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Booth Tarkington.

From the play by ~~Booth Tarkington~~

CAMEO KIRBY (Fox, 1923) Directed by John Ford; Scenario by Robert N. Lee;

Camera, George Schneiderman; 70 mins app.

With John Gilbert, Gertrude Olmstead, Jean Arthur

Tarkington's barnstormer of a play (remade as a semi-musical in 1930, presumably to cash in on its similarities to "Show Boat") is one of the few early John Fords that seems never to re-surface, probably because the only surviving prints are from the Czech archive and are subtitled accordingly. However, it's an easy plot to follow and a synopsis will be provided. A story of a chivalrous (but of course much misunderstood) riverboat gambler, it proved to be an ideal vehicle for John Gilbert, and did much to boost his growing popularity. Ford's handling of it is rather divided: at times he seems content to offer a photographed play, yet when the right opportunity arises -- as in a beautifully staged duel sequence in long, waving grasslands -- he creates some of his loveliest visual images. Some of the shots of the river boats were good enough to be re-used, undetected, in "Steamboat Round the Bend" in the mid-30's. -- Wm K. Everson '128 PFA