

come a good deal closer than it does to perfection if, like the film just reviewed, it had had the courage throughout to be true to itself. It would then have been a thoroughly venomous piece of satire; and I think that the boys in the back-room who conceived it would have liked it to be so; only the big executive chiefs out front, thinking of national morale (it was made during the war) as well as of the box-office, decided to water down the venom.

There have been other films which have snarled at the commercial exploitation of hero-worship in America—*Hail the Conquering Hero*, for instance, and more recently *A Medal for Benny*. But the film which did it most successfully was *Nothing Sacred*, with Fredric March and Carole Lombard. *Practically Yours* could have been another *Nothing Sacred*. It isn't because it still treats some things as sacred, and in a basically satirical picture that is a grave handicap. Yet the set-up here is just about perfect. An heroic flyer (Fred MacMurray) takes a suicide-dive at a Japanese aircraft-carrier and sinks it, his exploit being filmed and his last words recorded (somehow) by the crew of another American plane. During his farewell speech he expresses the wish that he could be back in the park kissing his Peggy on the tip of her funny little nose. The record is played to Congress (all standing) and is heard in millions of American homes. But by a miracle, the pilot has survived his crash-dive; so that when he comes back for two weeks' leave in the States, he finds awaiting him an hysterical public, a businessman (his former boss) who has both eyes on the main chance, and a girl named Peggy (Claudette Colbert). Only it wasn't Peggy he mentioned in his "last words," it was his dog named Piggy. However, since candles have been lighted to his and Peggy's love in thousands of American homes, he feels he can't let either national morale or the girl down by announcing the mistake. So he accepts the fiancée as well as his boss's unctuous hospitality and all the other embarrassments of being a national

hero; and even when the girl finds out that she was really a dog they maintain the subterfuge for the sake of the war effort and in order to keep the great big heart of America still palpitating. And then, of course, it isn't so very long (just under two weeks) before he decides that She is the Girl For Him, after all.

In parts, for example in the opening sequence and in an encounter with a worried war widow, *Practically Yours* practically drips with the milk of human kindness; which, as I have said, is a mistake in what is by nature a satire. But there is also enough coldly calculated hatred towards certain aspects of human behaviour which fully merit hating, to make this comedy jump just a little out of the rut and to give it, besides, some really funny incidents. One of the best of these is the sequence in which MacMurray, visiting a newsreel theatre where he is billed as "Hero of the Week," is so nauseated by the flattery poured out over him by the screen commentator that he audibly voices his disgust—and is promptly punched on the jaw by an enraged patriot in the row ahead! There is another good situation, almost surrealist in style, when an emergency life-raft which the hero is carrying in a crowded subway car suddenly inflates itself, pinning passengers to the walls. Funniest of all, however, is the episode involving Mikhail Rasumny as an aesthetic photographer trying to get hero and heroine to pose for a picture to be called "The Kiss" and to be used for selling war-bonds. Good as MacMurray and Miss Colbert are at this sort of comedy (and they frequently are very good indeed) Rasumny eclipses them. Indeed this episode at the photographer's, though brief, is such a delicious piece of pantomimicry that it becomes not merely the highlight of the film as it stands, but an indication also of what a mordant masterpiece *Practically Yours* could have been if a similarly healthy disrespect for persons and institutions had been displayed throughout.



FILM FOR SCHOOLS: The Minister of Education (Hon. H. G. R. Mason) is shown accepting from A. G. McClure, Managing Director of Warner Bros. Pictures (N.Z.) Ltd., a 16 mm. print of the full-length film "The Story of Louis Pasteur," for free use throughout New Zealand schools. Otago Medical School was also presented with an additional copy of this film, together with "Dr. Erlich's Magic Bullet"

BBC FREQUENCIES IN THE PACIFIC SERVICE

G.M.T.	Station			
0600-0845	GRM	7.12	m/c	42.13 meters
0600-1000	GSM	11.82	m/c	25.38 "
" "	GSP	15.31	m/c	19.60 "
0730-1000	GRA	17.715	m/c	16.93 "
0600-1000	GRX	9.69	m/c	30.96 "
0600-1000	GVZ	9.64	m/c	31.12 "



ISSUED BY THE DEPT. OF HEALTH



FINGERS OFF FOODSTUFFS!

- 1. PEOPLE BUYING READY TO EAT FOODSTUFFS** in shops or restaurants, to take home or to eat on the premises:—
Touch only the portion you yourself are buying. For example, examination of several sandwiches to select one is wrong. There is no reason why forks or spatulas shouldn't be provided for use by customers in helping themselves.
- 2. PEOPLE SERVING READY TO EAT FOODSTUFFS** to customers:—
Use forks or spatulas to handle foodstuffs. Proprietors of premises should provide the necessary implements.
Wash hands faithfully before handling dishes or food. Proprietors should provide ablution facilities—hot water, towels and soap—conveniently situated for frequent washing of hands.
- 3. PEOPLE COOKING FOODSTUFFS** for others must be very particular to have clean hands and fingernails, and no diseased condition of hands or fingers. Washing of hands after lavatory visits and before handling food must be the rule.
Bowel diseases are spread very commonly by contaminated hands. Fingers should be kept off other folk's food and dishes as much as possible, and washed clean before handling food in any way.

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FOR A HEALTHIER NATION

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