

## Film Record—by Gordon Mirams

# REVOLT in the HEATHER

—And Love On The Campus

REVIEWS OF "KIDNAPPED" AND "VARSITY SHOW"



### Schoolboyish Tale Of Daring Adventure

["Kidnapped," 20th Century-Fox, directed by Alfred Werker, starring Warner Baxter, Freddie Bartholomew. First release: Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, August 19.]



A RUN FOR YOUR MONEY.

IT is so many years since I read Robert Louis Stevenson's "Kidnapped" that all I took with me to the screening of the new film version was a hazy memory about a thrilling seige of Alan Breck and David Balfour in the round-house of a brigantine. Since the film did not show us that seige, but merely a hurried exit over the side in a rowing-boat, I am beginning to wonder whether I merely imagined that Stevenson had written it.

In fact, on the rather important question of how much the film resembles the book I cannot be at all helpful. It is probably a lucky escape for me.

However, Fox Films quite frankly admit they have introduced a love

theme into the story, with the plea that Stevenson himself would probably have done the same had he been writing for the screen. Perhaps they are right. Here again I am glad that my hazy memory of the original makes it possible for me evade the issue.

### Hair-breadth Escapes

OF the film as a film, it strikes me that, despite its love theme, it is designed very largely to appeal to the boys in the audience, old and young, and therefore falls into the same school—if not necessarily the same class—as such films as "Treasure Island," "The Buccaneer" or "Midshipman Easy." In view of this there does not seem to be much point in being too critical about faults in direction, atmosphere and acting. These are pitfalls which an American producer, making a film about Scotland in Hollywood with a partly American cast, could hardly be expected to avoid.

It's the story that counts; and—I imagine because R.L.S. did the groundwork—it's a red-blooded tale of schoolboyish adventure in the wild old days of Scotland, full of hairbreadth escapes, desperate ventures and fighting for lost causes. Realism and atmospheric accuracy are not nearly so important as that there should be plenty

of melodramatic incident—though it is still somewhat incongruous to hear American accents in the Lowlands of eighteenth century Scotland!

### Like The 'Cisco Kid

THE same tendency to push authenticity into the background—this time for the sake of giving the public established "names"—is to be noted in the choice of Warner Baxter and Freddie Bartholomew as stars. Baxter is very much the 'Cisco Kid in a three-cornered hat instead of a sombrero; and to the extent that both were romantic outlaws, I suppose there is some similarity between the star's famous early character of the 'Cisco Kid and his present toothy one of Alan Breck, the dashing, if misguided, hero who keeps loyalty to the Stuarts and rebellion against George of England still smoldering in Scotland two years after Bonnie Prince Charlie's hopes have been scattered on the fatal field of Culloden.

### Freddie's No Scotsman

IF Baxter is never a Scotsman, neither is Freddie Bartholomew as David Balfour, the lad who, in spite of being in the opposite political camp, shares

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