

Perhaps Eric Bransby Williams thinks three is company if one is reading! Miriam Seegar and Nelson Keys, on location for "When Knights Were Bold," regard Eric's studiousness with something far removed from admiration.



The Editor MINGLES

A personal angle on studios, people and pictures in London's film world

A DEAR old lady once suggested that, to avoid mistakes in identity, burglars should be compelled to wear some distinctive costume. It would be a sound notion, from some points of view, if directors of British pictures had some uniform to distinguish them from the others who cluster round an illuminated set.

I often see non-committal people watching pictures in the making, and wonder whether they are relations of the man who holds the slate, owners of cinema theatre circuits in Czechoslovakia, parents of babies used in the film, or just plain shareholders watching their money go in retakes, amperage and temperament.

Personally, I know all the directors; but a stranger must often wonder which of the gentlemen round the camera is the one whose name on the screen will be greeted with that warmth of hopeful applause that is only heard before a new British film has really started.

British directors affect every extreme and every happy medium of attire. In quiet, well-cut lounge suits, and with impeccable linen, one will always find

Graham Cutts, Harley Knoles, Herbert Wilcox and Hayes Hunter—the last-named, with his coat sleeves rolled to the elbows, suggesting the mesmerist he is. I once saw Alfred Hitchcock directing in full evening dress and an opera hat—he usually concentrates, however, like George Pearson, W. P. Kellino and Jack Raymond, in shirt sleeves. Pearson wears a hat with his shirt sleeves.

A bright note is struck by Sinclair Hill, in a vivid canary sleeved waistcoat. A similar gay yellow garment is worn by his cameraman, and it is, in fact, the badge of a small secret order to which I have myself had the honour of being invited.

If untidiness is a reliable indication of genius, then we have two directors—George Cooper and Frank Miller—who are far greater than Lubitsch.

The only point of resemblance between Anthony Asquith and Hugh Croise is that both wear patterned pull-overs. So does Leslie Hiscott. George Dewhurst and one or two others don linen overalls, thus lending a not unpleasing Home and Colonial air to the operations.

The Shrinking Violet.

But by far the most striking attire is worn by my friend Adrian Brunel. His belted flannel trousers are concertinaesque, and he wears a thick flannel shirt of Byronic cut and deep mauve in hue. This tones perfectly with the Cooper-Hewitt mercury-vapour lights, and the general effect is something between a sculptor's secretary and a worker in a Bulgarian power-station.

I found him thus the other day at Islington directing *The Crooked Billet*. A night-club crowd was abruptly seized with panic as a posse of Sidney Jay's policemen appeared guarding the doors. Luckily I have influence, and got through the cordon. Brunel's cast includes, besides Madeleine Carroll, Carlyle Blackwell (who cannot beat me at putting) and Gordon Harker, a new young man who might be noted and encouraged. He is like Monte Blue and Rod la Rocque. His name is Kim Peacock.

A New Castle United.

Every few weeks someone tells me that I must come and see the biggest set ever put up in a British studio.

I generally say, "What, again?" But lately I found what is easily the biggest interior—the castle hall for *When Knights Were Bold* at Cricklewood—quite by accident, for nobody had said a word about it. Tim Whelan, who is directing Nelson Keys in this great farce (which ought to be a *British Yankee at the Court of King Arthur*), failed to find a real castle, so had one built at Stanmore; and hundreds of men in armour lately stormed it, to the great edification of that historic Middlesex village.

Based on actual Norman originals, the vast hall has been erected in sections and joined together in the studio, to the brilliant designs of my friend Clifford Pember. Nothing more accurate has ever been done in Hollywood, and the picture will at least be a triumph for the art director.

The story, of course, lends itself to outdoor expansion and historical detail, and Herbert Norris, the expert adviser on costumes and trappings, tells me that the attacking army of Sir Brian will travel with pavis, gyn, trabutrum, perriers, ballista, trebuchet, mangona, arbalest, spurgardon and espringale. All of which have long been discarded by the British Army Council.

I Meet Marion.

I asked Marion Davies at the Savoy if she was going to make a "talkie"—beating by a neck the dozen or so other Pressmen who had framed the same query.

Marion, who is one of the most charming