

(continued from previous page)

heart to Kurt, Prince of the Habsburgs; but Kurt stops a cannon-ball in the first battle and dies spectacularly in Technicolour. So the American journalist biffs von Bohlen on the head in the nick of time and takes Anna Maria and her dancing-master back to the States with him where he presents her, still in Gorgeous Technicolour, at a premiere in the little mining-town of Drinkman's Wells, California. She does a Salome dance and, without even removing a single veil, is a riot among the crude, unlettered miners; but the performance is interrupted by Cleve, the Bandit (the lad who took General Lee too literally). He carries off Salome as well as the box-office takings. But Cleve reminds her strongly of Kurt, her lost lover (in fact, it's the same actor), so she restores his faith in human nature by crooning "Der Tannenbaum" (same tune as "The Red Flag") beside the camp-fire. This, for some reason, makes him remember Christmas in Old Virginia; the celestial choir strikes up "Come All Ye Faithful"; and Cleve returns Salome as well as the cash to their rightful owners. The miners are so agreeably surprised that they rename their town Salome, Where She Danced and allow Cleve to join the dancing troupe.

When we next see them they are in San Francisco, the Baghdad of the New World. The Technicolour here is even more Gorgeous, and Anna Maria is even more popular with the boys. As one of her admirers says, "She was always a great artist, but above all—a woman!"—and while there may be legitimate doubts about the first part of this tribute, the accuracy of the second part is beyond question. Her most enthusiastic suitor is a Russian multi-millionaire named Ivan Dimitroff (Walter Slezak) who presents her with an original Rembrandt and builds a theatre for her to dance in. But she says "I shall never dance again"; she is a little upset, you see, because Cleve, feeling himself unable to compete with a Rembrandt, has returned to banditry. So she goes aboard a Chinese junk loaded with precious jade and waves a couple of hankies in an Oriental kind of dance while waiting for Cleve and his gang to pirate the junk. But when Cleve does make the attempt he is met by an old Chinese philosopher who speaks with a broad Scottish accent, because he once studied medicine in Edinburgh (at least, that's the explanation given here and I leave you to decide whether it is satisfactory). This remarkable old man apparently tells Cleve what Confucius had to say on the subject of piracy; anyway Cleve abandons his gang and the junk, and it looks as if we shall get a happy ending at any moment. Only then von Bohlen turns up again. He is sore because, as he tells Salome, not very originally, "You tricked me into loving you. That I can never forgive or forget." Apparently also his Prussian honour was besmirched when she pinched his battle plans and he has come all the way to California to unsmirch it. When he sees Cleve he says, "I cannot cross swords with a mere boy," but Cleve says "Don't worry; we had a French fencing master in our regiment"; so they pick up a couple of sabres which are conveniently lying on a table and fight each other up and down a blood-red floor, until finally the Prussian is transfixed and expires most picturesquely on top of scarlet drapes.

That isn't the end, though. There still has to be the "chase sequences," and I

can scarcely omit to mention it since the man who arranged it, one Breezy Eason, is given a special mention in the credit titles. Having killed von Bohlen, Cleve pushes Salome into a stage-coach and careers madly off along the coast road, with the sky-scrapers of San Francisco plainly discernible in the distance. But he loses a wheel, so the Russian millionaire, the American journalist, and the Scottish-Chinaman, who are following behind, adopt a thoroughly philosophic attitude and turn over their own vehicle to the lovers in order that they may escape to Virginia together. After all, they had to end the picture somehow.

* * *

IF this story doesn't make sense to you, don't blame me. It doesn't make sense to me either. In fact, I think *Salome, Where She Danced* is just about the silliest picture I have ever seen, and I marvel that anybody had the audacity to produce it, let alone expect intelligent people to pay money to see it. But what's my opinion against Universal's, or the opinion of those thousands of picturegoers who are apparently enjoying the show?

NATIONAL FILM UNIT

BY special arrangement, National Film Unit has secured a film of the great Rugby game at Leeds, when the Kiwis beat Northern Services 14 to 7, and this is included in the Weekly Review No. 225, released on December 21. Other items are "Splendid Fellows' Club," showing the Christmas party and gifts that were given to crippled children by Wellington children who banded together specially to help these less fortunate boys and girls, and "Christmas Comes to Petone," wherein, just for a change, Father Christmas arrives in a Benzine Buggy of 1900 vintage.

Items From The ZB's

WHEN all good little boys and girls are in bed and the ancients are having their last cup of cocoa, Z2B is devoting three-quarters-of-an-hour on Saturday nights to modern dance-band music. (When London News goes off the air at 11.15, the Wellington station presents a session called "Spotlight Rhythms of To-day." Older people who remember with nostalgia "Thora" and "Bedouin Love Song" may ask what all the din is about, but Abraham Lincoln's advice is remembered by Z2B.

* * *

LEMMY CAUTION, Peter Cheyney's bright boy from Chicago, is performing snappily at 42B in a piece called "Don't Get Me Wrong," a tale in wise-cracking language of tough guys and dames. It is said that the southern people who have been bred in the rugged traditions of the Border are bending Scottish countenances, stern and wild, over their receiving sets as they follow Mr. Caution practising his trade in London among the Sassenachs. "Don't Get Me Wrong" is there for the taking at 8.45 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

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E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM, an old stager at thriller-writing, can still thrill, and his followers are many. His spies are classical, his heroes brilliant, and his women beautiful and virtuous or beautiful and bold; those in either category have much to commend them. The latest Oppenheim story is "The Treasure House of Martin Hews," to be heard every Monday and Tuesday from Z2B at 6.30 p.m.



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