

his portrayal, whether he is battling with the "lady of the skies" in her gown of blue, whether he is on the wild "jags" that last for days, whether he is in love for a day or for a lifetime. He has here a fine rôle and he seems to like it.

Not Quite So Good

MYRNA LOY'S treatment of the country girl who saw her prince of dreams come dropping from space and who fell hopelessly in love with him on the instant, is not quite so satisfying. The script was kind to her—there are whole scenes evidently written specially for her—and at times she is excellent. But on the whole, she is far too much the poised and philosophical lady of "The Thin Man" to be real. Even her hysterics are restrained and decent, fit for any drawing-room. In real life, I think, when a girl like this let herself go at last, she would blow up completely. Somehow, Myrna Loy fails to bring out the depths of tragedy of those who live perpetually on the brink of disaster, and can neither escape from the danger nor do anything to avert it.

Tracy Scores Again

THAT job was left for Spencer Tracy, as the friend of the test pilot who had been his mechanic for 12 years and had learnt the courage to hide his fears. Tracy in this film is seldom taxed, and does nothing he has not done as well before—even to dying. But he shows himself a great actor by the ease with which he steals the honours.

Also taking their share in the film are Lionel Barrymore—just a soothing voice and the Barrymore smile—a pleasant young man named Ted Pearson, and last, but not least, Gloria Holden in a minor rôle so well handled that I could almost "spot" it for an Academy award were that not such a dangerous thing to do. Watch for Gloria Holden as the sensitive and utterly-broken wife of a flier who crashes before her eyes.

Yes, all in all, "Test Pilot" is one of M.G.-M.'s best efforts this year, and you can see from the strong direction, the careful (if not utterly successful)

script, and the photography, that it was meant to be. As I said, it is melodramatic; and it also has the failing of working a very old theme—but oh, so smoothly. I think, if you don't mind being "harrowed," and if you don't mind Myrna in heavy drama, that you may find this the most exciting film in a long time.

A Gangster Who Mixes Music With Murder

["Dangerous to Know." Paramount. Directed by Robert Flory. Starring Akim Tamiroff, Anna May Wong, Lloyd Nolan. First release: Wellington, July 8.]



I SUPPOSE it is part of the price we must pay for having a Morality Code in Hollywood that gangster films these days are seldom as enjoyably violent as they used to be. When a bumping-off has to be done, it quite often happens off-stage, and we only hear about it after-



NOVA PILBEAM, brilliant young English child star of "Ten Days A Queen," is growing up. She's at the sweet-seventeen stage in "Young and Innocent," a Hitchcock mystery-melodrama highly praised by overseas reviewers.

ward, instead of being metaphorically splashed with the blood. Psychology has been substituted for sawn-off shot-guns; and all your best racketeers nowadays are quaint, mentally-unbalanced creatures who would delight the heart of Freud.

Take, for example, Akim Tamiroff, in "Dangerous to Know," which is the rather heavily disguised film version of Edgar Wallace's "On the Spot." Tamiroff plays the rôle of Steve Reeka, political Big Shot and cold-blooded murderer. But Reeka has a Soul, and a very wide appreciation of culture. His house is filled with busts and pic-

tures of Napoleon, and with a slightly different upbringing he could probably have been a great general himself, for he has all the required ruthlessness and flair for organising. After any particularly dirty work, however, Mr. Reeka relieves his tortured soul by playing the organ—preferably Bach or Handel, but his culture is wide enough to admit swing music on occasions.

Too Polite

PERSONALLY, I prefer my screen gangsters to be slightly less complex, with fingers more at home on the trigger than the organ stops. Yet, although a simpler and not-so-polite treatment of "Dangerous to Know" would have improved it immensely, one has to acknowledge with gratitude that Tamiroff gives a remarkably vivid and well-controlled performance as the underworld king, who discovers to his cost that "dames is dynamite." Not content with gaining control of his city's finances, he seeks recognition from its social set. To be asked to tea by the best people will be his final triumph. (A study of Mr. Reeka's pre-natal history would probably reveal that his mother was charwoman to one of the Van der Hoosits of Long Island).

Woeful Wong

SO Mr. Reeka seeks marriage with the poor but aristocratic Miss Margaret Van Kase (Gail Patrick), and does not let the fact that she is in love with someone else stand in his way. But when a screen gangster starts mixing social ambitions with business, there can be only one end for him. Mr. Reeka's end is brought about in ironic fashion by his Chinese "hostess" (courtesy title only). That Mr. Reeka's establishment should contain such an exotic figure, is just another instance of his quaintness. It is also the excuse for Anna May Wong to display Oriental fatalism, mixed with quite Occidental jealousy. She does so at great length through a series of immense tear-dewed close-ups.

With less psychology and more action—especially in the finale—"Dangerous to Know" would have been a better picture. But it still has its good points, including (in addition to Akim Tamiroff), Lloyd Nolan as a detective.

The Heads Arrive

THERE has been an influx of prominent movie men into New Zealand from Australia in the past week. They include Messrs. C. Von Hake (Fox), Bernie Freeman (M.G.-M.), Harry Hunter (Paramount), Herc. McIntyre (Universal), and Gordon Ellis (B.E.F.).

This "invasion" has some connection with the internal trouble in the film industry, caused by the Government's Theatre Licensing Regulations, which was dealt with in a special article in the "Record" last week.

The heads of the industry in this part of the world are very interested in the present situation, as it is felt that whatever is done in New Zealand regarding theatre licensing, etc., may be made a basis for similar legislation in Australia.

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