

*Their golden rule*

# IPANA TOOTH PASTE

Twice a day with IPANA keeps teeth  
brilliantly clean. Children appreciate IPANA'S  
distinctive, refreshingly different taste. And with  
massage, IPANA helps ensure firm healthy  
gums — so vital to sound teeth.

*refreshingly  
different!*



Bristol-Myers Co. Pty. Ltd.,  
127 Manners Street, Wellington.

Buy  
the  
large  
tube for  
economy

16

Film Reviews by G.M.

## SPEAKING THE WAY TO THE STARS

(Two Cities)

THIS film has already been favourably noticed in these columns by a colleague who attended a preview in my absence some months ago (*Listener*, June 14). My purpose in mentioning it again, now that it has been generally released and I have had the chance to see it, is to concur with my colleague's high estimate of its quality and to give it the appropriate grading. This may be useful when the time comes to select the ten best pictures of 1946: for the present indications are that *The Way to the Stars* will be among them. Actually, the film is now a good 18 months old, and the success which it is achieving with local audiences is therefore particularly gratifying. For these days, when the patriotic compulsion to approve has been withdrawn, any "war" film needs to have some uncommon quality to attract public attention. It has to be uncommonly far-fetched and romantic; or uncommonly good and authentic.

*The Way to the Stars* belongs, of course, to the latter class. It ranks, I think, with *San Demetrio*, *London, Western Approaches*, *In Which We Serve*, and *The Way Ahead*; and may be said to do for the flying-men of the war what these others did for the sailors and the soldiers. Like them, it is an expert blend of the documentary and the fiction film, the type of production in which Britain has proved her supremacy. (But how long will she hold it, and does anybody in control of British pictures really care that she should, now that the attempt is being made to compete with Hollywood on Hollywood's own terms?) However, *The Way to the Stars*, though not necessarily more successful, is really more ambitious and more penetrating than those other fine pictures I have mentioned because, in addition to dramatising some of the "types" of the R.A.F. and depicting their day-by-day life on an air-station in Britain in a manner that is entertaining as well as dignified and factual—because in addition to all this, the film attempts an analysis of Anglo-American relations (when a squadron of the U.S. Eighth Air Force takes over Halfpenny Airfield), and goes even beyond this again with an assessment of human values which is marked by sympathy and notable good taste. This is particularly apparent in Rosamund John's characterisation of the English airman's wife and widow; imagine how Hollywood might have debased her commonsense courage with sentimentality.

The film is not without blemishes. For instance, the way in which the English eventually take all the Americans to their hearts seems a little over-done, even naive. I am thinking especially of the loud-mouthed wolf in U.S. Air Force clothing, a thoroughly obnoxious type in English eyes if ever there was one; it would have helped the authenticity of the picture if we had been allowed to go on disliking him. And though the acting and the direction are, on the whole, splendid, neither the camera nor the script-writer has been kind to Renee

## CANDIDLY

Asherson, who portrays the girl with the awful aunt. Her voice kept on ringing a bell in my memory, but it was not until I saw her name on a poster after the screening that I connected her with the piquant Katherine of *Henry V*. These, however, are minor imperfections in a very noteworthy film.

## THREE STRANGERS

(Warner Bros.)

MELODRAMAS based on Oriental idols and the curses or benefits which they are presumed to dispense have a persistent fascination; so have stories about the lucky chances of sweepstakes and lotteries. When the two are combined; that is, when the idol influences the drawing of the winning ticket, but puts a curse upon it, you have the promise of an entertainment which, though highly improbable, will at least not be uneventful. *Three Strangers* is such an entertainment.

What compensates a good deal for the patent absurdities in the film is the unusually good acting (unusually good, I mean, for this type of thriller). Geraldine Fitzgerald is the heroine-cum-villainess whose superstitious regard for a Chinese idol called Kwan-Ying motivates the action, by bringing about a strange pact—involving a sweepstake ticket—between herself and two strangers picked at random from the London streets. One of the strangers is wanted by the police on suspicion of murder (unfounded) and altogether is a most unusual person—not the least unusual thing about him being that he is portrayed by Peter Lorre. I can think of a dozen reasons why Mr. Lorre was not suited to play this role—which is, in effect, that of the romantic lead—and only one why he was: the fact that Mr. Lorre is such a good artist that he can make even the most unlikely characters seem interesting.

The other stranger is a lawyer of dubious repute: and here we have the immense Mr. Sydney Greenstreet; immense in both senses of the word, in a story and a role which are really both too small to contain his dazzling virtuosity and his sardonic sense of comedy, and yet which both become worth seeing by his mere presence.

## More About Houses

HOUSES, it would seem, are almost as photogenic as horses; they are certainly of more vital concern these days, even to New Zealanders. At any rate, films about the housing problem have been made, or are being made, in many different countries. Recently I saw a new one dealing with the New Zealand Government's housing scheme, produced by the Public Works Department and photographed in colour. This is, I am informed, the first occasion on which a New Zealand film of this size has been given this treatment in colour, so there is a special technical interest to it, apart from the interest in the subject-matter. There is no point in comparing this P.W.D. effort with that produced recently by the National Film Unit, except to say that each has much the same story to tell, but tells it differently.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, NOVEMBER 29