



'Good Mornings' begin with Gillette

You emerge from the bathroom with schoolboy complexion, all smiling and sunny and shaved to perfection. Gillette Blades are available at all Tobacconists, Chemists, Hardware and Department Stores.

Blue Gillette Blades cost 1/9 for 5.

G18.5b

RELIEF or No Cost!

*Lumbago
Neuritis
Rheumatism
Sciatica*

Every large packet of R.U.R. has the famous guarantee certificate plainly attached. You must get relief—or it costs you nothing.

TAKE

RUR

AND RIGHT YOU ARE
SOLD EVERYWHERE.

The five in one Health Tonic, made by R.U.R. (N.Z.) Ltd., 141 Cashel Street, Christchurch.



The ballet dancers must study stance
But find their costumes rather chilly
They should have brought a tin of Bants;
To get sore throat is ballet silly.

BANTS

THROAT JUBES



EDWARD BROS. LTD. 188 GUTHRIE PARK AUCKLAND

ALL CHEMISTS 1/6

Speaking Candidly, by G.M.

THIRTEEN YEARS AFTER

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

(Paramount)

THIS is billed as Paramount's "modernised production" of Cecil B. De Mille's 1933-vintage spectacle—a claim which I just refuse to take seriously. For the modernisation consists merely of a contrived and unconvincing opening sequence in an American bombing plane over Rome, and an end-piece of a glimpse of bombing planes flying home again; this being apparently designed to point the film's moral of what the world owes to the sacrifices of the Christian martyrs in Nero's day. But coming as it does right on top of the film's rather effective original ending—a simple, symbolic representation of The Cross upon the door through which the martyrs have just entered the arena—I can only regard this final "modernistic" touch as the work of either a cynic or a dolt.

As for the De Mille "epic" itself—the supposedly topical past which is thus sandwiched in between the present—it is interesting to see it after all these years; but to me the interest was mainly antiquarian. The film is a museum piece very much closer in technique, particularly acting technique, to the silent era of movies than to that of 1946. Though *The Sign of the Cross* was made about five years after the coming of sound to the screen, all that you really have here is dialogue added to the over-emphatic "emoting" which we once took for granted in silent films. The De Millean spectacle has survived fairly well; but as one watches the studied mannerisms, the emphatic gestures of the cast (especially Elissa Landi, who is absurdly coy as Mercia, the Christian heroine), one realises how far cinema acting has developed towards naturalism since 1933. The way in which some of

the players "register" emotion fortissimo is so ludicrous that I would not have been surprised if the audience had given these sequences the bird. But not a single laugh was heard in the theatre the night I was there: was this because the audience failed to appreciate the absurdity, or were they giving the film the benefit of recognising that it was out of date?

IF the appearance of this old-stager means that we are in for a series of revivals I am all for it, though I can think of many old films more worthy of resurrection, and of much greater interest to the student of the historical cinema, than this. But *The Sign of the Cross* does at least provide us with a fascinating opportunity to notice how at least three popular stars of the present day have developed in the last 13 years. Here is Charles Laughton, a good deal slimmer than we know him now, as that sybaritic monster Nero; rolling his eyes and mincing his words as he lolls on his throne or plucks his lyre over burning Rome. Here is Claudette Colbert as the Empress Poppaea, the embodiment of seductive evil. And here is a very much younger, more handsome, and more dashing Fredric March as Marcus, the Prefect of Rome, who went to the lions for love of the Christian maid (compare this performance, if you can, with that he gave recently as Mark Twain).

However, in all these performances, though the influence of the silent era is still heavy upon them, one can discern signs that the real quality of acting was there, and that given the opportunity by directors and producers these three stars could successfully adapt themselves to the changing demands of the screen. But it is now equally apparent that

(continued on next page)

ON THE SPOT WITH UNNRA

THE following is an account of experiences at a domestic training school for girls in Macedonia (where two of CORSO'S relief teams have just started work on behalf of UNNRA). It is written by a member of the staff at the school, which is a new experimental venture run by the Friends' Relief Service:

OVER INTO MACEDONIA

BEFORE our arrival the premises were occupied by an army of bugs, which have mainly been exterminated with DDT, while the few survivors are probably lying dormant till the spring. There is water and electricity laid on. The kitchen has been fitted up with cookers of the "field kitchen" type, made from simple tin containers. They are now working very well, but we had difficulties at the beginning. The school started with a certain amount of chaos, as girls had to be taken in before the premises were really ready for them, for fear of their getting snowed up in their villages. This resulted in an intermingling of smoky boilers, weeping, homesick new arrivals, bugs and DDT, taps which would not turn off, and drains stopped up. But gradually since then the boilers have been improved, the carpenters who were here have worked their way out of the building, and the girls have settled in.

At present we have 35 girls and hope soon to have 40. They are a nice set, aged mostly between 14 and 16 years. They come from many different Macedonian villages and a variety of different homes and backgrounds and there is considerable disparity in their abilities and intelligence. There is now a real community spirit among them and they work and play together very happily, which is all the more surprising and encouraging when one realises that the parents of some have actually been murdered by members of the political party supported by the parents of others in the recent political strife. Most of them are already looking decidedly fatter and better now than when they came. But nearly all are physically underdeveloped.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, MAY 31