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religious duties as of his social ones (though we never see him at them), but nobody is likely to be taken in by the explanation that his foreign accent is due to his having been "educated abroad." And one may equally question, on practical grounds, the generous gesture whereby Mr. Nicholls secretly purchases one of Branwell's paintings, paying a high enough price to enable Emily and Charlotte to go to a finishing-school in Brussels.

REGARDED purely as entertainment, which is clearly how its producers would like us to regard it, *Devotion* scores not much higher than as education. Admittedly, the settings are alternately pretty and pretentious, and the dialogue is quite high-sounding (even including, unless my ears deceived me, such quaint Victorian expressions as "pansy," "eyewash," and "do his stuff"). A few of the characters acquire a certain validity through good acting. Arthur Kennedy's performance as Branwell I have already mentioned; and in addition there are Ida Lupino, who is such a good actress that she makes Emily quite a vital person in spite of the script, and Sidney Greenstreet who contributes a robust sketch of Thackeray to the picture.

In fact, what with the Brontës, Thackeray, a chance meeting with Dickens, and a visit to the "Cheshire Cheese," it is all very cosy in a literary way, enabling us to rub shoulders casually with the great; but while it may be true, as the foreword states, that the Brontë sisters "lived a story as rare and remarkable as any they dreamed," I doubt if "rare and remarkable" are the proper adjectives to apply to this film—except, of course, in an ironical sense.

TO EACH HIS OWN

(Paramount)



THIS also stars Miss de Havilland, whom I gladly confess I always find pleasant to look at, however nonsensical the role she is playing. And if it comes to that, I must admit I prefer the Victorian fatuities and pretty period costumes and settings of a film like *Devotion* to the mournful modern-style melodrama of a picture such as this. However, it is really only the setting that is the least bit modern about *To Each His Own*, the theme of which belongs unblushingly to the *East Lynne*. "And-he-never-called-me-mother" school of playwrighting. As it happens, the illegitimate son of Miss Joady (or is it Judy?) Norris does call her mother, right at the end, thereby soaking, I imagine, the last dry corner of the last handkerchief in the theatre. But this happy outcome is not reached until Miss de Havilland has proved, to the satisfaction of the Johnston Office and possibly of a major portion of the audience, that the wages of three hours' sin with an airman in the First World War amount to 11,112 feet of tear-sodden suffering. On this point the picture is quite explicit: "You sinned; you must pay for it all the rest of your life," says Miss Norris's father on hearing the scandalous news. Thereafter Miss Norris pays and pays and pays. Her scheme to adopt the baby goes awry; her attempts to win his affection and assert her position as mother recoil on her own head; she sublimates her maternal instincts by becoming a highly successful businesswoman, but her triumph is a hollow one. Until

the last scene—a wedding ceremony in the private chapel of a London restaurant during the Blitz, arranged through the good offices and influential connections of Lord Dashem—her only crumbs of comfort are derived from contemplating an album of baby-photographs and her attempts to engineer "chance" encounters with her son. "I know this is foolish of me," she admits, "but it does keep me alive." In my opinion, this is more than can be said of the film.

Apart from its effect on the tear-ducts (and probably the box-office) the major achievement of *To Each His Own* is that for the greater part of its length it presents Miss de Havilland not as her comely young self, but in the fairly convincing make-up of a handsome middle-aged woman.

To the Editor—

"The Postman Always Rings Twice"

Sir,—I find that very often G.M. and I have vastly differing opinions, particularly from the angle from which G.M. makes his comments.

For instance in a recent review of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, three-quarters of G.M.'s criticism discusses the impossibility of screening the story from the novel, as such. Does any movie script-writer attempt to do that? Isn't it claimed by M-G-M that the movie story was based on the novel rather than that it was turned directly into dialogue, and screened page by page? Usually it is only the general theme of the story from a book which is used to make a film. The movie company who made the film do not claim any more, particularly if the posters advertising the film are read more carefully than perhaps just looking at a cover of a book shown at one corner of the advertisement.

The criticism then suggests that the film is not immoral enough by stating that "the film lacks the crude honesty of the original." Then is the critic suggesting that movies should be immoral? Perhaps that is being hard on G.M., but whichever way one looks at that statement it does not do anything towards constructive criticism.

In saying that "fortunately it is a very short novel, a virtue which the screen version did not possess" is G.M. suggesting that the film is overlong either in length in fact or that the movie is drawn out to appear long? If it is length in fact then *The Postman* is just an average length film. If the latter, then to me, the film did not appear overlong as it had plenty of action and the story moved right to the end.

Actually I considered the film fast moving, possessing a well-told story which certainly did not leave me bored or slumped in my theatre seat as it did G.M.'s little man.

As I seem to have taken a view opposite to G.M. I will sign myself M.G. (Wellington.)

(G.M. replies: "Only one of the correspondent's points requires comment. I was not suggesting that the film was not immoral enough. I was stating, not suggesting, that the story should not have been filmed at all, because it belongs to that class of literary material which, by its nature, cannot be put honestly on the screen. So instead there are unhealthy evasions; an attempt is made to maintain a balance between what is profitable (according to the box-office) and what is permissible (according to the standards of screen censorship). If there is any 'immorality,' this is where it is to be found.")

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