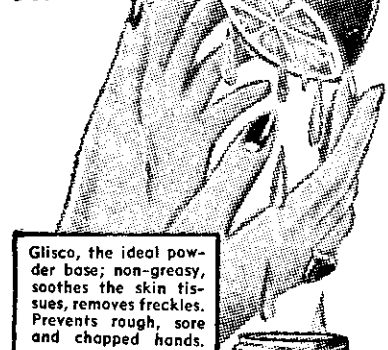


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Film Reviews By G. M.

SPEAKING CANDIDLY

SO ENDS OUR NIGHT

(United Artists)

 I was only after long cogitation that I decided not to grade this production as 100 A1. Such faults as it has only serve to accentuate its good points and I am sure that many film-goers will feel, as I did, that it is one of the finest productions they have seen. But it is not general entertainment. It is not the kind of film which one stands up and claps; one does not sit up and clap; rather one sits for a moment in numb silence when the lights at last go on. And maybe that is the highest tribute which one can pay to a film.

So Ends Our Night is not for those who seek entertainment, and some women may find it too stark to bear, but it is great. I went to see it with misgivings. I had seen the trailer and it seemed that the film would simply be a following up on *The Mortal Storm*—and sequels are so often unsuccessful. But I was only half right in my anticipations. It is, in effect, a sequel to *The Mortal Storm*; but, if anything, it excels it.

It is the story of the dispossessed and the hunted, the refugees who swarmed out of Germany to escape the Nazi terror. Deprived of civic rights, deprived of passports, they were hurried from one border to the next, knowing no peace and no abiding place, hardly knowing where to lay their heads; finally driven further and yet further afield by the territorial advances of the Third Reich.

Heart-rending as the story is, John Cromwell has directed it with a capability which at some points amounts almost to genius. There is hardly anything that is overdone, tragedy is suggested as much by the tired bodies of the refugees as by the words they speak, violence for the most part occurs "off," the dialogue is notable for what is left unsaid, and the occasional humorous scenes (which one greets with relief) only serve like the Porter Scene in


Macbeth, to heighten the horror of the whole. And I should mention that the photography ably abets the direction.

The cast is headed by Frederic March and Margaret Sullavan, the former as a political refugee from Germany, the latter as a Jewess. March makes a particularly fine showing and the most dramatic scenes are those in which he appears. Miss Sullavan is fully as good as she was in *The Mortal Storm*, but, looking back on the two pictures, I can't help feeling that if she goes on being such a fine tragedienne she may get typed—and I would like to see her in a happier role occasionally. Playing opposite her is a young newcomer, Glenn Ford, and while his performance has not

threw the general tragedy into greater relief. Perhaps it was meant to do that, perhaps without some such compensation the unvarnished truth would have been too much for our stomachs. For the night has not ended, rather has it engulfed all Europe and now spreads south and east. Though the stars may still look down, it may yet be darker before the dawn, whether dawn comes from the West (as Hollywood is so prone to suggest) or from the more conventional direction.

MR. AND MRS. SMITH

(RKO Radio)

 HERE is another clever comedy, this time with Carole Lombard and Robert Montgomery in the leading roles. Mr. and Mrs. Smith (no relation to the Washington Smiths) are a young couple who, even as you and I once did, try to make their mar-



THAT HAMILTON WOMAN!—or more politely, *Lady Hamilton*. Anyway, the film about the "affaire" of Emma Hamilton and Horatio, Lord Nelson, produced by United Artists, will be released here as "*Lady Hamilton*." Vivien G.W.T.W. Leigh has the title role, and Laurence Olivier, as you see above, is Lord Nelson

quite the veteran quality of the two others, he has as large a part and discharges it quite capably. The minor characters are for the most part well played. I liked Erich von Stroheim as the Black Guard commander, and in her two brief scenes as March's wife, Frances Dee was impressive. Anna Sten I hardly recognised.

So Ends Our Night is, of course, outright propaganda, but it is not so direct in its approach as *The Mortal Storm*. The feelings which it arouses are more those of pity for the fugitives than hatred for those whose cruelty pursued them—that, at least, is the immediate effect. It is not until you are on the way home that pity begins to curdle into something else.

From the dramatic point of view, the wrong note was only struck once (in my opinion) and that was in the almost happy ending. There, of course, the fault may have lain with the author, Erich Remarque, and not with the studio but, for me, the happiness which the two snatched from circumstance only

riage as perfect as possible by adhering in times of inevitable domestic upheaval to a set of rules. There is, for instance, one very important rule which states that in the case of a quarrel, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Smith may leave the room until it is made up. This rule is naturally a rather awkward one and has been responsible for several contretemps but fortunately Mr. Smith possesses a very accommodating and understanding business partner (Gene Raymond) who makes allowance for such crises, even when, as on one occasion, hostilities kept Mr. Smith at home for eight days.

The film begins in the midst of such a quarrel and it is in the reconciliation which follows that Mrs. Smith (as wives will!) puts the fateful question: "If you were free again, would you marry me?" and instantly reminds her spouse of Rule 7—"Always Speak the Truth to One Another." And so, when Mr. Smith replies, truthfully but tactlessly, "I love you, darling, but, no, I wouldn't," the plot begins to take shape. Because when

(Continued on next page)

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