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Merrily We Go to Hell

Paramount production and release, starring Sylvia Sidney and Fredric March. Adrienne Allen and Skeets Gallagher featured. Directed by Dorothy Arzner. Scenario by Edwin Justus Mayer, based on the novel, 'I, Jerry, Take Thee Joan,' by Cleo Lucas. Photographed by David Abel. At the Paramount, New York, June 10. Running time, 82 mins.

Joan Prentice.....	Sylvia Sidney
Jerry Corbett.....	Fredric March
Claire Hempstead.....	Adrienne Allen
Buck	Skeets Gallagher
Charicle	Florence Britton
VI	Eather Howard
Mr. Prentice.....	George Irving
Dick Taylor.....	Kent Taylor
Damery	Charles Colman
Butler	Leonard Carey
Housekeeper	Milla Davenport
Baritone	Robert Greig
Minister	Rev. Neal Dodd
June	Mildred Boyd
Stage Leading Man.....	Cary Grant

Broadway screen is kneedeep this week in journallist heroes, plastered, slightly jingled and cold sober. This one has the plastered hero, a charming irresponsible immacuately played by Fredric March in a light and graceful way. Persuasive playing by this young actor and by Sylvia Sidney puts the release in the running for good boxoffice prospects. In less happy casting a sometimes muddled story would have raised a question of its fate.

These players, however, turn the trick. Both the young people have a substantial following, and this one will gain them more well-wishers. Strength of the picture probably will be on the side of feminine interest, story having to do with the trials and tribulations that beset young married people, when a temperamental young husband with a broken heart and a burning thirst and an emotional little rich girl clash after the wedding day.

Broken heart is left from an unfortunate love affair and the thirst

seems to be inherent in the reporter genus on the screen. Anyway, here it evolves into many complications, some of them humanly interesting, some of them not quite clear and intelligible. Maybe the aberrations of romantic young couples aren't meant to be intelligible and maybe they somehow add to the engaging charm of young couples such as these. Anyhow, they're both very real people, and their fate engages interest, even if it doesn't arouse any vivid emotional reaction.

All this is to say that the playing of the two leads by March and Miss Sidney is the substance of the entertainment. What happens isn't of great moment, except as it affects two engaging characters. Fitting most neatly into the picture is the suave vamp character of The Other Woman, played with a great deal of poise by Adrienne Allen, a decorative and svelt blonde who brings a new distinction to the vamp type, which has lately been becoming a brunet stencil. Skeets Gallagher has the assignment of the inevitable shadow of the drunken reporter, playing a strictly utility role with commendable simplicity.

Story opens in a cheerful spirit of comedy, moves along to a romantic measure and comes to a strong finish in a touch of sentimental seriousness that rounds out a fairly absorbing, if slightly commonplace, history. Of dramatic action there is practically none, play being pitched on a plane of polite comedy, and the running time is rather overboard for that style of entertainment. Eighty-three minutes is quite a stretch of attention for a narrative that concerns itself in a large measure with pleasant persiflage and drawingroom gatherings, be the romantic tangle drawn ever so tight. Recounting of husband and wife clashes can become tiresome if too often repeated, as they are here, and the 18th Amendment debate can be overdone in the domestic scene as well as in the political forum.

Only here the tenuous story is supported by the fact that the people concerned have early made themselves likable and engaged the interested sympathy of the audience, a special tribute to the two people who play the parts.

Fine direction probably also accounts for much of the picture's effect, notable for its artful directness, direction that stays in the background and works through its impersonal medium, instead of calling attention to itself by trick angles and strained devices. As much cannot be said for the dialog, which is often extremely 'literary' and must have been a sore trial to director and players both. *Rush.*

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