

TWO SEATS

the Back Row Please

At this time, we should tell you a little bit about this column. It is not intended to be free publicity for the various theatres in the city; but rather, it is a reserved space in the Gazette, which space any body can use to express his, or her, views or opinions on any of the movies playing in town. The managers of the Capitol, and of the Vogue and Family theatres have been very co-operative, they even gave passes to be issued to any aspiring reporter who would like to write a review for this column. (Weekly, occasionally, or even only once.) We will in the near future get in touch with the other managers, so that, we may have passes to all of the theatres.

That is, all but the Paramount; previously we had passes to the Paramount, but they were cancelled, because one of its pictures was "panned" instead of praised (couldn't do otherwise). Also the manager pointed out: "Why should I give you passes, your paper only reviews my pictures when they are over!" He wanted advertising, and unfortunately, we, as mentioned previously, do not intend this column to serve for this purpose, so . . .

Fortunately, all the managers did not take this view; Mr. H. Howes, (Capitol's manager) even accepted to write an article on "the trend in modern movies" — or something along that line, which article will appear in this column shortly.

Now, on with the reviews . . .
Caine Mutiny: Herman Wouk won a Pulitzer Prize with his novel of the Caine Mutiny. Stanley Kramer's film adaptation ought to do as well with movie awards. Given the problem of bringing an outstanding best-seller, and a good work in spite of this, to the screen, the Stanley Kramer people have done their usual fine job. The novel has been trimmed to fit movie limitations, but most of the original power is kept while the small subplots are cut away. Filmed in Technicolor, *The Caine Mutiny*, is a pleasure to see, with a number of beautiful ocean shots, particularly a magnificent record of the Caine in the rage of a typhoon.

This is an unusually fine and powerful picture. It deals with the mounting tension in a ship where the officers think the captain mentally ill. The executive officer finally takes over the ship, when the captain (Bogart), is endangering it. The dramatic court martial scene which follows seems to sum up the case; but afterward, the lawyer for the defence questions whether or not justice has been done.

The characters are presented with sympathy and understanding. H. Bogart as Queeg and J. Ferrer as Greenwald (the defence lawyer) are outstanding. The picture is done in an exceptionally realistic manner and captures the viewer's interest throughout.

Doctor in the House: College groups at their best can offer a zest, color and flavor refreshing in itself and promising as a setting for drama or prose. A number of motion pictures have capitalized on this truth in recent years: *Take Care of My Little Girl*, comes to mind, a frank, revealing glimpse of the sorority problem; *The Student Prince*, displayed the charms of the European university of the past. Now *Doctor in the House*, a vivid, colorful English comedy has turned the public eye on the most imponderable of all campus groups the medical students, with agreeable and entertaining results.

Dirk Bogard, (the medical student in question) has played so many divers roles we never know what to expect next. The last time we saw him in the *Green Light* he was a fear-crazed killer, fleeing for his life, for *Doctor in the House*, a gay, rollicking comedy about four medical students and their hilarious adventures, Dirk plays a diffident new student who makes an inauspicious beginning to his career by going into boarding with three well known figures around the Medical School. All three are taking another fling at their first year, the first, because

Modesty In Hunting

We want to introduce to you a friend of Charles', a chap by the name of Pierre. We must note here the one significant difference between Charles and Pierre, and that is, Pierre always uses a gun. Now the other day he related to us an experience which will probably go down in history as one of the most unique happenings in which a human being could partake.

According to Pierre the story goes: "With my old shotgun under my arm, I set off into the deep woods on my annual hunting expedition, never suspecting that before I would get home again, I would have a tale that would be told over and over for generations to come. Well, the first bit of excitement came as I was making my way around the side of a steep cliff. Accidentally I stepped on a large size boulder and fell to the ground, the gun slipping from my hand. On hitting the ground, the gun exploded. Now there happened to be a flock of wild geese flying overhead, and I'll be darned if they all weren't killed! But that isn't all. The boulder that I tripped over rolled down the steep incline, smashed into a bear's den and killed two little bear cubs. Boy, was that mother bear ever mad! And with a loud snort-charged. Was I scared? No. I just reached into the mouth of the animal until I grabbed its tail—and then pulled. It turned her inside out! Unfortunately that great effort took its toll and I fainted. A few moments later, I awoke lying in the river which is at the bottom of the cliff. I slowly got up, and to my surprise, my pockets were filled with fish! And with the weight being too great, one of the buttons holding my suspenders, snapped off—flew into the reeds and killed a partridge."

There Pierre ends his tale. We're not sure why, except that he appeared to be quite modest and probably felt that if he went farther, a few people might think that he was stretching it a bit.

—Woody Woodpecker.

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A Study in Absurdity

Something has been happening lately across the country. We are referring to the sudden change from Mickey Spillaine and Space Adventures to the deluge of paper cover "good books" which have been appearing in ever increasing numbers in every drugstore, newsstand, etc. Now, it is not that we have anything against such "good books"; but it is our firm belief that everything has its proper place and that once it gets "out of joint" it either becomes absurd or harmful. Such is the case with these paperbacks—they are becoming absurd.

As we are writing we have about 25 of these books before us. All with multi-colored, beautiful and exceedingly cheap-looking covers, in other words, characteristically American. Seventy per cent are written by famous authors, ranging from Plato to Whitehead. Let us look closer at these books and try to determine their social value (for that is the value they are supposed to have—"Mentors").

The first one is our good friend Niccolo Machiavelli's misleading and misunderstood *Prince*. Now, as everyone knows, the understanding of the *Prince* depends entirely on the careful perusal of his major work — *The Discourses*, and a thorough acquaintance with the Italian Renaissance. In other words, the reading of the *Prince* must be preceded by an acquaintance with Villari, Burckhardt and Symonds. Without that the *Prince* remains meaningless and, at best, obnoxious. The question arises; how many of the "ordinary" people buying this book have the necessary prerequisite to really enjoy and understand the little treatise?

The second book is one of the best we have read in a long time. We are referring to H. J. Muller's *The Uses of the Past*. The following words are written on its cover: "A Bold Analysis of the Meaning of History." What does this short sentence imply? That to enjoy and appreciate this little classic the reader is expected to have a good acquaintance with Western History. For example, ch. 5 deals with the highly fascinating period of Greek Pericles, Socrates, Aeschylus and the other immortals. The discussion in this chapter is concerned with criticism of some of our notions of that particular

period. The criticism is excellent but it presupposes that the reader has already a good, to say the least, knowledge of that period. Otherwise this chapter and most of the others tend only to confuse the reader or at best to give him a wrong impression of what the author is really saying. Again the question arises—how many readers of this particular edition are going to gain anything from this admirable survey of our past?

We could cite a score of other books to illustrate our point but two or three more will suffice. For example, Alfred North Whitehead's *Aims of Education*. A thoroughly enjoyable little volume but only up to a certain point. Approximately one-third of the book deals with subjects so utterly esoteric that its appearance in such an edition fails to be justified in any way. Whitehead devotes chapters to such "obscure" subjects like "Fields of Force, "Time and Space" which contain sentences like: "A sense-object is part of the complete stream of presentation. This concept of being a part is the statement of the relation of the sense object to the complete sense-presentation for that consciousness."

Again, S. K. Langer's *Philosophy in a New Key* contains an abundance of references at the bottom of each page. A few examples: Russell, *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*, Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*; *Die Sprachphilosophischen Werke Humboldts*.

Yet, surprisingly enough, some people, laborers, office workers, etc., are buying up these books—not to read them but to keep them at home for everyone to see what a "smart" person its owner is. But what is really infuriating is the fact that very frequently these books are the object of contempt and ridicule. The "smart alecs" recently delighted themselves in defiling verbally a Pocket volume of *Platonic Dialogues* to the great delight of a number of bystanders in a drug store. Is this not carrying "popular education" too far?

It is a good sign that crime and sex are disappearing from the bookstands. It is a bad sign that really fine books are being circulated indiscriminately, undergoing worthless "criticism" and creating a class of "quasi-intelligensia." Every thing has its proper place. Remove it and it becomes worthless.

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