

"Everything that is not absolutely essential must be cut out at all costs. But in eliminating even one line of dialogue, we have perhaps altered the whole sequence of close-ups and other shots, and the whole thing must be rearranged."

"You see how complicated it becomes. After *Don Juan* was finished, we added a few extra scenes because we realised on seeing the film on the screen that the funeral sequence could be built up better and be made longer and more impressive by these additions. For this, of course, re-takes were necessary, which meant a hurried SOS to many of the artistes!

"I have a chief cutter and one assistant working for me, and the joining and cutting machines they use are of the latest American design. The joining machine, as its name implies, pieces together all the bits and sections we cut out of different sequences, after the day's shots have been selected and arranged."

"Most of this I leave entirely to the initiative and intelligence of my assistants, and the result is shown the following morning to myself and the director for final approval and, if necessary, correction."

"In the final editing it is often found necessary to 'inter-cut'—that is to say certain bits are perhaps removed from one sequence and dropped transferred to another, the displaced shots being transferred to the first sequence, and so on."

"This method is called 'cross-cutting,' and can be applied equally to the dialogue. For example, in *Don Juan* a certain line of dialogue spoken by Merle Oberon delayed her reaction to the spirit of the words; the line was too long, but too good to remove altogether. So we cut it to allow her reaction to take place at the right moment, and transferred the remainder of the line to another member of the cast."

"At the completion of production, the whole film is run through, and we embark on the final polishing—and many a long and complicated conference and argument this leads to, believe me!

"And here I must hand it to Alexander Korda, for he will spare no trouble to perfect every detail in his pictures, each one of which he strives to make the best he has produced to date."

"I still think, however, that it is one of the weak spots in English film production that there are

so few 'pre-views'—that is, pictures definitely tried out on an audience first.

"The ordinary trade show does not quite meet this purpose, as it is of necessity composed of rather a special audience. In America the value of a 'pre-view' is so far recognised that each picture has at least one, and sometimes as many as three, 'pre-views' in order that the reactions of the average audience to the film may be studied."

"This is the only way to test thoroughly whether the picture has been cut to the best advantage or not, since everyone in the film studio is too soaked in the atmosphere and technicalities of production to get an unbiased view on the picture as a whole, and it is amazing how much the audience can help."

"In fact, many film companies in Hollywood arrange to have post-cards issued to the audience in the kinema, inviting comments and criticism—and very useful and intelligent these comments usually are."

"Usually, too, members of the staff, and even the director, will listen for remarks from the audience during the performance or as they stream slowly out afterwards; and some tips are often picked up, not only concerning the production itself, but referring to the acting and dialogue."

"Take a comedy, for example. The laughter must be long enough, but not too long. Sometimes in a try-out it is found that just as the audience's reaction is reaching its peak, and the laugh growing, the situation is cut too soon. Or vice versa, it has not been cut soon enough and the audience is growing restless and bored."

"On the other hand, a dramatic situation, particularly a horror or a thriller, must never be drawn out or prolonged; and this can only be found out by testing the audience's reactions and sensing when they are becoming uneasy. Immediately after the try-out a conference is held on the points observed and commented on, and the film is then cut or augmented afresh."

I asked Mr. Young when he was last in England, and if he noticed many improvements. "I have not been in England since the making of *When Knights Were Bold*," answered Mr. Young, "and I can tell you that I notice some differences since then."

"Apart from the astonishing progress in general production, the maximum that a producer dared risk financially on even a super film in those days was £25,000, because England, at that time, had practically no markets abroad."

"To-day, it is already a well-known fact that British films are making Hollywood directors sit up, and the foreign market for certain films is nearly unlimited."

"And there is another thing I have noticed," he continued. "British films—which people have always said would never quite catch up to Holly-



Nelson Keys in "When Knights Were Bold," which was in production when Mr. Young paid his last visit to this country

wood's standard—have now not only caught up, but are actually beginning to lead and continue where Hollywood is leaving off."

"Some of Hollywood's most brilliant men are working over here now, and you have apparatus which has not yet been used in Hollywood."

"In the 'trick' department I happen to know that there are men here who are experimenting with things which Hollywood has not dreamt of yet."

"I think Britain's weakest point is still undoubtedly the scenarios. Also the lack of technicians and lack of stage space."

"In England all the sets must be put up in such a hurry and taken down again as quickly to make room for others, simply because one studio has only room for one set at a time, and on this basis of hurry and rush, the setting is bound to suffer in the end."

"In Hollywood there is always plenty of room and stage space, and each studio can have several sets in construction at a time."

So they are not hampered by this constant building against time, and can give more care and thought to the business, and spend more time on production."

tor
da.
als
from
Pimpernel
the Howard
ute. A
description
by the edito



Mr. Young is always on the set when shooting is in progress. Here he is seen (sitting) with ex-Mayor Jimmy Walker and Betty Compton

Alexander Korda directing "The Private Life of Don Juan." He is an indefatigable worker, says Mr. Young