

GREEN PASTURES, BEAUTIFUL IN SIMPLICITY, IS IMPRESSIVE

Circle Shows Film Version of Fine Play

Adaptation Is Praised for Excellent Direction and Good Acting.

BY JOHN W. THOMPSON
Starting when the earth was nothing but a "mess of bad weather," Marc Connelly's movie adaptation of "The Green Pastures" relates as impressive a sermon as we ever have heard.

But don't get the idea that Mr. Connelly's fable is "preachy." It is grand entertainment, and is acted excellently by a large all-Negro cast. Although Rex Ingram's portrayal of De Lawd is not quite as convincing as the late Richard B. Harrison's interpretation, his characterization does not lack power.

"The Green Pastures" opens with a group of small pickaninnies at Sunday School down South. Their teacher, Mr. Deeshee, tells them Bible stories. Throughout the film, the camera returns momentarily to this little group, and lets one listen to naive questions asked by the youngsters.

Early scenes of the Negro fable depict a fish fry in progress in Heaven. Every one is supremely happy, eating catfish sandwiches and "biled" custard, smoking 10-cent "see-gars." Gabriel approaches, horn in hand, shouts:

"Gangway, for the Lawd God Jehovah!"

On walks the gentle, be-whiskered Divinity, clad in a long-tailed coat. He too sips custard, tucks a cigar in his pocket. But the custard lacks something. De Lawd decides it needs more Firmament. So he just "mess back" and causes there to be more Firmament. Then there is too much Firmament and little angels' wings get damp, and it looks for a moment as though there might be a pneumonia epidemic in Heaven. So De Lawd just "mess back" again, and causes there to be earth and the sun, as a place to "dreen" off excess Firmament.

Lord Has Trouble

That's the fable about the creation of the world, as it exists, or existed, in the minds of Southern Negroes. But once he has the earth, trouble starts for De Lawd. He creates Adam and Eve to live there, and their children kill each other. There is wickedness and sin all over the place. So De Lawd gives it up as a bad job, calls Noah from the flock, gives him his Ark commission.

After 40 days and the life begins anew on the earth. But the people backslide again. This time it's trouble in Egypt where De Lawd's people are in bondage. He sends Moses and Aaron to liberate them, to lead them back to the Land of Canaan. Things go pretty well for a while, but when night clubs open in Babylon and the High Priest puts religion on a business basis, De Lawd decides to refuse further responsibility for his creations.

Years later, He hears a voice calling to him from earth. He tries not to listen but finally is persuaded to help the young soldier who solicits his aid in restoring faith and love on earth. De Lawd enables the young man's warriors to win back the Ark of the Covenant in the battle of Jericho.

From Heaven, De Lawd hears cries of the crowd at the Crucifixion. He realizes that even God must suffer and take new hope in his pet child, the earth.

Mr. Connelly and William Keighley directed the movie version of "The Green Pastures," with a finesse which exceeds even the fine stage production. Vivid, colorful and swift changing from reality to fable and fantasy enables audiences to grasp easily the idea that the author did not try to re-write the Bible, but merely tried to represent the simple faith of the Negro.

Simplicity Observed

We wish to congratulate Warner Brothers for not going "Hollywood" in this production. The Heavenly gates, which might have been tall spires, glittering with pearls, are not that at all. They are the fine gates seen all through the South at entrances to fine mansions. They are the finest of gates as far as the play's characters are concerned. The same simplicity was observed throughout the picture.

There are many individual performances that merit praise. Chief among them is Eddie Anderson's Noah, which stands out as the best acting. Ernest Whitman's King Pharaoh also is convincing.

"Green Pastures" wouldn't be "Green Pastures" without music by the Hall Johnson choir. It's the loveliest music we've heard from the screen. "Simple folk songs of the South were moulded into thrilling and sentimental ballads which fit the theme more nearly than any other background music the screen has employed. This probably is because music is a foundation for just such religion as described in "Green Pastures."

England banned the play because it was "sacrilegious." Russia because it was "godly." Persons who saw first showings of the picture yesterday at the Circle surely agree with us that at least two nations are wrong.

Harry Carey Signs

Harry Carey, Western star, has been signed to play an important role in Wesley Ruggles' new film, "With Banners Blowing."

FATHER AND DAUGHTER RELAX



Now that her illustrious father is through work on "Romeo and Juliet," in which he is starred with Norma Shearer, 11-year-old Leslie Ruth Howard spends a lot of time taking strolls with Papa Leslie. Leslie Ruth shows exceptional talent herself, as those who have heard her on the radio with Mr. Howard are aware.

FILMLAND'S FUNNIEST MEN! SLIM SUMMERVILLE

The sixth of a series.

BY PAUL HARRISON
HOLLYWOOD, July 18.—Slim Summerville hasn't bothered to figure out a philosophy of humor. He acts according to a simple formula — plays his role, straight and takes them very seriously. The astonishing result is that fans who offer more and more make-up to the director through large eyes tinged with custard and an ineffable melancholy. "Great!" yelled the director. "You got the job!"

So a comedian was born. Summerville still doubts that he is funny, and seldom is sure whether he's contributing a tear or a belly laugh to a scene. Sometimes he knows, of course. He contributed one of the most hilarious lines in "The Country Doctor"—when the fourth brand-new quintuplet was brought into the room.

"Doc," said Constable Summerville, anxiously, "you got to stop this!"

ON screen or off, he never laughs aloud. Occasionally he chuckles—a brief heh-heh—and his smiles are more wistful flashes that add a few more contours to a face which even in repose looks like a relief map of the high Sierras.

He is a sad man. His baggy cheeks look as though they contained twin quills of cut plug, and his chin is that of a man who has just sent his upper plate to the veterinarian. Summerville is 43, and would be 6 feet 3 inches tall if he ever straightened up. He looks older because his hair and beard are graying, and he has worn an unkempt stubble in his last four pictures. He hates to shave, and pleaded for permission to retain his beard in "Public Nuisance No. 1."

HE was a child of adversity, motherless at 5. After living in New Mexico, Canada, and Oklahoma with little formal education, he was graduated at the age of 10 to the nomadic fellowship of the road.

He worked at pretty nearly everything. There was a period of apprenticeship in a coffin factory. San Francisco next, with Summerville racking 'em in a pool hall. He was handy with a cue, too, and with quiet guile would allow himself to be drawn into games with avaricious slickers. He did so well there

that, to this day, he loves San Francisco above any other spot on earth.

He came to Los Angeles to look up an uncle, and found instead a Mack Sennett comedian who escorted him to the studio. The dour, angular youngster hadn't thought of acting, but he proved so apt at "taking a pie" that he became the first "guaranteed extra" in Hollywood.

Sennett assured him four days' work a week at the magnificent total of \$12. Slim accepted. Then came contracts with various studios, and some years as a director. It was his role as "Jaden," in "All Quiet on the Western Front," that lifted him out of cheap slapstick shorts and made him a character comic.

LATELY he has been just about the busiest funny man in town. Makes a lot of money these days, but is a self-acknowledged sucker for oil-stock salesmen, ceding acquaintances, and ordinary beggars.

He lives by the sea and spends most of his spare time casting furtively but happily into the surf. He reads only detective stories, prefers Fred Allen on the radio, and almost never goes to the movies unless there's a Mickey Mouse.

His best friends are his doctor and his dentist. He'll walk around a golf course with Bing Crosby, and almost never at a party. He tends a party. He likes to cook Italian dishes, but is the only one who dares eat the result.

He is the sloppiest dresser in the film colony, and almost never at a party. He tends a party. He likes to cook Italian dishes, but is the only one who dares eat the result.

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'The Devil Doll,' Newest of Horror Pictures, Is Full of Mystery and Surprises

Lionel Barrymore, Disguised as Woman, Plays Leading Role in Loew's Offering With Ease and Conviction; Photography Good.

What next? We've had zombies, Draculas, Kong and son, vampires, walking dead, and now we have the "Devil Doll" to make us look under our beds before retiring.

The "Devil Doll," playing at Loew's, stars Lionel Barrymore and is crammed intriguingly with all sorts of surprises and mysterious action. It is alive with sure-fire entertainment, for the most part well acted, and at the same time is a lot of hokum which won't stand up under much cross-examination.

More than a contribution to medical science, it is a contribution to motion picture science because technical production is more outstanding than plausibility of plot.

In "The Devil Doll," we have Paul Lavond, a Paris banker wrongly committed to Devil's Island prison for a crime he didn't commit, struggling through swamps in a successful escape. With him is Marcel, mad scientist, also escaping from prison.

At Marcel's home, Lavond meets Melita, Marcel's wife, who helps her husband show the newcomer how they can reduce animals to one-sixth normal size and yet keep them alive. The only thing they can't do is to keep the brains intact, and the dolls respond only to other's wills. When Marcel tries his stuff on his wife's servant girl, Lachna, and her brain fails to function normally, the scientists die.

Lavond suddenly gets an idea for revenge. To Paris with Melita, Marcel's wife, he hurries, taking with him the secret process. There, disguised as an old woman, he captures one of three men who are offering more and more make-up to the director through large eyes tinged with custard and an ineffable melancholy. "Great!" yelled the director. "You got the job!"

These marvels have been taking place for 23 years, since the gangling Summerville squeezed into the uniform of a Keystone cop and ambled on a set to meet his first pie.

He accepted the pie as just another of the rude buffings of fate.

He wiped away the mess and looked at the director through large eyes tinged with custard and an ineffable melancholy. "Great!" yelled the director. "You got the job!"

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SHOW BOAT ARTISTS FEATURE LYRIC BILL

Radio's summer doldrums are vaudeville patrons' good fortune. Scarcely a week goes by that the Lyric does not present on its stage one or more popular radio entertainers. Currently representing the air waves are Show Boat's Keller Sisters and Lynch, a harmonizing trio, two women and a man, who sing their own clever arrangements of popular tunes.

The Lyric show is a varied and above-average vaudeville bill together with the picture "The Crime of Dr. Forbes," starring Gloria Stuart and Robert Kent.

Acrobatic Act Daring

Opened with a daring, at times breath-taking acrobatic act by the Danwills, the stage offering is snappy and not too long. Also in the spotlight are the Danwills, who present a really funny pantomime; three comedians, Melis, Kirk and Howard, who mimic such personalities as Hitler, Mussolini and Halle Selassie, with astonishing fidelity, and the Jans and Lynton dance revue, which closes the show with artistic, rhythmic effects.

We feel that it is not too late to mention the Lyric's rhymed introductions of its vaudeville stunts. Borrowed, we suspect, from Horace Heidt, who popularized rhymed introductions on the air, the idea adds to the enjoyment of the performances.

The "punch" in "The Crime of Dr. Forbes" comes in the last-minute turn of events, which, we suspect, even the most astute mystery fans do not foresee. Accused of murdering his benefactor, Dr. Eric Godfrey (J. Edward Bromberg), Dr. Michael Forbes (Robert Kent) faces conviction when unexpected revelations free him to the waiting arms of Mrs. Godfrey (Gloria Stuart).

Dr. Forbes, after graduation with honors from medical school, had associated with Dr. Godfrey in the latter's famous laboratory. Dr. Godfrey was called to Arizona to investigate a mineral substance believed to be responsible for a prevalent disease, departing with the admonition to his wife that she frequently entertain young Dr. Forbes to prevent his overwork in the laboratory.

When Dr. Godfrey is injured in a mine accident, both his wife and Dr. Forbes rush to Arizona, to find him incurably hurt and in great agony. Dr. Godfrey begs his friend to end his misery.

"The Crime of Dr. Forbes" was directed by George Marshall, and aimed from an original screen play by Frances Hyland and Saul Elkins. Altogether, it is an interesting, dramatic and reasonably well acted and directed movie.

Actor Is Athletic

Paul Muni, running at top speed in a scene in "The Good Earth," tripped, fell, turned a complete somersault, and suffered not a scratch.

Team in Films 9 Years

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Apollo Gets Will Rogers Movie Again

Humor of 'State Fair,' Acting Enjoyed; Some Scenes Show Changes.

If you smell a very pleasant aroma coming from the Apollo this week, it's probably Mrs. Frake's mince-meat which got a double dose of apple brandy and won first prize in "State Fair," the Will Rogers movie which opened yesterday for a return engagement.

Perhaps no other incident in a movie during the last five years has been enjoyed as universally as the mince-meat gag. Mrs. Frake would stand for no brandy in her mince-meat. But Pa Frake (Mr. Rogers) poured in a half a bottle while Ma was out of the room. Then when she came back, she gave in and poured the rest of the bottle's contents into the mixture. And was the judge's nose red?

Phil Stong's story about country folks and their adventures at the state fair is a splendid movie entertainment now as it was several years ago, although censors, for the return showing, cut the heart out of one sequence showing Emily Joyce (Sally Eilers) and Wayne Frake (Norman Foster). "State Fair" was filmed when the Legion of Decency was just an idea in the back of Will Hays' mind.

The Frake family, Pa, Ma, Margy and Wayne, trudge off to the fair, Pa to win the Hampshire hog prize with Blue Boy, Ma to walk off with medals for pickles (sour and sweet) and mince-meat.

Wayne meets a beautiful girl of the streets, and Margy falls in love with a newspaper reporter who comes running through the rain in the final fade-out to make her life complete.

The film contains excellent acting, and was directed intelligently by Henry King. Victor Jory is seen in a fine characterization in a small role.

"State Fair" is the way we like to remember Will Rogers. (By J. W. T.)

Wine New Role

Una O'Connor, character actress who won acclaim for her work in "The Informer," is to have a prominent role in "The Plough and the Stars."

Plans to Travel

Jessie Ralph, character lead in "Count Pete," is saving her money to take a leisurely trip around the world.

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Belmont W. Wash. & Belmont Double Feature "Three Godfathers" "Treacherly Rides the Range" Sun. Double Feature—Irene Dunne "SHOW BOAT" Joe E. Brown "SONS O' GUNS"	Stratford 19th & College Double Feature Dick Foran Ruby Keeler "COLEEN" "THE GHOST GOES WEST" Sunday Double Feature Patricia Ellis "BOULDER DAM" "ROBINHOOD OF ELDMADO"	Strand 1333 E. Wash. St. Double Feature Margaret Sullivan "THE MOON'S OUR HOME" "DOG FIGHT FLANNERS" Sun. Double Feature—Boyd "BAR 20 RIDES AGAIN" Gary Cooper-Jean Arthur "MR. DEEDS GOES TO TOWN"
DAISY 2540 W. Mich. St. Double Feature William Boyd "CALL OF THE PRAIRIE" "PRIDE OF THE MARINES" Sun. Double Feature—Carol Lombard "The Princess Comes Across" "THE LAW IN HER HANDS"	MECCA Noble & Mass. Double Feature Fred Bartholomew "LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY" Louis-Schmeling Fight Pictures Sunday Double Feature Janet Gaynor "Small Town Girl" "Treacherly Rides the Range"	Paramount 411 E. Wash. Double Feature Patricia Ellis "BOULDER DAM" Joan Perry "Mysterious Avenger" Sun. Double Feature—Sybil Sides "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine" "The Leathernecks Have Landed"
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Zaring Central at Fall Crk. Double Feature Robert Montgomery "THE GHOST GOES WEST" Chester Morris "Three Godfathers" Sun. Double Feature—Fred McMurtry "13 HOURS BY AIR" "THREE LIVE GHOSTS"	Tacoma 2442 E. Wash. St. Double Feature Edmund Lowe "THE GARDEN MURDER CASE" Patricia Ellis "BOULDER DAM" Sun. Double Feature—Marilyn Loy "PETTICOAT FEVER" "BIG BROWN EYES"	Sanders 400 E. New York Double Feature Dick Foran "SONG OF THE SADDLE" "THE UNGUARDED HOUR" Sun. Double Feature—Guy Kibbee "LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY" Jimmy Allen "SKY PARADE"
Garrick 30th and Illinois Double Feature Gene Raymond "LOVE ON A BEAM" "BOULDER DAM" Sun. Double Feature—Fred Bartholomew "LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY" Chester Morris "Moonlight Murder"	IRVING St. Cl. & Ft. Wayne Double Feature William Boyd "THREE ON A TRAIL" "SWEET SURRENDER" Sun. Double Feature—Claudette Colbert "UNDER TWO FLAGS" "THE FIRST BABY"	Avalon Frost, Churchman Double Feature Dick Foran "SONG OF THE SADDLE" Donald Woods "ROAD GANG" Sun. Double Feature—Dionne Quinlan "THE COUNTRY DOCTOR" "DANGEROUS INTRIGUE"
St. Clair St. Cl. & Ft. Wayne Double Feature William Boyd "THREE ON A TRAIL" "SWEET SURRENDER" Sun. Double Feature—Claudette Colbert "UNDER TWO FLAGS" "THE FIRST BABY"	Emerson 4638 E. 16th St. Triple Bill Louis-Schmeling Fight Pictures Fred Bartholomew "THE FARMER IN THE DELL" "Murder on the Bridge Path" Sun. Double Feature—Carol Lombard "LOVE BEFORE BREAKFAST" Ted Healy "SPEED"	Garfield 2508 Shelby St. Double Feature Dick Foran "PETTICOAT FEVER" "THE GARDEN MURDER CASE" Sun. Double Feature—Al Jolson "THE SINGING KID" "The Calling of Dan Matthews"
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