

It's the Irish in Them!

THE QUIET MAN

(Republic)

JOHN FORD is one of the greatest living American directors, and his latest film, a long and affectionate look at Irish life set in the dreaming landscapes around Lake Corrib in Galway, is also probably the funniest picture he has yet made. Indeed, in the earthy quality of its humour, its rounded portraiture of village types and customs, even the occasional roughness of finish on the technical side, it resembles more a good English comedy than the work of a man from Hollywood. There is an explanation for this, of course. Ford's own family came from the district seen in the film, and he has used practically an all-Irish cast, including Abbey Theatre players and other local folk. And his cameraman, Winton Hoch, has devoted as much care to his Technicolor photographing of the countryside as to the people in the story.

The film is adapted from the novel by Maurice Walsh, and concerns an Irish-born American prizefighter (played by John Wayne) who decides to give up the ring and go back to Erin for a quiet life. He is met at the station by Barry Fitzgerald, the local marriage-broker, who soon introduces him to his cronies at Pat Cohan's bar, as well as crossing his path with that of Mary Kate Danaher (Maureen O'Hara) and her terrible-tempered brother (Victor McLaglen). Danaher is tricked into giving consent to his sister's marriage to the Yank, but after the couple are successfully united refuses to pay up her dowry. Since the red-headed bride is as proud and tempestuous as her brother, she refuses to consummate the marriage until the money is paid over, and this leads to a gargantuan fist-fight that goes on all afternoon over hill and dale, through woods and streams, and ends with a smashing blow which sends Dana-

BAROMETER

FINE: "The Quiet Man."
FAIR: "The Prisoner of Zenda."

her right through the door of Pat Cohan's pub.

Ford has coaxed some fine work from his actors and Barry Fitzgerald is given plenty of scope for his comic talents without being allowed to overplay his hand. Good performances are also given by Ward Bond as a salmon-fishing priest and Arthur Shields as the Anglican vicar, Mr. Playfair. *The Quiet Man* reveals itself in its undertones to be a variation on the Homeric theme of the homecoming of Odysseus and his contest for Penelope. The film has been made with the bold sweep of Ford's best work, with less care for detail than for the overall mood, the long surging rhythms of the action, the feeling of place and identity with the soil.

THE PRISONER OF ZENDA

(M.G.M.)

Anthony Hope's romance about an Englishman who through his kingly resemblance gets mixed up in all sorts of royal skulduggery in the mythical state of Ruritania has provided Hollywood with some of its most durable material. This is the fourth version to date, with Stewart Granger in the dual role. Deborah Kerr as the lovely Princess Flavia, and James Mason as the villainous Rupert of Hentzau. Being timed for Coronation year it devotes some of its most spectacular scenes to the Ruritanian crowning of the substitute king and the magnificent ball which follows. Apart from that there are the usual tree-swinging, moat-swimming escapades in the manner of Douglas Fairbanks, battles with pistol, sword, and dagger, and some old-fashioned drinking bouts. Granger makes a sufficiently cool hero in his swashbuckling way, and Louis Calhern, Robert Douglas (as the wicked Prince Michael) and Jane Greer help out to make this a colourful, if not super-colossal, production.



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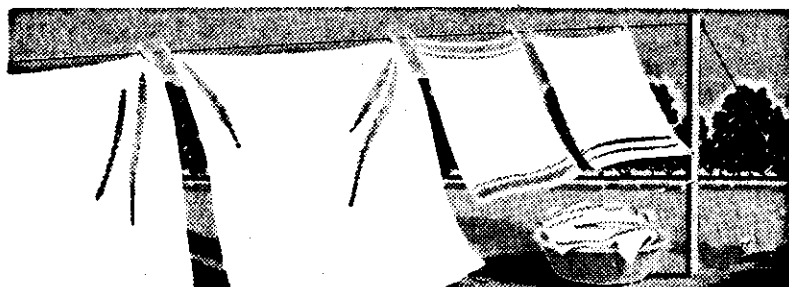
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