

(continued from previous page)

could have run quite successfully with benefit of nothing except its few translated sub-titles in English.)

Chaplin once knew perfectly the secret of silent comedy (though he may since have forgotten it), and so did René Clair. There is, indeed, a good deal in this film which reminds us of Chaplin—the business with the tight shoes, for example, and the fun with the umbrella at the end. But most of it is pure Clair, pure silent cinema, and purely Gallic—the bald heads and feathered hats, photographed from just above, embracing one another, the dance, that riotous sequence in the Mayor's office and, of course, the whole theme of the thing. The British Film Institute, which supplied this 16 mm. copy to New Zealand, classifies *The Italian Straw Hat* as one of the half-dozen outstanding comedies in the history of the cinema, and I see no reason to dispute that verdict.

PINK STRING AND SEALING WAX

(Ealing)



THE awful effects of a Victorian father's repression of his children are depicted in this British film. It should be an exciting as well as an improving chronicle, because everything leads up to a murder, but it isn't, in spite of strong local colour and some very nice bits of acting. Mervyn Johns plays the stern parent, an ultra-respectable chemist, and Gordon Jackson is his erring son who, frustrated by papa in an honourable romance with a baronet's daughter, forms a liaison with the adulterous and homicidal wife of the local publican, and becomes innocently involved when she, wishing to be rid of her husband, tries to make strychnine-poisoning look like tetanus. Google Withers plays this Victorian menace and is, according to the advertisements, the successor to the Wicked Lady—a statement which is erroneous, misleading, and no recommendation anyway. It may, in fact, explain in part my lack of enthusiasm for *Pink String and Sealing Wax*.

To the Editor—

"CARAVAN"

Sir,—In view of the slight argument over the merits of *Caravan*, your readers may be interested in the following description of the film by Miss C. A. Lejeune (London Observer, June 2, 1946).

*Richard of Anglo-Spanish blood,
Betrothed to a bashful British Bud,
Is clumsily shot by a gypsy set,
In the pay of a wicked baronet.
Amnesia sets in, and what is worse,
He marries his Spanish gypsy nurse,
Leaving the Bud to the vile advances
Of the baronet (his name is Francis).
Defending her maidenhood in vain,
She runs away from the Bart. to Spain,
And inadvisedly chasing the lass,
He's sucked to death in a foul morass.
The Bart. goes down with a gurgle and
cuss.*

*The gypsy expires; being superfluous.
The Bud finds her ultimate refuge
from danger,
In the beautiful arms of STEWART
GRANGER.*

—ARSENIC (Auckland).

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

K.K.: Thanks. The Little Man applauded Tawny Pipit on February 22, 1946.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, MAY 16

NATIONAL FILM UNIT

A TRIP from Wellington to Napier in the Viking aircraft is one of two items in the National Film Unit's Weekly Review No. 298, released on May 16. The other item, Ruatoki Maori Farms, shows what strides this Maori farming settlement has made in recent years. Ruatoki is twelve miles inland from the Bay of Plenty, and what at one time was a poor place is now a prosperous district, different from other districts in that all its farmers are Maoris. The Native Department has advanced the money for good houses to be built, there are two stores, and the 116 farmers carry on their dairying business under modern conditions.

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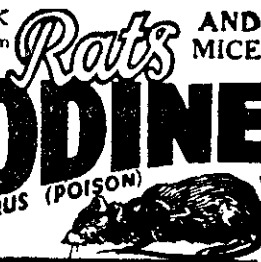
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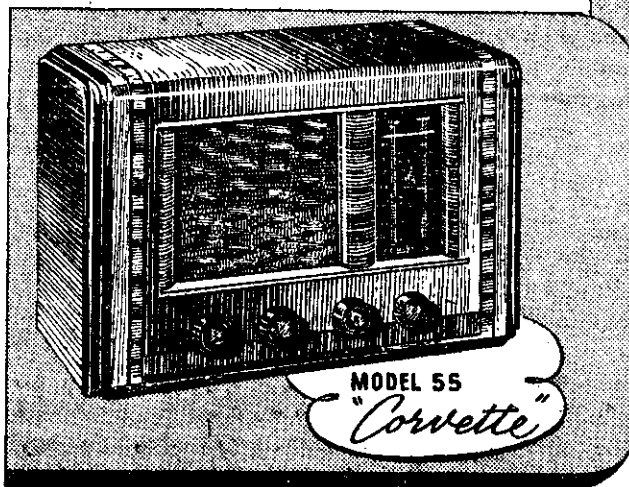
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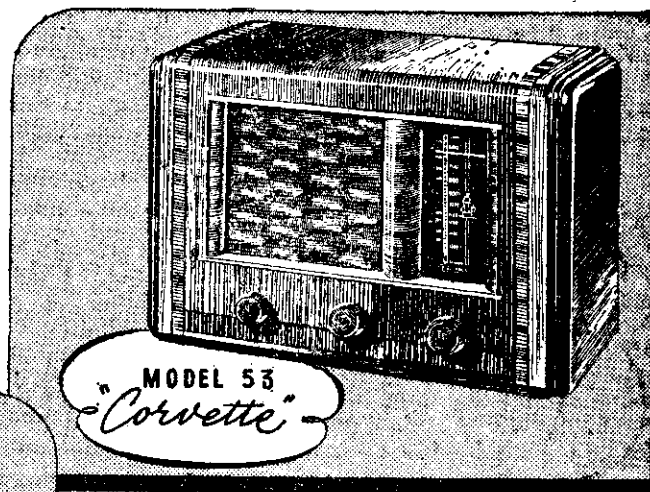
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