

The Somme Film Coverage

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Notwithstanding the King's approval of the Somme Film, there has been an attempt in certain quarters, though it cannot be said to

have met with any pronounced success, to raise a controversy over the wisdom or propriety of exhibiting such parts of the film as may give a notion of the more ghastly aspects of warfare.

A certain dignitary of the Church has joined the protesters, with the objection that it will next be thought decent to introduce the film-taker into the death chamber of one's relatives, apparently forgetful of the fact that, where a death chamber has been occupied by someone notable in the eyes of the nation, it has not been altogether uncommon for it to receive pictorial representation, as many a famous picture testifies.

What our men have the courage to suffer, the people at home may surely find courage to see on the film, was the view expressed out in the trenches, when it was learned that some of the more vivid glimpses given in the Somme film were considered "too horrible" for a number of sensitive souls, and it was pointed out that even the most perfect film must leave a good deal to the imagination.

Exactly how much the film does reveal, and what is left to the imagination, readers will discover for themselves next week, when the pictures commended by His Majesty as giving some idea of what the Army is doing, and what War is, will be exhibited locally.

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The Big Battle on the Somme.
War Office Picture.
Supplemented by a French Exclusive.

The terrible responsibility which rests upon the shoulders of that irresponsible Monarch, the mad dog of Europe, otherwise the German Emperor, can be fully realised when one witnesses the films of the fighting on the Somme, which are to be seen at the Theatre during the week. The War in all its horrors is to be seen, and for the first time we are given the opportunity of realising what those brave soldiers of ours have to go through. The British War Office film is in five parts, and for nearly an hour and a half the audience is shown various stages of the fighting. There are, of course, lighter sides to the picture, but these vanish into mere nothings when that which the film is meant to convey is realised.

A commencement is made by showing troops on their way to the trenches, and in the subsequent stages there are seen guns at work, and the havoc that they bring about. Tons of earthworks are blown into the air, to come down into millions of pieces. The dauntless courage of the British Tommy is vividly portrayed, and, what is even more noticeable, his

Kindness to a Defeated Foe.

Several examples of this are seen when beaten Germans have surrendered, and in one instance an officer is seen giving a badly wounded enemy refreshment from his bottle, whilst a Tommy comes along with a case of cigarettes.

These are the actions which help to make our fighting men the finest in the world. But as for the picture itself, it will be remembered as one of the remarkable achievements of the cinematograph. As we have said, it shows us War as it really is—War in all its grim and heart-gripping reality. The story of the great triumph for Britain's splendid new armies has never been more graphically told than it is upon this wonderful film. Then the mechanical side of the War is vividly depicted, for the audience see all kinds of guns in the act of bombarding the trenches where the Germans are.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the whole picture is that which shows the advance on the first of July, and where our men are to be seen going over the top of a trench, headed by their officers. Solemn indeed are

The Sights of the Dead,

and another such moment is that when British soldiers are to be seen burying the German dead.

In addition to "The Battle of the Somme," the Management are showing the French Official War film, "The Offensive on the Somme." Though not quite so long as the British picture, this film is equally interesting, and the doings of the Poilus will be followed with much interest. The famous guns of the French Army are seen at their devastating work, and the infantry movements are such as to inspire all who see them. This picture, like the one previously mentioned, will be on view during the remainder of the week.

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AT THE PICTUREDROME.

Battle of the Somme.

The Stern Realities of the Struggle at the Front.

PUBLIC interest in the current programme at the Picturedrome has naturally been centred in the official War film of the Battle of the Somme, and the enterprise of the Management in securing this unique War picture for their patrons has been rewarded by a succession of crowded audiences, who have followed its vivid portrayal of the stern realities of War with mingled feelings of surprise and admiration.

Extending over five parts, this film is probably the most wonderful War picture that has ever been exhibited, for the simple reason that many portions of it were taken while the fighting was actually in progress, and its presentation on the screen not only brings home to one what war really means, but it is also calculated to still further increase the admiration which everyone feels for the bravery of our soldiers who are fighting for their country on the battlefield.

The spectacle of our guns preparing for the big advance by

Demolishing the Enemy's Trenches,

the huge accumulation of ammunition, from the massive shells for the mammoth howitzers or "grandmothers" down to the bombs or "plum puddings" for use in the trench mortars, are interspersed with scenes of the men leaving their billets and rest camps for the attack, the charging across No Man's Land, the clearing out of the Germans from their dug-outs and trenches, the bringing in of the wounded, the casualty stations, the kindness shown by the British soldier to his captured prisoners, and even the burying of the dead on the battlefield; and from first to last the picture is one which should on no account be missed.

A Nestor comedy, a two-part drama, "Paid with Interest," an interesting educational film illustrating the life and habits of the Cormorant, and the customary instalment of the Gaumont Graphic also find a place in the programme, but the Somme film, which takes about a hour and a-half to show, is, as stated above, the chief attraction.