

MEN And THINGS

By ELIJAH HODGES

A NEW NEGRO STAR

Last week I saw Ernest Anderson in "In This Our Life," appearing with Bette Davis, Olivia DeHaviland, Hatie McDaniels, George Brent and Dennis Morgan. To my surprise there wasn't a thing of the clown, or "Uncle Tom" about him,

but just a clean-cut American boy of a type new to the better class of screen production but a delightful addition to the nightly intellectual interpretation of the play. His artistic portrayal of an ambitious colored boy seeking an education to make for himself a place in life which offered a better chance in the struggle for existence, reached its climax in a simple, but logical answer to his employers questions as to why he sought education.



Says he: "A white boy can work anywhere with the hope of some day becoming a manager or partner in the firm, whereas a colored boy has only two things to look forward to, he can keep or lose his job, but he can never rise above it.

This splendid exhibition of dramatic art in its clever unfolding of a story to true to life, will pave the way for the making of other Negro stars, as well as, strengthen my conviction of the possibilities within the reach of the aspiring young Negro with faith in himself and the courage of his conviction.

Just as Canada Lee and Ernest Anderson have proved their right to a place in the upper tier in the realm of dramatic art upon the legitimate stage and the silver screen, so also will Walter Harris, Jimmy Howard, Eugene Edwards, and William Cuff, Philadelphia boy, who have answered their country's call to the armed forces and others like them all over the land prove their fitness as candidates for the Marine Corps, as quartermasters and gunners in the Navy; navigators and bombardiers in the Air Force.

Had such a course been followed between this and the first world war we would have a larger and better equipped fighting force and one more representative of National solidarity. But, as the young Negro hero of "In

This Our Life" was tried in the crucible of prejudice and hate, so must other youngsters meet and overcome this hydra-headed monster by sheer force of intelligent opposition before the race can reach a higher plane of citizenship in this great Democracy which the strong arm and red blood of their fathers helped to build and preserve.

During the next 15 or 20 years the Negro of the North will have his own and much of the burden of his brother of the South to bear because of his better access to an education, and because their common future problems, will be solved more than ever along intellectual lines.

Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois offer opportunity for about the best high school education of any spot in the world and yet the consistency of its neglect is alarming. Much of this is due to the indifference of parents who cling to the silly idea that after the child acquires an education there is no place to use it and the child, who is simply hanging by a thread, construes this parental attitude as the sign to go ahead and hence thousands quit within sight of the goal, only to regret it when it is too late.

How much better would it be for the future of the whole race if such parents gave a moment's serious thought to the fact that an education is the only thing that the white folks can't take from them and upon which rests their future salvation!

Many boys quit school to work and spend their money on dress and a good time with the indispensable cigarettes, gin and a type of frivolous little dame with high heels, short skirts and home-made hair who can only bring into their lives an endless string of gimmies and a lot of splitting headaches which add nothing to the sum of human happiness but take plenty of joy out of life.

The race has much to hope for in the coming readjustment and it must come through the younger generation whose sacrificial offerings in defense of democracy will speak louder than words in the coming crusade against lynching. Until then "America expects that every man will do his duty."