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his identity can easily be discovered. And it is convenient for the romantic interest when the Governor of the Indies brings his beautiful daughter (Barbara Britton) aboard Kidd's ship and is promptly murdered, leaving the maid alone among the cut-throat crew, with no one to protect her but the daring spy (Randolph Scott). They start calling one another by their first names at their second meeting, and one scene later are embracing; but after all, there's nothing like danger to bring people together.

It is probable that Laughton had quite an amusing time playing Captain Kidd; he certainly gives that impression, as he pulls some of the tricks of Captain Bligh out of his locker, and even some touches reminiscent of his Henry VIII. But it would, I think, have been better for the film if an actor of less reputation had been the star: we might then have had a more straightforward adventure yarn and not so much kidding.

THE HOODLUM SAINT

(M-G-M)



AN overseas critic described this as a "queer, tasteless mixture of finance, romance, and religion." I partly disagree. *The Hoodlum Saint* is not tasteless:

on the contrary, it has a very strong taste, even (I think this is not going too far) a rankly offensive one. In the words of one of the characters, it is "sorta risky foolin' around with religion" at any time; with luck and some sincerity the cinema may get away with it in a *Bernadette* or even a *Going My Way*; but when a producer shows such rotten bad judgment as is exhibited here, I find it hard to express my disapproval strongly enough. And my dislike is not dependent on any sectarian issue. Quite apart from anything else, this is a dreary, badly-acted, and ineptly-directed picture.

So far as one can make out, the story is intended to be an indictment of those people who exploit simple religious faith for the sake of financial gain (well, if it comes to that, what were the producers doing in this very picture?) William Powell is seen—most regrettably, for he was once a good actor—in the role of a journalist turned financier who, finding himself embarrassed by some socially-inferior friends, tricks the simple fellows into believing in a miracle and thus starts the cult of St. Dismas, the Penitent Thief. Conversion goes on apace; many of the tough guys of the neighbourhood turn over a new leaf and contribute their dollars to the St. Dismas Fund. However, the hero remains a cynic until he discovers that some people as unregenerate as himself are transforming the cult he has founded into a racket. Thereupon he is stricken with remorse and goes down on his knees to the Saint, his change of heart being immediately rewarded by a turn for the better in his financial affairs and the reappearance of his lady-love. Well, well, so it's as easy as that!

Everything about this film is ill-considered. Esther Williams, the heroine, is a swimming champion who looks her best in a bathing-suit, but who is here given the chance to do nothing but act, which she doesn't do very well. The "other woman" is Angela Lansbury, about whom I feel it would be generous to say nothing.

—G.M.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

H. E. Iggo (Christchurch): The only answer to you and several others who have from time to time raised the same point is that only a full-time critic could write about as many films as you would like, and no New Zealand journal employs one. But even the best full-time critics overseas usually devote most of their space to what you would regard as "wastefully long screeds" about one or two films only, and not necessarily "good" films, either.—G.M.

Film Fan (Greymouth): There were not enough clues provided for us to track down the lady.

INFORMATION WANTED

A correspondent from Southland wants to know the name of a melody which has been haunting him—the pianoforte composition played by Elizabeth's "ghost" in the film *A Place of One's Own*. Can any reader help us to lay this ghost?

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