

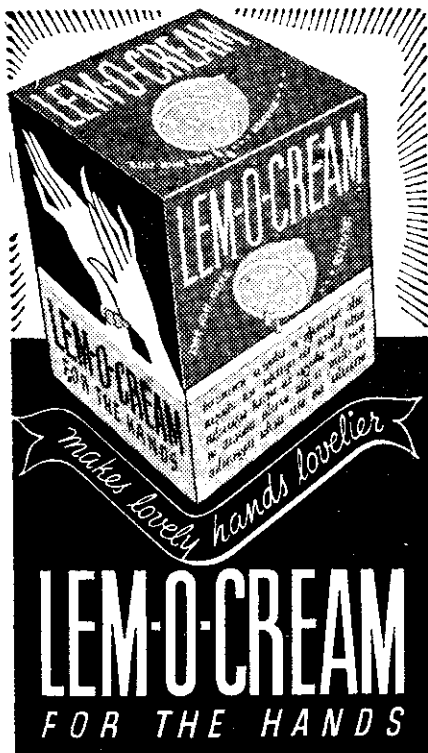


"'Here Comes Mr. Jordan' is an unusual and great picture." *Damon Runyon*

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Film Reviews By G.M.

SPEAKING CANDIDLY

LYDIA

(United Artists)



TO find, in some unobtrusive, unpretentious production, a first-class piece of cinema is for me one of the chief delights of picture-going. I don't want to go altogether Shakespearean and say that it is like finding your pearl in your foul oyster, because that wouldn't be altogether fair to the film industry, but the delight of discovery is the same. Yet there is an obverse side to such enjoyment and, since action and reaction are generally equal and opposite, I must rate as one of my principal *bêtes noires* the film that does not measure up to expectations. *Lydia* falls (rather heavily, I fear), into this class.

I do not think that I habitually expect too much from films, but when one sees in the credits the names of Alexander and Vincent Korda, Merle Oberon, Julien Duvivier (the director), Ben Hecht, Edna May Oliver and Joseph Cotten (ex-*Citizen Kane* cast), one is entitled to expect something better than average. That *Lydia* is, if anything, below par is due more I think to faulty direction and a certain incoherence in the story than to the work of the cast, who seem to find the going heavy at times.

Lydia's story is that of a woman who has four loves in her life and remains a spinster. As a romantic girl she nearly elopes with a college footballer, she conceives a tender affection for a blind musician, who more than reciprocates, she has an affair with an attractive but irresponsible and worthless stranger for whom, woman-like, she is willing to give up more than for her more devoted admirers and (viva democracy!), she nearly marries the son of her grandmother's butler.

I suppose that could all be made into a very interesting story, but Messrs. Korda and Duvivier decided to use the device of emotion recollected in tranquillity. *Lydia* and three of her beaux are shown at the beginning of the film having a reunion — all of them septuagenarians, more or less — and the story is evoked by their reminiscences. Even that would be all very well were it not that every now and then there is a flash-back, or rather forward, from some scene of Miss Oberon's youth to this reunion of the ancients, to enable the aged Miss *Lydia* to make some caustic comment on her youthful follies.

The effect of this technique, quite apart from the depressing reminder that wrinkles will one day deface even Miss Oberon's fair flesh, is to break down what might have been a unified and integrated story into a series of episodes, held apart by far too many hiatuses, or hiati, or whatever they are. The dialogue, too, is uneven. At times good, it occasionally falls into bathos through too much striving after effect. I am loath to blame this too much on Ben Hecht. I notice he had associated with him a Mr. Samuel Hoffenstein, who should, perhaps, take some of the kicks in exchange for his ha'pence.

But though the film as a whole misfires badly, I don't want to dismiss it

as altogether uninteresting. The photography is occasionally good—and slow motion is used very effectively in one sequence to portray a state of mind. Some of the scenes, too, in which Hans Yaray (a new face to me), plays piano pictures for a class of blind children, are excellent, and most of the other members of the cast have their moments. But there are not enough of such moments to make it a good picture, though I concede that to a limited audience, it would be interesting.

TILLY THE TOILER

(Columbia)



TILLY the Toiler is a well-known comic strip in America —though we doubt if this in itself is sufficient justification for allowing Tilly loose upon the screen. Still, if you like your comedy crazy without being particularly intelligible then we advise you to attend all the Tilly films.

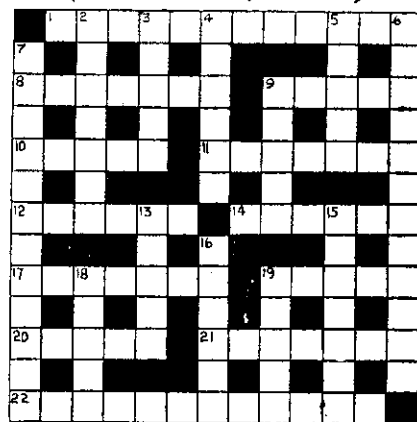
Tilly herself is delightfully dumb without being particularly beautiful, which is explained by the fact that she

(Continued on next page)

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

(No. 80)

(Constructed by R.W.C.)



Clues Across

1. Summarise with a puerile tact.
8. A very precarious state to be in.
9. A peach may be this, but not out of season.
10. Pointed arch.
11. Tunes up! (anag.).
12. Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the mid-day sun instead of taking this.
14. I put it in a town well known to admirers of Gilbert and Sullivan.
17. A form of "inside" exercise common among those with convictions.
19. A crop of dried coconut kernels.
20. Keen.
21. This geological formation is little more than a confused invitation to enter.
22. The alert pigs are arranged in order to send telegrams.

Clues Down

2. Evil use of an epithet applied to the Scarlet Pimpernel.
3. Eagle's nest.
4. Invalid without the symbol of Victory—and a little confused.
5. About.
6. Remonstrated.
7. Coins in tents—this is contradictory.
9. Hidden in an Inca prison.
13. Didactic trout.
15. Stamp.
16. It looks as though there's harm in this dance.
18. The composer of "Pomp and Circumstance" marches in a kingly guise.
19. Clerical dress.