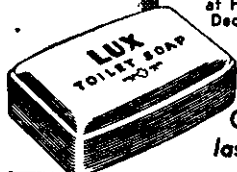


Rita Hayworth says

LUX TOILET SOAP
IS A WONDERFUL
BEAUTY CARE. IT
LEAVES SKIN
SOFTLY SMOOTH. I
USE IT EVERY DAY.



Actual statement
by Columbia's
RITA HAYWORTH
at Hollywood on
December 15th,
1941



Costs so little
lasts so long

MADE BY LEVER BROTHERS (N.Z.) LIMITED,
JACKSON STREET, PETONE. LT.104.322



My Secret
for NO Grey Hairs

Primrose Hairdressing, the scientific hair rejuvenator that helps bring back natural colour to faded tresses.

PRIMROSE
HAIR DRESSING



WOOLWORTHS AND ELSEWHERE
Cook & Ross Ltd., Manufacturers,
779 Colombo Street, Christchurch.

The Films, by G.M.

WEST MEETS EAST —And Makes A Mess of It!

WHEN you think of the culture of India, what does it mean to you? Pale hands beside the Shalimar, perhaps; or the *Bhagavadgita*, the Taj Mahal, or the rock edicts of Asoka the Great? But not, surely not, Hollywood! Not a Hindu cutie with a caste-mark on her forehead, and a toothy Hollywood smile on her face, in Shalimar Studio's rollicking musical-comedy, *Prem Sangeet*!

Yet that, I am afraid, is what Indian "culture" should begin to mean to you these days. Hollywood has apparently done it again. A most interesting, and at the same time most depressing, document came into my hands recently: a copy of the Indian *Motion Picture Magazine* for November, 1943 (price, 12 annas, published in Bombay). It is written in English—but quite plainly intended for Indian readers rather than Europeans—and is handsomely printed and illustrated; from the outside it reminds you of one of the more expensive English pictorials of pre-war days. There was, obviously, not much paper shortage in Bombay in November, 1943.

The first editorial page is ordinary enough; a pompously patriotic but well-meant "message" from Sir Rahimtoola Chinoi, a magnate of the industry (photograph inset), exhorting the Indian film industry to help Great Britain to fight "this war for Civilisation" to a victorious finish. "... Let us help Government wholeheartedly and then demand from them all our legitimate facilities for which we very many times make such a powerful claim!" (His exclamation mark, not mine.)

The next page contains an editorial pep-talk about "The Sunshine Ahead"—apparently there are Pollyannas in India, too. It is when you turn the next page that you start to experience the first of a nasty series of shocks; that is, if you are still capable of being shocked by anything that the Hollywood influence can do. For here the reproductions of Indian film star photographs, and the advertisements for genuine Indian films, begin. Here you find a full page extolling the merits of the Indian star Lila Desai, "who first won your hearts in *President*," and who is now "exploring newer realms of screen emotionalism in *Paraya Dhan*" (produced in two languages, Hindi and Bengali). A little further on you will find another full page devoted to Mumtaz Shanti, "the Indian Screen's Most Favourite Star," who, "with Melody on her Lips and Rhythm in her Legs is making Bombay music mad in *Gitanjali* Movietone's *Sawaal*."

Even worse is to come. Below a picture of a handsome Hollywoodised Indian gazing with longing into the eyes of a good-looking caste-marked girl, is the announcement that Ashok Kumar, "the Matinee Idol of Millions," is now appearing in a "super social" entitled *Angoothi*. Opposite is an almost exactly similar picture (except that the yearning hero now wears a felt hat and sports coat). Either he or the girl is named Motilal, and he (or she) is the "Heart Throb of Hundreds of Thousands," appearing in the "great social" *Muskarahat*. (This word "social" is a favour-

ite one; it seems to be the generic name for a type of picture which we might call "comedy-drama.")

After that, you can regain your breath for a while: the succeeding advertisements are more restrained. Only such comparatively colourless lines as this meet the eye—"A Picture with a Message for the NATION!" "Spectacular Production," "The Director whose Films never fail at the Box-office," "A Galaxy of Talent in the Supporting Cast," and so on.

But the lull doesn't last. You begin wondering again whether the blessings of Western civilisation haven't been slightly over-rated when you read that Devikarani and Jairaj are coming "with a Song on her Lips, and Love in his Heart to form a Newer and Greater Love-Team in *Hamari Baat*," and when, on glancing again at the cover, you notice something you previously overlooked—that the pleasant-faced Indian youngster in four colours is Baby Akhtar (India's Shirley Temple perhaps?) who, from having been a Sad Bird of Song, is now a Smart Gay Bird in Dalsukh M. Pancholi's Star-Studded, Laugh-Loaded, Musical Treat of the year, *Poonji*.

HAVING exhausted the advertisements and yourself, you then study the "still" photographs, where West not only meets East but almost completely submerges it with a wave of Glamour, Hollywood poses, and press-sheet jargon. The caption beneath an illustration of an Indian couple (neither of whom looks either tender or little) informs the reader that "Kananbala is most probably suppressing the tumult that is rising in her tender little heart." Most of the other illustrations are variations on this familiar Hollywood theme; Indian boy woos Indian girl, with varying degrees of propinquity in the illustrations and of naive absurdity in the captions — "Neena and Al Nasir have quite a lot of fancy for each other"; "Two dynamic personalities meet"; "Shobhana Samarth does full justice to her roll of Seeta..." etc., etc. But not even the unrestrained influence of Hollywood has been able to conceal or destroy all the native dignity and beauty in many of the faces. Give it time, though, give it time!

(continued on next page)



The mysterious NEENA, India's Greta Garbo.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, JULY 21