"THE PENGUIN PARADE" (1938, dir: Fred Avery) is an amusing and colorful takeoff on the big Warners musicals, but then coming to an end; "GOOD NIGHT ELMER" (1940, dir: Charles Jones) is a curious, silent, Keaton-ish essay in frustration, somehow never terribly funny - frequently the case with comedy of frustration - but an interesting and off-beat little cartoon; "COCONUT GROVE" (1936, dir: I. Prelleng), a fast, typical cartoon of the 30's when caricatures of radio and movie stars were very much in vogue; and "BEEP BEEP" (1961, dir: Charles Jones), one of the earliest and best of the roadrunner-coyote cartoons, generous in its speed and abundance of good gags, and not as labored and repetitious as the later ones in this series.

"THE DENTIST" (Mack Sennett-Paramount, 1932) Directed by Leslie Pearce; Story by W.C. Fields 2 reels
With W.C. Fields, Babe Kane, Elsie Cavanah, Bud Jamison, Dorothy Granger.

Although not an unfamiliar Fields, "The Dentist" for the past decade or two has been seen only in dupes of a slightly trimmed version taken from the Sennett compilation, "Down Memory Lane". Our print tonight is a good original one of the full version. The first of Fields' four 2-reelers for Sennett, it is the least unified (there is really no reason for the golfing routine at the beginning, not that one minds such an additional bonus) and also presents Fields in the least sympathetic role that he ever played! Its black humor is often hilariously funny, but Fields must have realised that such a totally vicious character would lack sustaining appeal, and wisely became a little warmer and more human in his subsequent films, without losing any of his comic bite.

"A FAREWELL TO ARMS" (Paramount, 1932; released, 1933) Director: Frank Borzage Scenarist by Benjamin Glazer and Oliver H.P. Garrett from the novel by Ernest Hemingway; Camera: Charles Lang; Art Directors, Hans Dreier and Roland Anderson; 10 reels
With Gary Cooper, Helen Hayes, Adolphe Menjou, Mary Philip, Jack La Rue, Blanche Frederici, Gilbert Emery, Henry Armetta, George Humblet, Fred Malatesta, Mary Forbes, Herman Bing, Tom Hickett, Robert Conaire, Peggy Cummings, Augustine Borgatta, Paul Porazzi, Alice Adair, John Davidson, Doris Lloyd, George Hayes, Reinhold Schumitzel.

Curiously, although it was in reissue distribution until 15 years ago, "A Farewell to Arms" has become a "lost" film in this country. Neither Paramount, which made it, nor Warners who reissued it (and unofficially remade it as "Force of Arms") nor Selznick, who now owns the property as a result of their gargantuan-sized remake with Rock Hudson, seem to have any preservation prints, and all of the circa-1950 distribution prints seem to have been junked. So we are lucky indeed to have this Russian-derived print, which is of reasonably good quality and more to the point, is fully complete and has the original rather than the compromise ending.

When I first saw this film, in 1950, I must confess to being somewhat disappointed in it. I suspect it was partially due to a not yet fully developed appreciation of Borzage, but more essentially I think it was due to the cutting in that version. "A Farewell to Arms" was never a long film; its 10 reel copyright designation is misleading, for in actual running time its original length was only 80 minutes. It was compact, tight, with no wasted footage; its story was underway immediately. When you start cutting a film that is that compact, you're asking for trouble - and the reissue cuts, partly just for the sake of trimming, partly to overcome then current censorship requirements, severely damaged the delicate balance of the film. When I saw it in its full form for the first time last year, I was quite stunned by its power and beauty, a beauty enhanced by a particularly luminous 35mm print. European lab work not always being what it might be, this print is not as soft and some of the pictorial beauty is lessened - particularly in the quite breathtaking and Germanicily stylised montage in the second half - but enough quality remains so that one can read between the frames and imagine what it looks like in a really fine 35mm print.

Hemingway wrote "A Farewell to Arms" in 1930, and this film was in fact the first Hemingway story to be filmed at all. Hemingway purists may argue that it is too romantic an interpretation and that even if less interesting filmly, "For Whom the Bell Tolls" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" are more authentic Hemingway. But it is still probably the best film to result from any Hemingway story, and into the bargain remains one of Borzage's best works. Although a

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handsome and glossy production, with big sets, plenty of extras and superb camerawork, it carefully remains non-epic in scope, thus avoiding the dreadful pitfalls that made the overblown Selznick remake such a disaster. It is "emotionally big" in the way that few movies are any more, yet Borzage could always get away with scenes and cliches that other directors couldn't. Ricardo Cortez battling the waves in a small rowboat to get to Garbo in "The Torrent" was merely ludicrous -- yet one accepts such a scene here without question. Similarly the very last shot -- almost theatrical hokie if you like -- somehow remains tender and poignant despite its size, music, and sweeping camera movements. There's just no explaining how Borzage could exploit yet control sentiment at one and the same time, yet he did it over and over again -- even in such unlikely places as "Flirtation Walk" and "China Doll".

Gary Cooper's performance -- comparatively early in his career -- is surprisingly mature, and quite steals the thunder away from Helen Hayes' mannered and boringly self-conscious performance. Considering that it is such an important role, it is more than ever a tribute to Borzage's skill that one cares about the story and the people, despite Miss Hayes; one can't help but wonder how much better Ruth Chatterton (for whom the property was originally bought) might have been in the role.

One finds much written about Hemingway's disgust with the "happy ending" tacked on for the American release, but actually this has been somewhat exaggerated. The American ending was merely ambiguous; although the build-up made it quite plain that Nurse Barkley had no chance of surviving, she seemed to rally as the audience bellowed itself hoarse. Thus the fadeout was on an embrace, with Miss Hayes still alive -- but it was the kind of gutless ending which allowed the audience to make up its own mind as to whether she lived or died, and was by no means the traditional "happy" ending. Its major flaw was that it forced the excision of the final, extremely powerful climactic shot. We do have the footage of this alternate so-called "happy" ending, but I think it would be a mistake to show it tonight, even for academic comparison purposes, as it would only weaken the emotional effect. But we'll bring that reel along to our October 5th program (Tod Browning's "The Show") and screen it then, at the end of the program.      

Wm. K. Everson