

# STILL GOING STRONG

"Chu Chin Chow" from the ZB'S

IN the closing years of the 1914-18 war and in the early years of peace, posters all over London advertised *Chu Chin Chow*, "London's Longest Run," which for something like five years, packed His Majesty's Theatre. *Chu Chin Chow* had all the ingredients of popularity. Everyone knew the tale of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, and thousands saw Oscar Asche in the original production. The music was played, sung and whistled everywhere. Yet there is the apocryphal story of a man who attended every performance, but did not once see the show. He was the double-bass player, and sat in a part of the orchestra where he could not see the stage.

All the favourite musical numbers have been retained in a BBC version of *Chu Chin Chow*, now going the rounds of the ZB stations. In it listeners hear the *Cobbler's Song*, *Come, Marjanah*, *Come Awhile*, and many others. Marjanah in this production is played by Lorely Dyer, and another favourite with English audiences is Marie Burke, who plays Alcolom. Lorely Dyer (a soprano) is often heard in BBC programmes. For years she studied with an Italian master and to-day her range reaches from opera to pantomime.

*Chu Chin Chow* was the outstanding theatrical event in New Zealand in 1921 when it was presented with all its splendour. The theatres were specially lighted for the occasion, incense burned in brass bowls in the foyers and the attendants were dressed in Eastern costumes. Old



BBC photo.

LORELY DYER, who plays Marjanah in the BBC's production of "*Chu Chin Chow*"

theatre-goers may remember the principal performers—Charles Workman, Arthur Styan, Pearl Ladd, Helen Temple, Maggie Moore, Gerald Soupar, and Lottie Sargeant.

The BBC's version of *Chu Chin Chow* was heard from 2ZB last Sunday evening. It will be presented as a one-hour programme at 9.0 p.m. from 1ZB on September 28, and from 3ZB on October 12, 4ZB on October 26, and 2ZA on November 9, at the same hour.

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white *torii* at the top of the mountain had come into view at last, but it seemed to be getting no closer. We were meeting more people now, as it was that time of day when those who have climbed up the other side start to come down in order to reach the bottom before nightfall. We looked down for a sign of our companions and saw them, two stations below, tiny figures stretched out on benches outside the shack. Their climbing was over for the day.

It took us about two hours more to reach the top. The going was slower and slower, and towards the end we could only stagger ten paces at a time, so rarefied was the air. We passed a little patch of snow in a rocky hollow and thought of the heat we would have to encounter when we went down again. But at last we got to the top, walked under the *torii*, and solemnly shook hands on the rim of the crater. "You know, the only reason I've gotten up here," said my companion as we consumed our K-rations, "is because you're a goddam Limey." I assured him I would quite cheerfully have agreed to turn back once or twice had it not been too much for my pride to suggest it to an American.

## Two Kinds of Fool

The sun was behind us now, and the clouds having cleared, the shadow of the whole great mountain was cast on the umber landscape below. I thought of the people who lived in those farms and cottages and imagined them looking up at their beloved Fuji, as they do

every evening as eagerly as if they were seeing it for the first time. The Japanese have a saying, "There are two kinds of fool; one who has never climbed Fuji, and the other who climbs it more than once." Looking at that view I knew why.

The crater was not impressive, about five hundred feet deep with a sandy bottom. The weather station they were constructing on the crater's edge was finished shortly afterwards and it is now occupied by seven men and a woman, who live up there above or in the clouds all the year round. They formed their own trade union not long ago, considering themselves quite unconnected with their colleagues in the world below their mountain.

We hastened downwards, hoping to be off the rocks before darkness overtook us. As we got on to the Gotemba sand trail the last of the light faded and we had barely time to calculate our route before we found ourselves in darkness with a million stars above us and, like candles in a great dish, a million tiny lights scattered distantly below. The sand trail is a sort of fissure running half way down the mountain and we found ourselves slithering along in fine ash. We just let ourselves go and ran down, taking huge slow strides, sliding and plunging in the gravel. It had taken us twelve hours' climbing to get to the top: we required only three to get down again. At the station nearest the jeep we discovered our companions propped up comfortably amongst a pile of quilts, drinking Japanese tea and eating chocolate.

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