

SPEAKING CANDIDLY

INDISCRETION
(Warner Bros.)

THIS is an unexciting and unrewarding time for picturegoing. It nearly always is, this interval before Christmas when the Film trade, apparently assuming that the populace will be too busy and tired with buying presents and preparing festivities to go out much at night, holds back most of the big shows for the "Holiday Period" and unloads a lot of lightweight and undistinguished material. There are exceptions, of course, but that is the general impression one gets from reading the advertisements for current and coming attractions. It is also the impression one gets from seeing some of the new pictures that are offering.

Of those that have come my way in the last seven days, *Indiscretion* is perhaps the best; not because it is at all substantial, but because it is at least diverting; because it does the silly things it has to do with a certain skittishness, and ease of manner. Its title I would not advise you to place too much reliance upon. They might as easily have called it "Sunday Dinner for a Soldier"

(except that they have already called a film that, and anyway this hero is a sailor), or "She Wouldn't Say Yes" (except that there's a film of that title showing simultaneously), or "Jingle Bells" (because it's a Christmas setting and there's snow), or even just "Two Men and a Girl" (because you can always count on that set-up). However, they called it *Indiscretion*, not because anybody is particularly indiscreet, but because they had to call it something and one-word titles are in fashion just now (the two preceding films at this theatre were *Devotion* and *Conflict*, and elsewhere we've had *Suspense*, *Cornered*, *Heartbeat*, *Spellbound*—but why go on?)

This, then, is a romantic comedy-drama about a gifted young woman (Barbara Stanwyck) who has built up a big reputation for herself and a large circulation for the magazine which employs her by writing knowingly about cooking, furnishings, babies, husbands, and the other appurtenances of domesticity. Unfortunately, all her knowledge is derived, which proves embarrassing when her bluff is called and she is required to provide Christmas entertainment at her non-existent country home for a lonely war hero (Dennis Morgan)

and for the proprietor of her paper (Sydney Greenstreet), who is under the impression that she writes from first-hand experience, and is certain to be annoyed if he discovers that she doesn't. By promising to marry the owner (Reginald Gardiner) she manages to acquire a home and somebody who will pass for the husband; an old friend (S. Z. Sakall) supplies the culinary skill; and neighbours lend their babies. But the situation soon gets completely out of hand. Her marriage to dull Mr. Gardiner is interrupted at first by the untimely arrival of Mr. Greenstreet and then by the breath-stopping arrival of the handsome Mr. Morgan; the babies become jumbled; there are alarms and excursions by night and much frantic coming and going between bedrooms, kitchen, and barn. The net result is that the heroine, who has so often given advice to her readers on how to convert their homes into "havens of gracious living" succeeds only in converting her own into something about half-way between Bedlam and a bordello.

However, the proprietor of the paper who has been such a stern upholder of truth in journalism conveniently decides that a large circulation is more important; and the film ends with a big close-up and Mr. Greenstreet giving, this time with jovial meaning, exactly the same kind of laugh as he has so often given with sinister intent.

OUR HEARTS WERE GROWING UP

(Paramount)



SEQUELS, as I mentioned recently in connection with *Claudia and David*, are seldom successful. *Claudia and David* was an exception to the rule, but *Our Hearts Were Growing Up* conforms to it and proves nothing except that charm is a quality which cannot be manufactured synthetically. The original adventures of Cornelia Otis Skinner and Emily Kimbrough, as recorded in *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, possessed that quality to a marked degree and it made the screen version almost as delightful as the book. But it was the product of the co-authorship of the Misses Skinner and Kimbrough, who wrote with such autobiographical zest about their youthful exploits on a trip to Europe in the 1920's and were able to revive the nostalgic atmosphere of that era, but who lend nothing except their names to the characters of this new screenplay. Without them, our hearts refuse to be lifted up; they remain dull and heavy during most of Paramount's purely fictional account of how Cornelia and Emily, as two adolescent misses at an exclusive college become embroiled with bootleggers (in the persons of Brian Donlevy and William Demarest) and of how the bootlegger-in-chief turns fairy godfather and



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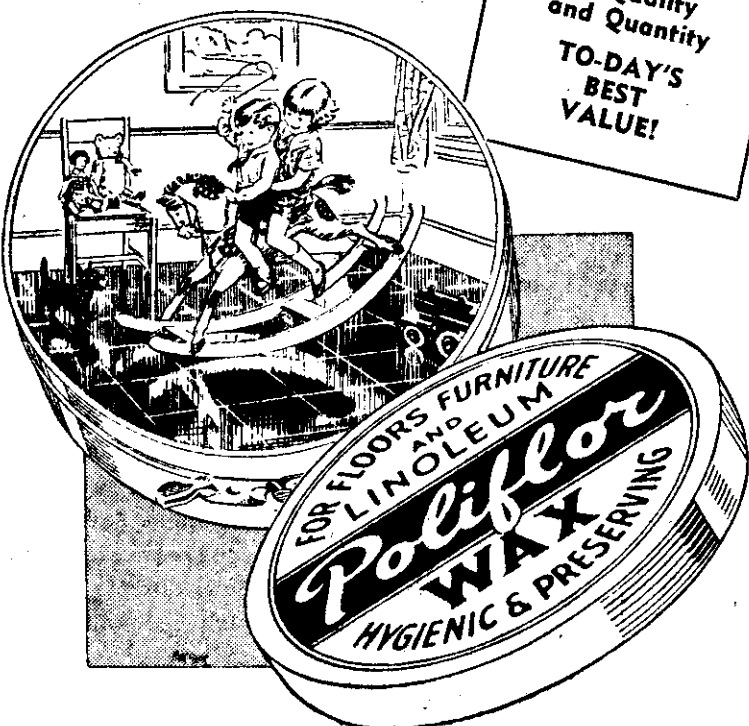
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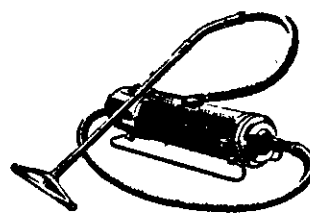
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