

ture of this kind of comedy, the picture of life in back-country Scotland is a fairly accurate one.

FOOTSTEPS IN THE FOG

(Frankovich-Columbia)

FOOTSTEPS IN THE FOG illustrates (if I may use a word which I have been saving up for a long time) the dichotomy of W. W. Jacobs. Most of us know him for his comic barges and long-shoremen, but Jacobs had another self—you might say an *alter esau*—with a flair for the uncanny, the melodramatic and the macabre. It was in this mood that he wrote the story called *The Interruption* from which *Footsteps in the Fog* was constructed. And of its kind—the gaslit, late-Victorian costume piece—this is quite a competent piece of construction. Stewart Granger, it is true, appears in his usual manifestation as the saturnine hero-villain, and Mrs. Granger (who plays opposite him) is something of a speckled apple, too, but my impression of the casting was that it was good at all levels, and some of the minor players—in particular Finlay Currie, William Hartnell and Peter Bull—performed excellently well. But for the filmgoer simply in search of vicarious excitement the picture's chief attraction will be, I think, the intricacies of the plot and the neat and methodical fashion in which the apparently loose ends are all eventually remembered and tidily tied up. In this, if you are familiar with his style, you will detect the hand of Jacobs, rather than that of Arthur Lubin, the director.

As the title suggests, *Footsteps in the Fog* is a murky melodrama. Granger has the part of a suave villain who has divested himself of an ageing spouse by adding strychnine (or something like it) to her diet. How he fooled the family physician is not revealed, but he didn't manage to fool the housemaid Lucy (Jean Simmons), who nourishes an unsanctified passion for her master and is not above using blackmail to satisfy it. To get rid of Lucy, her employer is driven to desperate lengths and, as it turns out, is eventually hoist with his own pharmacopoeia. I might add that the more hectic crises in the story are underscored by passages of strident mood-music, one of which (it accompanies the great poisoning scene) is more suggestive of acute abdominal agony than anything I have encountered this side of atonality.

WHAT EVERY WOMAN WANTS

(Adelphi)

I SAW this as the support feature along with *Laxdale Hall*, and the combined talents of Brenda de Banzie, Elsy Albiin, Patric Doonan, and the director Maurice Elvey were not enough to make more of it than that. It's a drab little production which attempts without much success to find its drama in the overcrowded homes of the English lower middle-class, and in the tensions generated between young people and their in-laws—with a ground-bass of industrial agitation chucked in for good measure. I was left with the impression that what every woman, or every lower middle-class woman, wants is not a baby (as the character concerned protests) but simply a little *lebensraum*.

HAMLET

(Rank-Two Cities)

PURELY for my own edification, I saw *Hamlet* again last week. It was a private screening of a 16 mm. print, and therefore not one readily accessible to the average filmgoer, but I am encouraged to mention it by the news that a new commercial print of this "essay" of Olivier's is to be issued this year. I don't propose to repeat what I said about this production when it was first screened here—we'd need an extra film page for that—but I hope that there will be a chance of comparing it with *Richard III*. Olivier may or may not be the greatest living English actor—I don't know. But I am convinced that he is, like Jurgen, a monstrous clever fellow.

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 6, 1956.

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