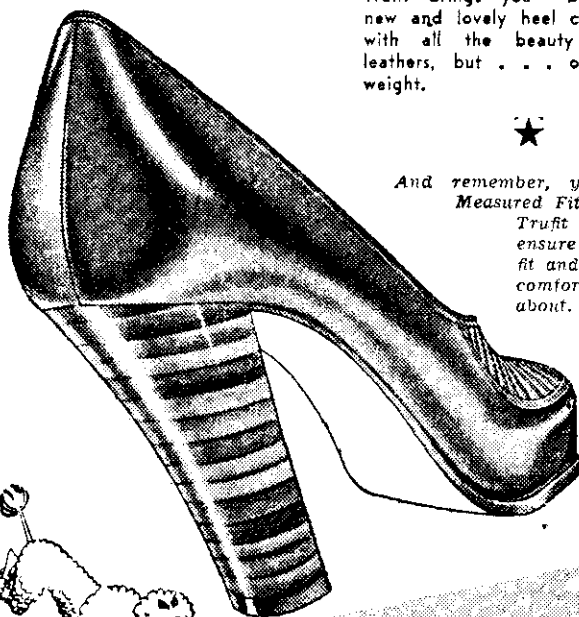
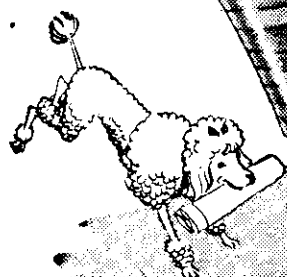


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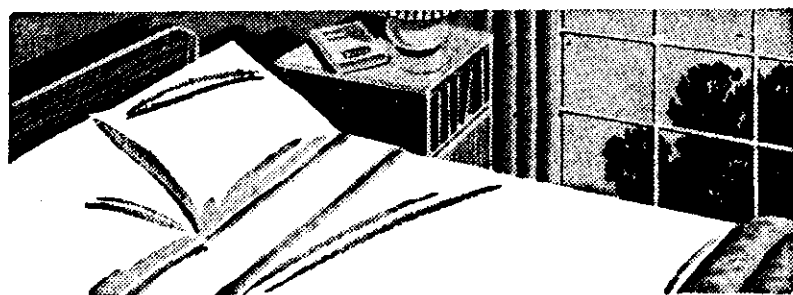


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FILM REVIEWS, BY JNO.

Love is the Sweetest Thing

THE STORY OF THREE LOVES

(M.G.M.)

YOU don't need to be a Kinsey to discover that it's love that makes the world go round, and in Hollywood (where they have no false notions about which side their cake is iced on) they know, too, that one good turn deserves another. For safety's sake, however (caution is one of the stigmata of the film industry), *The Story of Three Loves* adds a third turn, in case the first two fail to overcome our inertia. I must confess that I found this over-generous, and others who are also at the stage when arteries and prejudices are hardening may likewise find three helpings of sweet corn a little cloying at one sitting. But I am quite sure Hollywood need not worry about us. The vast mush-headed teen-age audience on which it still depends will take all and look for more.

On paper the film looked promising. The three stories involve eight players—James Mason, Moira Shearer, Agnes Moorehead, Leslie Caron, Farley Granger, Ethel Barrymore, Kirk Douglas and Pier Angeli—who are not merely well-known names, but are all capable of intelligent and stimulating performances, given anything like a chance. One of the directors is Gottfried Reinhardt (son of Max), who produced for Huston in *The Red Badge of Courage*, the other is Minelli, who directed *An American in Paris*. And there is also Technicolor.

The first episode (Shearer, Mason, plus Moorehead) is the story of a ballet-dancer forced to abandon her profession and her dreams because of a weak heart, and of a ballet-producer whose latest and most ambitious piece of choreography won't quite jell. She, throwing caution to the winds, dances for him—first on a deserted stage, then in his flat (where there is more room). He scribbles and sketches under her inspiration and she slips, unnoticed, home to die happily of angina. The dialogue positively coruscates with clichés, and with what the scriptwriter imagines to be high-brow conversation. Miss Shearer's dancing is the one saving grace. I am sure, anyway, that the suffering she was at times required to register was only in part simulated.

The second tale (Minelli's contribution) is by contrast airy, gay and, in a mild degree, sophisticated. It was somewhat blighted for me by the intrusion of an American small boy (I find the American urban juvenile generally cacophonous and ill-bred), but it was relatively easy to withdraw attention from him and concentrate on his French governess (Leslie Caron). Mlle. Caron, I am happy to report, is still dewy and unspoiled, still one of the most interesting of the recent discoveries—either in motion or in repose. But I hope that her capacity as an actress does not obscure her ability as a dancer. As the witch in this

BAROMETER

MAINLY FAIR: "The Story of Three Loves."
OVERCAST: "Sailor of the King."

fairy-tale fantasy. Ethel Barrymore seems (for once) a little more like herself and a little less like brother Lionel.

"Equilibrium," the third story (the others are titled "The Jealous Lover" and "Mademoiselle") features Pier Angeli, and the tanned torso of Kirk Douglas. Here again (as in the first) the script is overloaded with banalities and the dialogue is of the "Luck-chance-call-it-Fate-if-you-will" variety. But it is a tale of love on the high trapeze and there is just enough excitement and acrobatics, caught by good photography, to eke out the poverty of the script. Kirk Douglas is good in action. Pier Angeli, as the girl he hooks out of the Seine and trains as his partner on the circus circuit, has charm and a capacity for pathos, but she hasn't yet set my whiskers on fire.

I should perhaps have mentioned that the three stories are presented as flashbacks from the promenade deck of an Atlantic liner on which are travelling Messrs. Mason and Douglas, and Mlles. Caron and Angeli. The liner is travelling to America, where (no doubt) even Mr. Mason will find happiness.

SAILOR OF THE KING

(20th Century-Fox)

THERE were three good reasons (I thought) for going to see this picture. It was directed by Roy Boulting, the story was by C. S. Forester (who should by now be well enough known as the creator of *Hornblower* and the author of *The African Queen*), and the studio had the co-operation of the Mediterranean Fleet. The last might not seem a good reason to you, but warships have fascinated me from my youth up, and even the unattended sea excites my imagination. And I had also seen the original screen version of the story (with Betty Balfour and John Mills), and was curious to compare the new with what I remembered of the old.

But if you, too, are interested in ships and the sea, I must warn you that *Sailor of the King* takes a long time to reach salt water. The hero, Able-seaman Brown (Jeffrey Hunter), was apparently born on the wrong side of the blanket, and brought up on the wrong side of the hawespipe, and so much time is wasted telling us about his begetting (in the most genteel terms, of course) that the really exciting story—the sea-fights, and Brown's single-handed action against the Nazi raider *Essen* while she effects repairs in the Galapagos—has had to be cropped to the bare bones. The cruisers *Glasgow* and *Cleopatra*, and the fast minelayer *Manxman* (40 knots plus) provide some exciting sequences, but the studio work scarcely measures up to R.N. standards—or, for that matter, to Mr. Forester's.



JEFFREY HUNTER AND H.M.S. MANXMAN (ALIAS ESSEN)

N.Z. LISTENER, JANUARY 22, 1954.