

JINGLE ALL THE WAY

THE PICKWICK PAPERS

(Renown-International Films)

Before Dickens wrote a single story, he had a kind of vision. It was a vision of the Dickens world—a maze of white roads, a map full of fantastic towns, thundering coaches, clamorous market-places, uproarious inns, strange and swaggering figures. That vision was Pickwick.—G. K. Chesterton,

WHILE it is possible that Dickensians—using the word in its Pickwickian sense—may consider that Mr. Noel Langley has done less than epic justice to the members of the Club, the present reviewer, who finds himself irrevocably numbered with their less perfervid admirers, is of the opinion that we have here—so far as such is possible within one hour and 49 minutes—an accurate and entertaining realisation of the author's declared objective, *videlicet*, "To place before the reader a constant succession of characters and incidents; to paint them in as vivid colours as he could command; and to render them, at the same time, life-like and amusing."

Inevitably the selection of incident (and the omission or inclusion of *dramatis personae*) will provoke argu-

BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "The Pickwick Papers."
FAIR: "The Actress."

ment, and perhaps even some measure of dissatisfaction among enthusiasts. Is Mrs. Leo Hunter's fancy-dress breakfast of greater significance than the political climate of Eatanswill? Can a mere glimpse of the older Weller (a nostalgic glimpse for George Robey's admirers) leave us with anything but a lopsided impression of that unique father-and-son study in which Mr. Priestley has found the complementary virtues of town and country? Does the appearance of the Fat Boy atone for the absence of Bob Sawyer, and can one imagine Dingley Dell without a Christmas party? These and sundry other matters of omission and commission will doubtless arouse partisan enthusiasms in university common-rooms and wherever there is a local chapter of the Dickens Fellowship. But they are unlikely to produce violent reactions elsewhere.

The crucial question—Does the film deserve its title?—can quite safely be answered in the affirmative. Or, at least, one is persuaded that Mr. Chesterton



WINKLE, JINGLE, SNODGRASS, PICKWICK

"No incident or expression occurs which could call a blush into the most delicate cheek"

would have found it so. For, as Dickens gave us a vision of his world in *Pickwick*, so Mr. Langley has given us at least a vision of *Pickwick*—and he could scarcely have done more.

The abridgements into which he has been forced by stern necessity have

produced some oddly foreshortened perspectives. In particular, the importance of Mr. Jingle has been magnified to a point where his significance in the narrative tends to overshadow that of Mr. Pickwick himself. So admirably has Nigel Patrick put on Jingle's character,

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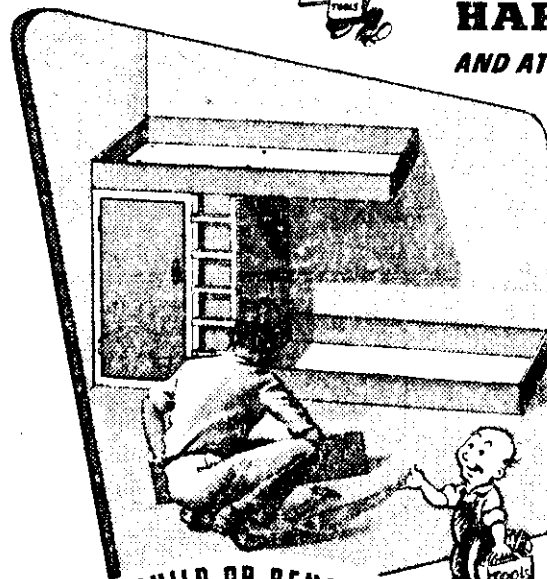
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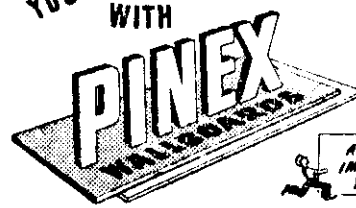
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for once we are talking
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