**NURSE TO YOU** (Hal Roach-MGM, 1932) Directed by Charles Armitage (Chase); 218
With Charley Chase, Muriel Evans, Clarence Wilson, Frank Darien, Billy Gilbert, Fred Kelsey, Stanley Price.

This mildly blank little Chase comedy sets the mood for the entire evening—comedy with a black humor that never goes (nor needs to) the whole way, as in "Nothing Sacred," or "To Be Or Not To Be." Actually "Nurse To You" also has quite a bit of charm, and the opening night gag, establishing Chase's race to save money, might well have been opened up to form the basis for an entire comedy.

**OLIVER THE EIGHTH** (Hal Roach-MGM, 1934) Directed by Lloyd French; 185
With Laurel and Hardy, Mae Busch, Jack Barty.

We've never played this Laurel and Hardy comedy before, always considering it one of their weaker films. However, a good print makes a lot of difference, and this brand new print—while it obviously can't make the film any better—does make it a good deal more enjoyable to watch than the duped and excessively scratched prints that we've come across in the past. In any case, "weakness" in a Laurel & Hardy film is always relative. Sometimes, the less material they have to work with, the more rewarding their creation of pantomime out of thin air. "Oliver the Eighth," with a 'The Private Life of ...' tracked on to the title for Europe, to cash in on the Korda/Laughton film, was their last three-reeler, and like almost all of their three-reelers, is too slow and measured. Furthermore, as in the earlier "The Laurel and Hardy Murder Case," the foreseeable climax is a distinct let-down. Nevertheless, it definitely has its entertaining elements: Mae Busch is in grand form, and Jack Barty extracts some good sinister pantomime from his mad butler role.

**THE AMAZING DR. CLITTERHOUSE** (Warner Brothers, 1938) Director: Anatole Litvak; 165
Screenplay by John Mankiewicz and John Huston from the play by Barre Lyndon; Camera: Tony Gaudio; Art Director: Carl Jules Weyl; music: Leo Forbstein; 8 reels

"The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse" hasn't been on view for quite a few years—tv expected, and it turns out to be still a rather surprisingly good and certainly entertaining film. "Surprisingly" because Litvak is normally not a very durable director, and most of his films, re-seen, tend to be heavy, oppressive, overstylized. Here however there is a sustaining lightness of touch which manages not to dilute the underlying suspense or menace, and the film still works very well. Whether it's Huston's script, or the Warner machinery, or an unusually good cast, or even Litvak himself, is a matter for conjecture. But it was a good year for Litvak his other Warner films in 1938 were "The Stork" and "Confessions of a Nazi Spy." Robinson at that time was veering more and more to sophisticated comedy or dramatic comedy—vic "Thunder in the City", "A Slight Case of Murder"—and this undoubtedly seemed an ideal vehicle for him. Too many of the old Robinson mannerisms remain for it to be a totally effective performance, and undoubtably Sir Cedric Hardwicke (on the New York stage) and Ralph Richardson (in London) were better. Nevertheless, it's both a melodramatic and a comedic success, helped immeasurably by Bogart, Alan Jenkins and the usual Warner clan, Claire Trevor's role—a clear-cut, unadulterated (no pun intended) prostitute in the stage version—has been somewhat blurred and over-amplified. Although this has somewhat the earmarks of an under-the-counter Hays Office deal by which Warners made a moral if not honest woman out of Miss Trevor in return for being allowed to get away with an ending that, by 1938 code standards, was quite surprising. "Clitterhouse" is still good and well-written theatre, and if moral values hadn't been turned so topay-turvy it might have made good material for a current remake, filmed a little more as it was written, without the heightened (though not distorted) melodramatic emphasis to encompass Bogart's menace and Tony Gaudio's lighting.

--- William K. Everson ---