

way of life. In this respect she is, of course, typical; which adds to the authenticity of the picture.

Louise Pierson's essential normalcy, indeed, is emphasised by the fact that she revolts against the lesser conventions while unquestionably accepting the major ones. She begins her career energetically demanding the right to earn her own living, in an age when women in business were a rarity. Her views on feminine emancipation shock her first husband (Donald Woods) but it takes the business "recession" after World War 1, plus another woman, to rob her of him. She copes with this domestic crisis almost as easily as she copes with an infantile paralysis epidemic affecting all her children (a well-handled sequence, this). Then she takes a second husband (Jack Carson), a cheerful fellow endowed with as much optimism as herself, and as little afflicted by self-pity. They speculate in a big business venture, and for a brief moment their life is literally rosy: but on the eve of triumph they find they have broken the rose market by over-producing hot-house blooms. Undeterred, they invest what they have salvaged in a pioneer aeroplane company, only to crash again from the pinnacle of success when the Stock Market gives way underneath them. Boom and bust, boom and bust: so it goes on. They survive the Great Depression peddling vacuum-cleaners (there is effective tragi-comedy here), and are just settling down to enjoy the fruits of patient toil and private enterprise (having succeeded in putting their boys through college), when the Japs blow up their hopes at Pearl Harbour. All their sons go off to war: but the film closes with Mr. and Mrs. Pierson again planning optimistically for a secure and happy future.

At one point in the story, the second Mr. Pierson, delivering the nice, safe "message" of the film (which, fortunately, doesn't get too much in the way of the entertainment) says: "America is a country where you don't get shot for dreaming." The trouble with the Piersons and their kind is, of course, that they keep on having the same dream, over and over again. But even two world wars and two depressions cannot wake them up.

### THREE "SHORTS"

**CYPRUS IS AN ISLAND**, *It Might Be You*, and *Man—One Family* are three new short British films worth hoping that you will have a chance to see—especially if you are fed up (and who isn't?) with many of the crooner and dance-band crudities which pad out the average supporting programme.

The longest and most ambitious of these three films—seen recently at a preview arranged by the British High Commissioner's Office—is *Cyprus Is An Island*. This half-hour documentary gives us a vivid, if rather romanticised, impression of the land and its people; its historic ruins and its villages, its forests and its arid plains, its fight against goats, droughts, erosion, and barren soil, with special emphasis on the clash between shepherds who stick to the old ways of life and agriculturists who favour the new. The benevolent British come in on the side of progress, convert the ignorant shepherd from his reactionary ways, and bring water and new fruitfulness to the soil. It is all just a little over-simplified and over-dramatised; but the film has at least the virtue of being more interested in people

than in scenery (though it certainly does not neglect that). The commentary by Laurie Lee is sensitive and poetic; the photography is beautiful; and the musical background is provided by the "Greek Suite" of Petridis. An interesting point: the film (I suspect deliberately) makes no mention at all of the part played by Cyprus in the war. That, you are led to infer, was a passing phase: the fight against burning sun and parched soil continues.

*It Might Be You* is propaganda for safety and sense on the roads: English roads, of course, but the lesson is applicable here. It is simply and effectively done, piling up the suspense almost unbearably, as the various characters in the drama are drawn implacably towards the climax of a motor-smash which might have been avoided if they all had obeyed a few elementary rules. The tension, in fact, is so strong that you find the audience laughing now and then: a sign not of amusement but of almost the exact opposite.

*Man—One Family* gives Julian Huxley and J. B. Haldane the opportunity to refute the "race-theories" of the Nazis and proclaim the true brotherhood of man. They do it by means of diagrams, newsreel shots, and commentary. Again the treatment is simple, and again it is effective. Propaganda, of course, but a very positive and worthwhile sort of propaganda.

### Pascal Under Fire

AT its 13th annual conference in London, the Association of Cinema Technicians, headed by Anthony Asquith, received from its general council a resolution demanding that the Hungarian-born producer, Gabriel Pascal, never again be allowed to make a film in Britain. The conference passed an amendment that Pascal be severely censured for the inordinate length of time taken to produce *Caesar* and allowed to make more films in Britain only under special control.

### AN APPEAL FOR HELP

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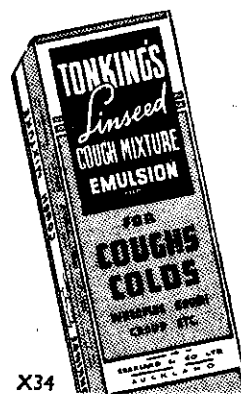
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