Expectations" current hits. There is some reason for that. The flavor of current styles in everything from clothes to wallpaper follows a trend to that period,

AN ARRIVAL FROM ENGLAND



A beautiful lady who looks—just a bit—as if she smelled something bad. Merle Oberon is the name, and she recently came to Hollywood from England.

which is picturesque, indeed, and precedes our own rather raucous and overdone "Gay Nineties," making Dickens the perfect author for screen entertainment.

E. V. Lipscomb, English playwright of "Clive of India," says that every one of the Dickens stories has screen value. Dickens was a reporter. He sketched sharply, even with a flavor of caricature when he wrote, but his characters are true to life, and types that persist in all ages and places. Yet, aside from all this, the Dickens rage is still further expression of Hollywood's Anglophile attitude.

The really strange thing about the whole situation locally is that Oklahoma cowboys, like the crooner, Pinkie Tomlin, are being trained in a nice, smooth English accent, while all the English actors in town are trying to denude themselves of any trace of accent. Charles Laughton eradicated the last possible "pip pip" suggestion in his "Ruggles of Red Gap," an American-western comedy role.

Colman Says Ideal English Accent Is None at All.

Ronald Colman says the ideal Eng-

Alas and Alack

To the Dramatic Editor:

CHICAGO, Feb. 19.—What divil's own cloud of weakness has cast its dark and menacing pall over the spirit of our proud and haughty race? Two long, shameful weeks have passed and we haven't heard as much as one wan whisper of patriotic protest in the public press against the gang of travelling trauders of Ireland now in our midst and known as the Abbey Theater.

Al, God be with the valiant days of the past when the saintly, scholarly men and women of the Gael would be raising their voices in burning scorn against the wicked Playboy and the dastardly Paycock! Isn't there a man or woman left outside of myself to take up a pen in the double battle of defending Ireland and thwarting the fell, foul, and insidious malignity of her betrayers? I fear not.

OSCAR MAC HALVEY.

ish accent is no accent at all, like King George's. Betty Fairfax, wife of Keith Kenneth, now playing in "Richard III" with Arliss and herself a well known stage player in England, confided at tea with Lady Hardwicke in her Hollywood apartment the other day that she is trying hard to soften her accent so she can play American characters for films. "I don't sound too fruff-fruff, I hope, do I?" she inquired of her American guests.

Incidentally, Lady Hardwicke is of the English stage herself and the wife of Sir Cecil Hardwicke, England's foremost knight of the theater, here playing in films. Also incidentally, local Britishers feel that all the talk of George Arliss' possible knighting by the king, which had got in print, is most unfortunate and likely to spoil his chances for such honor. A local magazine editor told of receiving an official communication from Buckingham palace after her magazine had printed such a rumor story last year, stating that such things were not for discussion in print before the award was made.

Betty Furness, who spends her working hours out at M. G. M., has a few rules for living in the super-heated glass house that is Hollywood and remaining as normal as possible. Here they are:

Betty Furness Tells Hollywood How to Stay Sane and Happy.

First, don't make friends with people not connected with the picture business, because you are likely to go insane trying to explain to them why you don't see them for weeks and why you are always breaking engagements.

Second, don't try to be seen at the best places for the sake of appearances. Also, don't make a practice of going out with actors for the sole purpose of getting your name and picture in the paper.

Third, visit your home town at least once a year in order to remem-

ber that Hollywood isn't the world.

Fourth, take your work seriously but don't get ardy. Don't let one adverse criticism in print get you down. Don't dramatize every moment of your life.

About marriage, she says, "Don't make a rule about marriage—just wait till the right man comes along."

Cora Sue Collins, on roller skates, came into our neighborhood market with her mother one bright morning this week. She had a tame parakeet which she carried on two sticks, having the bird climb continually from one stick to the other to keep it interested and not in the mood to fly off. Quite an animal trainer, that kid.

Rita Cansino, 15 year old Spanish dancer whom you will see in Darric's "Inferno," is the only long haired brunette in films that we can think of at the moment. She is a daughter of Eduardo Cansino, who danced as her partner at Agua Caliente, from where Fox brought her to Hollywood under contract.

Cansino is from an old Spanish family of dancers famous for generations. He is the author of the most exhaustive book on the dancing of Spain. Cansino was enough of a showman to know his lovely daughter would make little impression in casting offices and sought the showcase of Caliente to display her to producers. It worked, for the girl received offers from almost every studio during her engagement at the Casino. Rita is the daughter of Olga Hawthorth, Irish, and grand-daughter of Peggy O'Hare, thus representing a Spanish-Irish blend, one considered highly fortunate for beauty and talent and one with plenty of historic precedent. Cansino pere is now dance assistant to Jack Donahue at Fox's.

Spencer Tracy has been wondering whether he was a race horse owner or not, but it's finally been settled for him. Tracy has quite a stable of polo ponies, and his trainer is Jim Tully's older brother, a grizzled Irishman who loves horses. Among them is a recent acquisition named and renamed "Troubadour," "Cold Cuts" and "Wait for Me," formerly the property of Jack Holt, who used him as a mount for the referee in polo games. He was too fast for that and Tracy bought him. Tully felt sure he was race horse material. Tracy finally found out when he went to register the horse with Chris Fitzgerald at Santa Anita track, presiding steward. "This track closes at 6 o'clock. That ain't long enough for your horse to get around me," said Christopher unsympathetically.

Jack Donahue has been seen out with the fascinating Regina Roma, Polish actress. She was recently detained at Ellis Island but released when she proved her "unique and unusual ability as an actress" to the immigration authorities. Donahue is dance director at the Fox studio where the lovely Pola is now working.

Storms Rage, Ghosts Stalk in 'Hellodoro'

Critic Here Reveals Director's Trick Device for Torrents of Rain.

"HELLDORADO." Produced by Fox. Directed by James Cruze. Presented at the State-Lake theater.

THE CAST. Art Ryan.....Richard Arlen Glenda Wynant.....Madge Evans J. F. Van Avery.....Ralph Bellamy Sam Barnes.....James Gleason Abner Meadows.....Henry B. Walthall Miss Fife.....Helen Jerome Eddy Mae.....Gertrude Short Flo.....Patricia Farr Truck Driver.....Stanley Fields Sam Ed.....Lucky Harlic Ulysses.....Stepin Fetchit

By Mae Tinee.

GOOD Morning! Ever encounter a cloud-burst? Ever been in a ghost town? Then, my children, you ain't been and you ain't seen NOTHIN' yet! And "Hellodoro" has new and exciting adventure to offer you.

"How on EARTH"—you'll say—"DID they ever get those storm scenes?"

They made them right on the studio grounds, if you must know, and the effects were acquired by a system of rain pipes constructed overhead. As a rule I don't believe in giving production secrets away, but as the flood sequences are too realistic to BE true—for it frus, cameraman and players would have been swept away making them—I knew you'd be writing in making frenzied inquiry—so I'll just be obliging and put you wise right at the start. The fact that the scenes SEEM so genuine is a feather in the director's cap, I'm thinking.

Marooned in Weird Village Inhabited by One Lunatic.

The story is concerned with a mixed group who, caught by the storm, find themselves marooned in a deserted mining town.

The only resident of this weird village with its cobwebbed, chill houses and creaking gates and shutters is a gentle, white haired lunatic who lives in the past and sees about him friends and acquaintances of other days. Poor darling—such a sad game of make-believe as he plays! The heroine is a spoiled but innately warm-hearted and fine rib girl. She's engaged to a wealthy fellow, also of the party. Ere the story ends she finds her interest absorbed by that young soldier of fortune whom she—and all the rest of the crowd, for that matter—have accorded the curtest of treatment.

Gold Rush Adds Merriment to Suspense.

Hellodoro had been Ryan's goal, because he has reason to believe that it holds a rich gold mine, discovered by his defunct grandfather in days gone by. [Before his grandfather WAS defunct.] This, he knows, would be rightfully his, could he only find it. Old Meadows proves to have been that grandfather's partner.

A gold rush provides considerable merriment and excitement toward the end. "Hellodoro" really packs a lot of suspense. Its players are all of

HERO AND SIREN IN "ROBERTA"

Odette Myrtil and Raymond Middleton are behaving romantically in this episode from "Roberta," the musical comedy now at the Erlanger theater.



Odette Myrtil and Raymond Middleton are behaving romantically in this episode from "Roberta," the musical comedy now at the Erlanger theater. She plays a Parisian siren, he an American football hero who inherits a dressmaking shop on the Rue de la Paix. [White Photo.]

the first water. It's actionful, often pleasantly unexpected as to incident—and not too long.

Bits&BOUtem.

BING CROSBY, busy crooning a number for Paramount's "Mississippi," had to stop long enough the other day to answer a cable from London and deny that he is dying from cancer of the throat. "The rumor is general over England," the British paper wired. . . . It took CHARLES LAUGHTON five months to memorize Lincoln's Gettysburg address, which he recites with great dramatic effect during a scene in "Ruggles of Red Gap." Mr. Laughton said that such long study was necessary really to understand the address. . . . KEN MAYNARD, western star, and his beautifully trained horse, Tarzan, have been given contracts with Columbia.

During the filming of "Roberta," IRENE DUNNE was nicknamed "Princess." In the picture the star plays an exiled Russian princess, and one day when she appeared on the set wearing a gorgeous white evening gown, a sable trimmed cape, and a diamond tiara, she looked so much like a real princess that the whole company started calling her "Princess"—and the name has stuck. . . . It has been predicted that KATHARINE HEPBURN will

be acclaimed as the best dressed woman in pictures because of the smart modern clothes she will wear in her next film, "Break of Hearts." . . . "Love Song" is the title given to LILY PONS' first picture under her contract with RKO-Radio. She will start work on the film early in the summer. See you tomorrow.

'THE BAND PLAYS ON'

These likely looking youngsters, Betty Furness and Robert Young, are appearing in "The Band Plays On." At the Oriental theater.

IN COMIC OPERAS FROM LONDON

Kathleen Frances is one of the principal singers in the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company of London, which will come to the Erlanger theater March 4 in a repertory of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. This picture shows her in costume for the role of Mabel in "Pirates of Penzance." [De Bellis Photo.]

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