

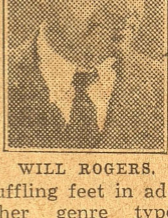
# Wherein Will Rogers Achieves a Synthesis

"THE COUNTY CHAIRMAN."—At the Majestic. Rewritten by Sam Hellman and Gladys Lehman from George Ade's play. Directed by John Blystone. Released by Fox.

## THE CAST.

Jim Hackler ..... Will Rogers  
Lucy Rigby ..... Evelyn Venable  
Ben Harvey ..... Kent Taylor  
Mrs. Mary Rigby ..... Louise Dresser  
Freckles ..... Mickey Rooney  
Elias Rigby ..... Berton Churchill  
Henry Cleaver ..... Frank Melton  
Tom Cruden ..... Robert McWade  
Vance Jimmison ..... Russell Simpson  
Uncle Eck ..... William V. Mong  
Abigail Tewksbury ..... Jan Duggan  
Lorna Cruden ..... Gay Seabrook  
Riley Cleaver ..... Charles Middleton  
Wilson Prewitt ..... Erville Alderson  
Sassafras ..... Stepin Fetchit

Our mortal hate of Will Rogers, growing out of the fact that he has succumbed to Amon Carter's narrow views of Dallas, dissolves whenever we behold the ex-Ziegfeld comedian in motion pictures. We did not see him in the flesh when he flew through the ether en route from Jack Garner's banquet to Hollywood's feasts, and we confess



therefore that we WILL ROGERS, are again at his shuffling feet in admiration of another genre type brought to the American cinema masses. From "State Fair" through "County Chairman," current at the Majestic, Mr. Rogers is simply the enacter of a vast American document and if you don't peruse it you won't understand the land in which you live; or more accurately, your mamma and papa have lived. Lest you think "The County Chairman" is merely a sociological study, let it be said that it is vastly amusing—as amusing as "Judge Priest," the last Rogers opus. We can't think of a nicer thing to say.

The county chairman of 1905 was more of a community big shot than he is now. Politics, however, haven't changed much. Rogers runs his young law partner for District Attorney to break a convention deadlock, feeling all along that Stepin Fetchit might make a better prosecutor. He escorts the young man through the Wyoming farm and ranch country to talk cattle to the cattlemen, sheep to the sheepmen and to kiss Mrs. Schulz's unwashed offspring. In an amusing bit played with Jan Duggan of Dallas, Rogers puts his candidate squarely on the side of prohibition without worrying the voters. If the candidate will come through with the "personality," Rogers promises to supply the "promises." The sage chairman advises his candidate to inveigh against Turkish atrocities in Armenia on the theory that his rival won't think of it, and, therefore, will stand convicted of favoring the same. The young man is played by Kent Taylor in a highly sniffish and disdainful manner. We don't blame his attitude inasmuch as Rogers, on the verge of slinging a barrel of mud, explains, "On the morning after election they won't ask if you fought a clean campaign; they will just ask if you won."

As usual Rogers has a puissant foe in the person of Berton Churchill, who has hemmed and hawed so well in the past that the rural screen fan is still in doubt as to who is the hero of a Rogers picture anyway. The tip-off is that Rogers always wins and Churchill loses. Kent Taylor vanquishes Mr. Churchill at the polls, although Mr. Churchill is the father of Evelyn Venable, who grouses because Mr. Taylor fights her daddy. It is necessary to say that Mr. Rogers makes Mr. Churchill like it, hence Miss Venable, hence Mr. Taylor, hence the audience?

It is unfair to give so much of the Rogers plot. The atmospheric scene of a vanished America is downright brilliant. George Ade's so-so play of 1903 is only part of it. Much of the present adaptation is Will Rogers' who supplied not only the essence of the story but an acting performance that is inescapably convincing. When he sings, as he does in "County Chairman," Mr. Rogers only persuades us that troubadourism in 1900 was as bad as they said it was.

For nostalgic background, quaint humor, and sharp characterization all Rogers pictures, including this one, are four-star entertainment. As album leaves of America's past they are invaluable. As good shows they continue to be the best.—J. R. Jr.

Starrett is the mechanical genius whose idea for a faster than lightning train is turned down by a railroad magnate (William Farnum) only to have the capitalist's daughter (Sally Blane) help him sell the design to a rival company. After an unsuccessful first run, the train proves its worth by saving the life of the railroad executive's son by bringing much-needed serum. However, the happy ending is not reached until the principals have run the gamut of the requisite amount of treacherous turns and narrow escapes. Messrs. Starrett and Farnum and Miss Blane handle their roles capably but honors for the best performance go to the locomotive.—G. A.