

## SMALLWOOD'S

### PIANOFORTE TUTOR

The World's Best Tutor

Price 3/6 per Copy

### ALL MUSIC SELLERS

Or Direct from the Publishers,  
J. ALBERT & SON PTY. LTD.  
2-4 Willis Street, Wellington

### POPULAR NOVELS

J. B. PRIESTLEY, Bright Day 10/9  
A. J. CRONIN, The Green Years 12/9  
N. COLLINS, London Belongs To Me 16/9  
X. HERBERT, Capricornia 9/6  
A. MALTZ, Cross and Arrow 9/9  
G. WESCOTT, Pilgrim Hawk 5/9

### ROY PARSONS

BOOKSELLER  
288 Lambton Quay, Wellington.

# SISTER-

*Will you help again?*



Your Skill and Experience are vitally needed to fill the gaps in our nursing ranks.

We know that you probably need a well-earned rest ... that you have given up nursing as a profession ... but ... think of that fund of knowledge, skill, experience, which you hold in your hands, and which is so desperately needed now.

Will you not come back into the nursing profession and give your valuable experience for even temporary duty? Unskilled nursing can never take the place of your experience. You are needed urgently.



**For the sake of the sick and suffering will you give a few hours daily or weekly to help relieve this national emergency?**

CONTACT THE MATRON AT YOUR NEAREST HOSPITAL

### Film Reviews by G.M.

## SPEAKING CANDIDLY

### SMITHY

(Columbia-Australian)



IT was to be expected that somebody would some day film the life of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, for he is good material for a screen biography. And it is in some ways gratifying that the first feature-length production to have come out of Australia for several years should deal with such typically Australian subject-matter as this. At least we in this part of the world cannot now complain that the barbarians of Hollywood have laid impious hands on one of our few national idols. I say "we" because in this context Australians and New Zealanders can be read as one people, sharing the same proprietary pride in Smithy and his exploits—exploits which are still fairly fresh in the memory of a good many of us. I can myself recall the excitement with which, as a young reporter on a Christchurch newspaper, I undertook an assignment to go out to the home of one of the few real radio "experts" of those days and listen in on a crackling static-ridden set for news of the Southern Cross on its historic trans-Tasman flight. In fact, one of the most curious oversights in the film is that it makes absolutely no attempt to exploit, as it might quite legitimately have done, the very special interest of New Zealand audiences in this aspect of Smithy's career. The first air-crossing of the Tasman is dismissed in one casual line of dialogue. And yet the historic significance of that feat was brought forcibly home to us by a National Film Unit item on the same programme, showing a trans-Tasman air stewardess at work on the journey that Kingsford Smith had pioneered so dangerously such a comparatively short time before.

WHAT is really disappointing about the film, however, is that, although the material is native Australian, it has not been treated in an Australian manner. Or rather, it might be more correct to say that the style of treatment is pure Hollywood. Perhaps there has not yet been time to get the hero of this story into true perspective; perhaps it was inevitable therefore that an Australian production company should approach him from a position just this side of idolatry, with bated breath and having put the shoes from off their feet. Yet while it was probably too much to expect on this occasion that vigorous, independent attitude which is commonly regarded as an Australian characteristic, and while I am also not for one moment suggesting that they should have gone to the other extreme of "debunking" the subject (the film has some shrewd thrusts at the mean-spirited belittlers of Smithy), I do feel that a much better job would have been made of the story if there had been a less fervent air of hero-worship; if it had been tackled in a more detached and unemotional manner, along the lines of the British documentary rather than of the Hollywood "epic."

Unfortunately, however, the producer of this Australian film is completely in thrall to Hollywood. All the familiar clichés and conventions are there; the approach is wholly sentimental. This is possibly most noticeable in the dialogue. The characters do not talk in the way that people really talk: they talk in the way they are supposed to talk—in the flowery phrases which Hollywood script-writers would like us to believe constitute normal conversation. Smithy himself, for instance, is referred to as "one of the pioneers who stride across lonely skies." And this flavour of false romanticism is carried through into many of the situations and into the acting. One notices it especially in Ron Randall's over-glamorous portrayal of Smithy himself. When he first sees the Southern Cross being wheeled from the hangar, a yearning look comes into his face, a holy light fills his eyes, he murmurs "She's beautiful," and a heavenly orchestra strikes up. It is all very solemn—and more than a little ludicrous.

The heavenly orchestra, indeed, works overtime throughout the picture, and notably in the finale when Smithy flies into the celestial distances followed by cohorts of ghostly planes. Perhaps some such ending was inevitable to such a story; but I cannot remove from my mind the idea that this scene, like many others, was included mainly because the producer had seen it done that way dozens of times before by Hollywood.

I STRESS this aspect of *Smithy* not in order to obscure the strata of solid worth which exists in the film—it has several exciting scenes, some good acting, and considerable technical ingenuity—but because I feel very strongly that if Australian productions are to make their own mark in the cinema, Australian producers will need to forget a good deal of what they have learnt from Hollywood.

It may seem a little unreasonable to expect it in a film wholly about the conquest of the air, but a more down-to-earth attitude would have made all the difference to *Smithy*.

### THE DARK CORNER

(20th Century-Fox)



SURELY it is time that some of the psychiatrists who are being kept so busy by the film-producers these days turned around and had a good look at some of the film-producers themselves, to discover just what complex or neurosis it is that makes them turn out so many films with the emphasis on sadism and violence. I have just been reading George Orwell's essay on "Raffles and Miss Blandish," in which he discusses the unhealthy and socially dangerous trend of much current literature towards the worship of "power" and the glorification of individual ruthlessness. It seems to me that an equally good subject for an essay could be found in a similar trend which is

(continued on next page)