

(continued from previous page)

those, like myself, who can find contentment in merely looking at Miss de Havilland, should be gladdened by the news that in *The Dark Mirror* there is a double helping of her, since she plays the role of identical twins.

I have never in my own experience come across this phenomenon of two persons so exactly alike that they cannot be told apart; but if one is to believe only a fraction of the books one reads and the films one sees, it happens by no means infrequently. And it seems to be a *sine qua non* of fictional twinning that the sisters or brothers should be as dissimilar in character as they are alike in looks. Thus it was, for instance, with Bette Davis in *A Stolen Life*, and thus it is again in *The Dark Mirror* where one of the Misses de Havilland is Horrid and Homicidal and the other is Nice and Normal. The H and H one (distinguishable as T-E-R-R-Y by means of a convenient necklace and hereinafter referred to as such) has bumped off a doctor for some reason known only to her paranoic self, but succeeds in baffling the police completely because the N and N one (identifiable as R-U-T-H) gives her an unbreakable alibi. One of them clearly did it, but nobody can tell 'other from which, so Detective Thomas Mitchell dare not even make an arrest. (Thanks to the necklaces, however, the audience is not long left in any such quandary). Then, where old-fashioned crime detection has failed, psychiatry steps in—in the welcome person of Dr. Lew Ayres (no, not Dr. Kildare this time), looking rather haggard after his wartime experiences, but still a very interesting actor. He undertakes to discover which of the twins is psychologically capable of murder, and by means of such fascinating gadgets as lie-detectors, ink-blots, and association tests, he succeeds. Terry goes completely off her head; Ruth, having barely escaped elimination herself, drops into the doctor's arms.

Scientifically it all looks quite impressive, and Director Siodmak and the players see to it that the entertainment is brisk and charged with tension. Yet two surprising facts emerge. One is that neither Terry nor Ruth can be regular picturegoers, otherwise they would have thought twice before submitting themselves to tests by a professional psychiatrist: they would know that most screen crimes are now solved that way. The other is that Dr. Lew Ayres, who is allegedly an expert on twins (and consequently would know all about the hereditary factors involved), should not hesitate before marrying the twin sister of a paranoic killer. Such details apart, however, *The Dark Mirror* is good melodrama.

## CARAVAN

(Gainsborough)

THIS is, I think, almost certainly the worst British picture that has been made since the British started regularly making good ones. An out-of-date period piece, it presents Stewart Granger as an aspiring author who loses his sweetheart, his memory, and some jewels in Spain, Jean Kent as the gipsy dancer who loves him unto death, and Anne Crawford as the pure-minded, high-souled English girl who keeps on being most dreadfully wronged. The film is so incredibly bad that it is at times almost amusing; but I do not propose,

by describing it in any detail, to add even in this way to the misguided energy that has already been lavished upon it. I would, however, draw your attention to how like Gillie Potter the villain sounds.

## NATIONAL FILM UNIT

WEEKLY REVIEW NO. 292 of the

National Film Unit, to be released on April 4, contains an item dealing with the migration of workers to Nelson Province for the tobacco, apple, and hop-picking season. There is also a musical novelty about bellringers and an item on the construction of N.Z.'s biggest earth dam near Auckland which will augment the city's water supply.

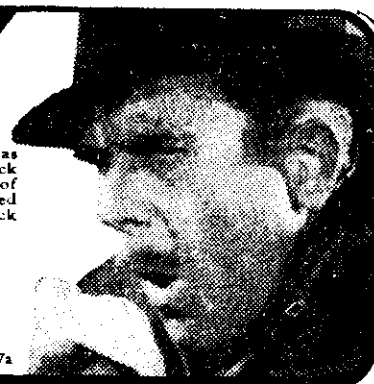
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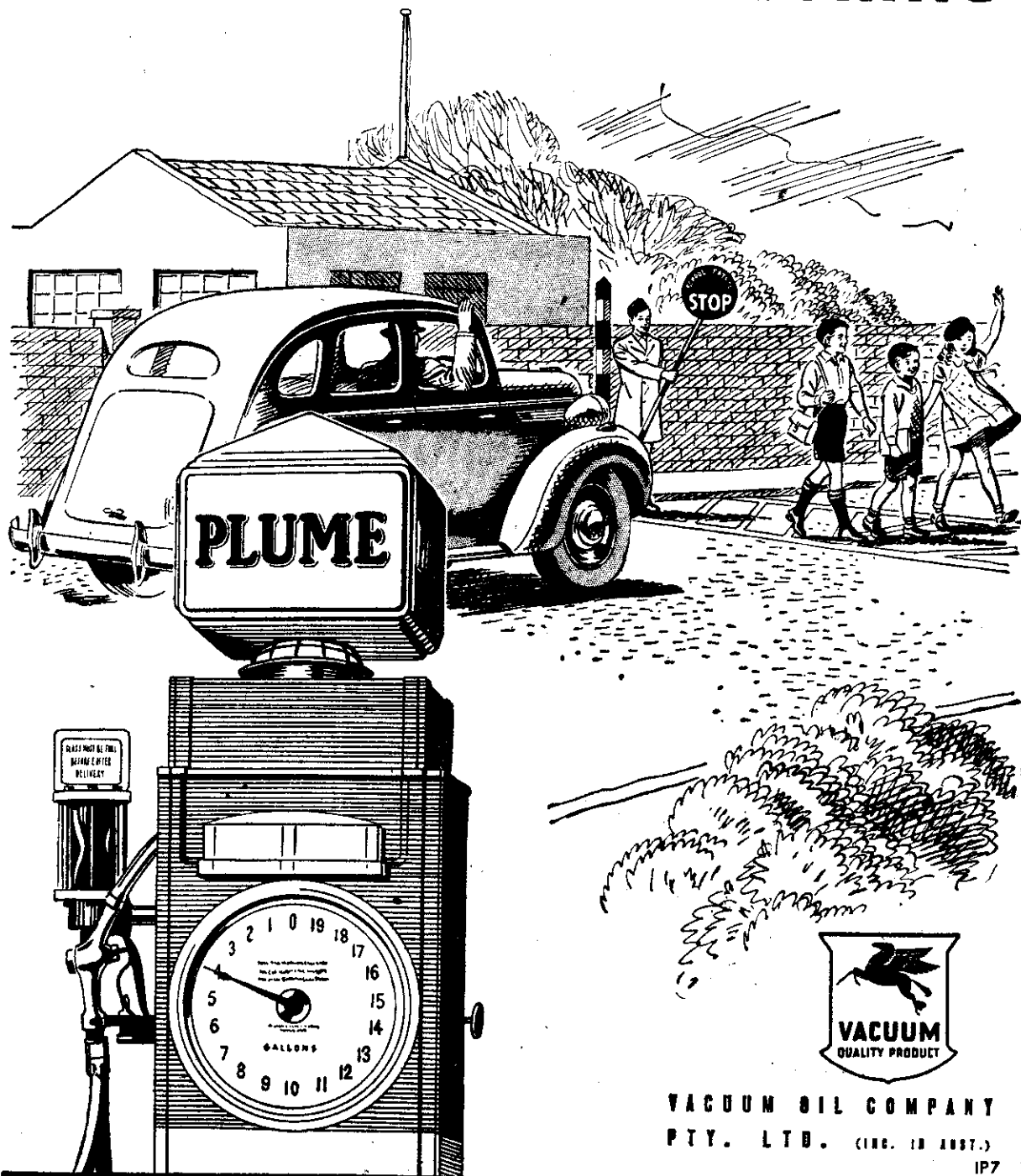
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