

amount of mild sadism in *The Assassin* (blood is always bloodier in full colour), but I have no objection to that. It has no ill effects that I know of on children, and I should class this as a film for children—and for those who do not disdain to become as children once in a while.

(Paramount)

**P**ARAMOUNT has thrown everything but the kitchen sink into this show, and since one swimming-pool and several thousand additional gallons of water were already provided for in the script the sink was probably not necessary. But I regretted its absence. It would have added a homely touch to a picture which is notable mainly for high-pressure whimsy.

On the ground that it's good publicity to lay all your eggs in the one basket, so long as you don't leave them there until they hatch, the studio's entire clutch has been thrown in to make a Hollywood holiday. In addition to first-grade eggs like Hope and Crosby there are a good many indifferently preserved ones. But as a variety show—and it makes no pretension to be other than that—the picture has its bright patches. The two principals behave *vis-a-vis* as they are expected to behave, for those who crave escape to Bedlam there is a Spike Jones item which looks as phrenetic as it sounds, and I enjoyed a sequence showing how the soundtrack is added to a cartoon—or how Paramount would like us to think it is added by the amiable zanies they employ as

## "THE LISTENER" CROSSWORD

(Solution to No. 376)



### Clues Across

3. Composer of "Dream of Gerontius."
8. Rules of sentence construction.
9. Obscure.
10. "The Roof of the World."
11. "—, unfriended, melancholy, slow."  
("The Traveller," by Oliver Goldsmith).
14. Synonym of an anagram of 17 across.
15. Temper.
16. Deprived.
17. Volcano in Sicily.
21. "Our — on the earth are as a shadow."  
(First Chronicles, 29).
25. Predicament mainly frivolous.
26. The rat may become a menace if disturbed.
27. Irritating insect concealed in a leaf.
28. List of turns of duty.
31. Instrument found in Apia now.
33. Responses.
34. I'm dead! (anag.)
35. Dirge.

sound-effects men. But the opening scenes of the film, which are given over to unctuously virtuous self-advertisement would have been better left out. Their connection with the story is as tenuous as the story itself.

## THE WRONG NIGHT

To the Editor—

Sir,—I know well that a critic who must judge every year more than a million feet of predominantly poor film cannot avoid succumbing occasionally to the boredom and irritation of it all. It is doubtful whether any critic can survey his reviews at the end of year and be sure that he has not assessed at least one film too harshly or too lightly. Film critics' lapses, however, take two forms, one unimportant and the other quite serious. It does not matter much if a mediocre film is over-praised but it is unfortunate if a good film, a very good film, is damned. As a respecter of Jno.'s judgment and an admirer of his style, may I protest that his assessment of *The Long Night* is erroneous. Far from being "confused," "indecisive" and "invidious," it is clear, direct, poetic and inspired. Although a nincompoop at following most Hollywood murder plots, I found this one refreshingly simple. The film's only real fault is a tendency to sag around the middle—but this is not commercial paunchiness, merely a minor accident of construction: a period of dialogue without action occurs between long sequences of dramatic (or would Jno. say "melodramatic") activity. For its originality, for its poetry, for its extraordinary direction, dialogue and acting, *The Long Night* deserves praise. I fear that a film of unflinching good taste and considerable distinction has been unduly condemned.

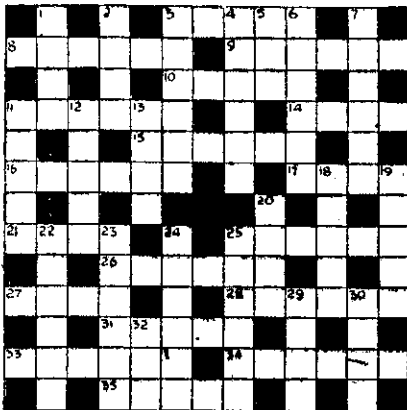
Another line if I may, to praise Jno.'s review of *The Man Within*, a much misjudged and misunderstood film.

ROBERT ALLENDER (Auckland).  
(Jno. replies: "In effect, Mr. Allender offers an amendment which is the direct negative of the motion, and it could not be effectively debated on the same evening. So far as the *Long Night* is concerned, he has invested the film with a sensitivity and beauty which, I think, existed only in his own mind. It is not an original work, and to call the direction extraordinary puts it midivv.")

### Clues Down

1. "Hands that the rod of empire might  
have swayed,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living —"  
(Gray's 35 across).
2. King of Greece from 1833 to 1862.
3. Scope. 4. Lump of meat. 5. Mimic.
6. Cause of the battle between Tweedle-  
dum and Tweedledies.
7. "It is too rash, too unadvise'd, too —"  
(*"Romeo and Juliet,"* Act II., Sc. 2).
11. Braid (anag.)
12. "I am never — when I hear sweet music."  
(*"Merchant of Venice,"* Act 5, Sc. 1).
13. He came between Theodore Roosevelt and  
Woodrow Wilson.
18. Compact. 19. In motion.
20. Between tenor and treble.
22. Self possession. 23. Plates (anag.).
24. Wrinkle. 25. Travesty.
29. "Sweet — of Avon." (Ben Jonson, re-  
ferring to Shakespeare).
30. "—, look your last." (*"Romeo and  
Juliet,"* Act V., Sc. 3).
32. Three-quarters of a gill.

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