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Film Reviews, by Jno.

CORN IN CAMELOT

A YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

(Paramount)

IN a dull period of film-going it is fatally easy for the reviewer to feel thankful for small mercies. Having written that, I feel that I can proceed with an easier conscience to the admission that there were parts of Mr. Crosby's latest picture which I quite enjoyed, though for most of the time the intellectual ceiling was about zero. Such enjoyment as I got, indeed, came simply from concentrating on the funny bits, and studiously withdrawing my attention when the fatuity of the whole became too depressingly apparent.

There is, of course, no serious attempt to translate Mark Twain to the screen. Oz has conquered Lyonesse, and though Mr. Crosby goes through some of the motions (he lassos Sir Lancelot—but not so deftly as the late Will Rogers would have done), he really appears *in propria persona*, with Sir Boss and Hank Martin as convenient aliases.

However, unless one is suffering from toothache or migraine, it is impossible not to be amused some of the time by William Bendix, who clowns his way through the story as Sir Sagamore the Desirous (one of the dimmer lights of the Round Table), and by Sir Cedric Hardwicke as a rather querulous and crotchety King Arthur. It was a shock to encounter the latter up to his whiskers in farce so soon after seeing him as Mr. Winslow, but I could not help noticing the professional attention to minor details of gesture, movement and intonation which even a low comedy part exacted from him.

Mr. Crosby sings as pleasantly as ever, but (with one exception) the songs are not particularly catchy. The exception is a cheery little three-part chorus, "We're Busy Doing Nothing," sung by Crosby, Hardwicke and Bendix, which reminds one of the brisk

BAROMETER

MAINLY FAIR: "A Yankee in King Arthur's Court."

DULL: "They Passed This Way."

hop-skip-and-jump rhythm of "The Wizard of Oz." We will all, I feel sure, hear more of it.

But the amusing parts were just the odds and ends—King Arthur's cold in the head, Sir Sagamore's greaves (which needed oiling) and his speech to the Round Table, the safety-pin which Hank painfully forged for the Lady Alisande. Viewed as a whole the film had barely enough wit to keep it sweet. Not that I have any sentimental objection to a comic King Arthur, or a pompous Sir Lancelot, or a self-satisfied Sir Galahad. If they were men, they may have been all those things. But if we are to have a comic interpretation of the Round Table, or the Arthurian legend, let's have a good one. Why doesn't some British producer discover, say, T. H. White's *The Sword in the Stone*? On his current showing I rather fancy Sir Cedric Hardwicke for the part of Merlin, or King Pellinore, and John Howard Davies would just be about the right size for the young Arthur.

THEY PASSED THIS WAY

(M.G.M.-Enterprise Studios)

THE RED SHOES were in their Fifth Grand Week; so was *The Winslow Boy*. It looked as if one could anticipate almost a month of *Chicken Every Sunday*, and *Bambi* had come back for the school and university holidays. Faute de mieux, I went to see *They Passed This Way*, but strictly in the line of duty (*Quaere*, At what point does one draw the line of duty?). Friend, if you should pass this way—and if you have previously passed the Fourth Standard—keep right on passing. This is not for you.



SIR BOSS (Bing Crosby) sharpens a sword for his own neck while Sir Lancelot (Henry Wilcoxson) looks on

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