

SPEAKING CANDIDLY

THE MAJOR AND THE MINOR

(Paramount)



WE have in our time seen some pretty queer goings-on at American universities, co-educational colleges, borstals, and similar institutions for the upbringing of youth; that is to say, in Hollywood's idea of such places. But we have never before seen anything quite like what happens when Ginger Rogers, supposedly aged 12, is unleashed among the 300 cub-cadets of the Wallace Military Academy. It happens in *The Major and the Minor*, Ray Milland being supposedly the Major, who has part charge of the 300 young military gentlemen of Wallace, and Miss Rogers being, by a much greater stretch of the imagination, supposedly the minor who falls into Major Milland's avuncular care but comes of age, of course, in time to marry him.

Miss Rogers, you see, is really 22 years old, and when the picture opens

has just spent a discouraging year in New York trying to retain both her virtue and her independence. That fumbling philanderer, Robert Benchley, is the last straw; she decides to give up the unequal struggle and go home to Mother in Iowa. But how can a girl without enough money in her purse for a full fare get home to Mother? One could think of various suggestions, but the one which occurs to the author of this story is that she should pose as a child and travel half-fare. Now I doubt if even such an accomplished actress as Ginger Rogers could get away with such a masquerade in real life; but on the screen anything is possible; and she does get away with it—at least sufficiently for her to be taken under the avuncular wing of the Major and spend a wholly innocent night in the lower berth of his sleeping compartment. Still, that takes a bit of explaining to the Major's fiancée, and to his Colonel (who is his father-in-law to be), and to the rest of the staff of Wallace Military Academy. So the masquerade has to continue, and the lanky 12-year-old has to

be produced as evidence of the Major's innocence. She stays at the academy three days, and thus do we arrive at those queer goings-on already referred to.

From evidence presented on countless other occasions, regular picturegoers will already have formed the opinion that adolescence comes early in America; but it would seem to come earliest to Wallace, where the embryo soldiers, not long out of their cradles, harbour the most precocious yearnings beneath their natty uniforms and bright buttons; yearnings in no way connected with their training as officers and gentlemen. However, having set the campus alight and broken up Major Milland's engagement, and her own heart into the bargain, Miss Rogers eventually succeeds in resuming her rightful age and in getting home to Mother, whither the Major inevitably follows her for a wholly unavuncular fade-out kiss.

Provided you can accept the basic improbability and don't look on it as merely silly, you should find as much to amuse you in *The Major and the Minor* as I did. You may, indeed, find even more. Ginger Rogers, complete with pigtails, baby socks, and a modified form of baby-talk, sustains the illusion remarkably well, considering the

(continued on next page)

May Belle
LINGERIE



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