



FILM TOPICS

by Globe



The Evening Standard describes

COME OUT OF THE PANTRY

as

"Jack Buchanan's best picture."

The Daily Sketch

says

"If you want a good laugh, see

COME OUT OF THE PANTRY"

Why not? It is a British and Dominions picture directed by Jack Raymond and distributed by



ON THE BRITISH SETS—con.

So it doesn't take the perspicacity of a Sherlock Holmes to determine the type of film this is; fortunately it has Marcel Varnel in the directorial chair; I say fortunately, because in the hands of some directors I know the amount of amusement to be squeezed out of a plot of this kind would be tenuous indeed. Varnel, on the other hand, has shown himself capable of making an amusing film out of very unpromising material; and when he has good material . . . well, look at *Girls Will Be Boys*!

Claude Dampier, Spencer Trevor, Sebastian Smith, and Peter Haddon are also of the party—which automatically makes it a good party.

Gent's Misfits

And now back to Elstree, to investigate the cause of all that grunting and groaning . . . Oh, it's only poor Jack Buchanan fitting himself into his armour for *When Knights Were Bold*. The trouble is that the 15th century exquisites who wore this armour-plating were apparently a great deal shorter than their counterparts to-day, but, by way of compensation, were considerably broader, so at first Mr. Buchanan had to achieve a very peculiar shape indeed in order to fit his tin.

However, the Research Department came to the rescue, and compromised by fitting him out partly in plate and partly in chain mail. So now Jack can shin up and around his noble castle like a twelve-year-old.

More grunting and groaning at Islington, and this time it's Henry VIII a-dying.

Ah, that gave you a shock! You didn't think anyone but Charles Laughton could play the Royal Widower, did you?

Here's the same difficulty that we picturegoers are encountering in the case of the Jack Buchanan *Pimpernel*; we've already made up our minds what Henry VIII looks like, and only that will do.

Interesting

As a matter of fact, it's a very brief appearance in *Lady Jane Grey*, and that fine actor Frank Cellier will probably look quite as much like the aged and dying king as Charles Laughton could.

This production looks like a very interesting one indeed. From the little I've seen of it, I gather the richness and roguery of the Tudor period are being reproduced very faithfully.

Nova Pilbeam, of course, is playing Lady Jane, having obligingly grown up to exactly the right age for the character; to wit, sixteen summers.

So you'd better put out of your heads any idea of seeing Nova in little-girl parts any more. How they do grow up on us, to be sure!

Here, for the benefit of the cast-enthusiasts, is the personnel of *Lady Jane Grey*.

Sir Cedric Hardwicke plays the unscrupulous Earl of Warwick, who treats kings and queens as so many pawns in the game of state. Dame Sybil Thorndyke (whom we see all too rarely on the screen nowadays) is a faithful nurse. John Mills is young Lord Gildford Dudley. John Laurie is the fanatical John Knox, the reformer. Martita Hunt and Miles Malleon play Jane's parents—and Mr. Malleon also is responsible for the script and the dialogue.

Let Us Sit . . .

Felix Aylmer is Edward Seymour, who is made Regent, only to lose his head for it, and Leslie Perrins is Thomas Seymour. And young Desmond Tester (who attracted favourable attention in his first film, *Midshipman Easy*) is another king—the boy King Edward IV.

And he also dies. All this sounds rather reminiscent of the suggestion in *King Lear*—"Come, let us sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the death of kings" (assuming, of course, that that was in *King Lear*).

But I'm informed that there are lighter moments too in this highly dramatic story.

A calamity nearly happened, by the way; Edward Seymour, the Regent, reverted to Felix Aylmer when the unit broke for lunch, and wandered off to the studio restaurant.

Unfortunately, Scotch broth was on the menu, and, fearing the effect of hot broth on the spiritum which held his magnificent moustachios in place, he gently detached them and put them in an empty tumbler for safety.

Saved!

When he had finished his lunch, lo! the glass had gone; and later two very unhappy, sodden little pads of crepe-hair were rescued from the washing-up water in the kitchen—but happily, just in time to be dried out and recurred for the next "take."

There is no limit to the perils of film-production; in fact, so many things could go wrong that I wonder the film ever reaches the screen at all.

By a coincidence, yet more grunting and groaning is coming from Shepherd's Bush; but this time it's Archvillain Peter Lorre having a spot of bother with his dialogue.

You see, it's this way; Peter was born in Hungary, and speaks Magyar. (Yes, Hilda, you wear it as a blouse; I know.) Well, his profession of acting took him to Vienna, where he learned to speak German.

Then Gaumont-British collared him for *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, and he had to learn our difficult and dangerous tongue.

Complicated

And when Hollywood grabbed him, he found there was still another language to learn; he had to grasp the fact that "trousers" is pronounced "pants," and braces are suspenders, and suspenders are garters, and garters don't exist.

But here's the climax. When he returned for the new spy-thriller *The Secret Agent*, he found he had to be a Mexican, who speaks broken English with a Spanish accent—whereas Peter Lorre speaks English with a German-Hungarian accent.

So now he's working hard with a Spanish tutor, trying to determine how a Mexican spy would pronounce English while engaged in secret service work in war-time Switzerland.

I bet he wishes he'd been an engine-driver.

Bachelors

On this *Secret Agent* set, a beautiful blonde girl, with an excellent figure and a B.A. degree, stands beneath the blazing arc lamps while cameras are focussed and positions arranged.

Then, when all is ready, she moves out of the way and goes to her chair at the side of the set, while another beautiful blonde girl, with an excellent figure and a B.A. degree, takes her place and plays her part.

The first is Brenda Green, the second Madeleine Carroll. Brenda acts as stand-in to the star. She took her degree at Oxford (Madeleine's is from Birmingham), and was going to be a schoolmistress but instead she became a parlourmaid, a fairy queen in a pantomime, a traveller for silk stockings, a free-lance journalist, a play-producer, a stage manager, and supernumerary on a tramp-steamer in the Mediterranean.

Fate

Recently she understudied four of the nine parts in the all-women cast of a recent thriller at the Westminster theatre. She has almost given up the idea of becoming a famous film-star . . . almost; no one ever gives it up quite.

She should really have become a school-marm, like Madeleine Carroll; that might have done it. Anyway, while Madeleine is "doing her stuff," Brenda has quite a lot of time to sit on the sidelines and write sonnets.

Oy! I'm running a little short of space, and here I am burbling away as usual about merely interesting things, instead of being instructive.

Well, here's some information for a change. *Eliza Comes to Stay* has gone into production, and Eliza has come to stay at Hammersmith—at the Riverside studios, where Twickenham films have taken floor-space.

Eliza herself is Betty Balfour, and the story (which is from a very successful stage-comedy) is all about a middle-aged man whose friend leaves a little girl in his care.

He fills a beautiful nursery with the most outrageously expensive toys in preparation for a child's arrival, only to find when she turns up that he has been left a very attractive young woman.

And as Sir Seymour Hicks is playing the part, a pleasant time is liable to be had by all of us. Two grand troupers will be working together for the first time—no, wait a bit, four at least. Here's the enormous Oscar Asche as a butler, and Athene Seyler.

I'm certainly looking forward to this, especially as Henry Edwards is directing it.