

... This one got left over from the previous page!

my account!

The "Good Bet" classification is for the good film of its class—a picture which should, far more often than not, return a very satisfactory dividend of entertainment. Into this particular quarter of the Mirams paradise go the



PUT YOUR SHIRT ON THIS.



A GOOD BET.

pictures which are not quite strong enough to take the shirt off one's back.

Purgatory

A FILM which "shows fair form" is a moderately successful production of its own particular type. One degree lower than "A Good Bet," but



SHOWS FAIR FORM.

still quite worth seeing—if you like the type. Films of this order are the backbone of screen entertainment.

With all the above classifications there is at least some degree of direct recommendation. The fourth classi-

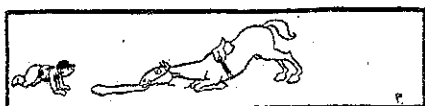


TAKE A CHANCE.

fication, "Take a Chance," is reserved for the borderline cases. You may like these films—or you may not, depending perhaps on your mood and the person who is sitting next to you.

Inferno

THE films on the other side of the fence carry no recommendation, but an increasing measure of warning. The "Also Rans" will be films which



ALSO RAN

start with fair promise, but can't stay the distance. After that comes "Scratched!" and finally, the "Dead Horse" brigade. These two distinctly non-favourable categories need no special explanation—a film thus brand-

ed belongs in the lowest depths of the Mirams hell. Should I find that the "Dead Horse" classification is not strong enough, I can always dig up a



SCRATCHED!



DEAD HORSE

"Decayed Horse," but I think the existing gradings should serve the purpose. Heaven grant me courage to apply them, and escape without my withers being wrung from the fury of the film people.

There is, it will be noticed, one special classification reserved for "Dark Horses." In most cases this grading



A DARK HORSE

will be used for films which have very definite intrinsic merit, but very dubious popular appeal, such as "Dead End," "They Won't Forget," and "Winterset." Or I may use it for films about which I can't quite make up my own mind. Ordinarily, however, I think you can take it that "Dark Horses" will be well worth watching.

Are We "Tough"?

IN introducing this grading system, it seems necessary once again to stress that all honest film criticism must be largely a matter of personal

opinion, because in the past few weeks several film men have accused the "Record" of becoming "too tough" and "to sophisticated" in its movie reviews. That they are sincere in their opinion, I have no doubt; but a conflict arises—as it always must—because they look at film reviewing purely from the angle of the box-office.

Here let me digress to say that there are two main types of film reviewing. In one of them the critic attempts to estimate how each production will appeal to the people who like that particular class of film. Even though he may know in his heart that a film is intrinsically bad, he must not say so if he feels also that it is going to be popular. How many films are like this—films that are almost entirely lacking in artistic unity, intellectual integrity, and which encourage a completely false sense of values—and yet which break records at the theatre! And how many really good films there are with only very small surface appeal.

At the other extreme is the critic who expresses little more than his personal likes and dislikes.

Vox Populi

I USED to think that the first type of film reviewing was the only proper kind—that the voice of the box-office was as the voice of God, before which criticism should be silenced. I am not so certain now. For surely a reviewer who presumes to know the public mind so well that he can estimate how any picture is going to appeal to it; is guilty of as much egotism as the critic who merely records his personal reactions.

And yet these two extremes of criticism are not, I think, entirely irreconcilable, even though it does seem rather like trying to serve both God and Mammon. One can acknowledge the box-office



According to English and American critics, a remarkable performance is given by Will Fyfe in "Owd Bob," the Gaumont-British film of Alfred Ollivant's famous story of the Cumberland shepherds and their dogs. This scene shows Fyfe with one of the canine stars.